



# County of San Diego

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## **P-801 (3)(a) & (9)(a) – TEMPORARY EXEMPTION/WAIVER OPTION**

The San Diego County Emergency Medical Services Office Medical Director, as part of a comprehensive strategy to contain and mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic and in conjunction with recommendations from the Health Services Capacity Task Force's Operational Core Group, has issued authorization for a change in EMS Policy and Procedure.

A 9-1-1 service provider interested in implementing this waiver option shall request authorization via [EMSNotifications@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:EMSNotifications@sdcounty.ca.gov). San Diego County EMS may grant a temporary and time-limited exemption to the P-801 (3)(a) and (9)(a) ground ALS response requirements after assessing potential system implications.

The following requirements may be temporarily modified:

- Instead of two paramedics, one paramedic may be dispatched to ALS responses via
  - first responder OR
  - ground transport vehicle
- Incidents with an assigned EMT-staffed ground transport vehicle are exempt from County standard ALS ambulance response time criteria.
- Communication centers using standardized emergency medical dispatch (EMD) may triage medical calls and dispatch paramedic or EMT-level resources, in accordance with a nationally recognized, uniform set of guidelines.
- EMD-calls triaged as low-acuity may be held until resources are available or may be assigned to:
  - ALS or BLS transport units with or without a first responder unit
  - EMS providers using non-traditional EMS vehicles (e.g., van, SUV, shuttle, light-duty truck) staffed by a minimum of 1 paramedic

All agencies shall request authorizations to implement this waiver option via [EMSNotifications@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:EMSNotifications@sdcounty.ca.gov) with a brief plan summary describing dispatch assignment criteria and expected response models/modes. Authorized agencies shall cease using these response modifications as soon as it is feasible to do so. All authorized agencies shall use existing Quality Improvement (QI) processes to ensure call triage and priority medical dispatch is appropriate.

All authorized agencies shall provide brief daily reports and detailed CAD weekly reports to [EMSNotifications@sdcountry.ca.gov](mailto:EMSNotifications@sdcountry.ca.gov). Daily reports shall include the number of times the agency used modified response the previous day and any other relevant operational updates like unstaffed frontline first responder or transport units, extended periods of paramedic ambulance unavailability, or similar. Weekly report details shall include, but are not limited to, modified response date, time, and type of modified response. These reports will enable San Diego County EMS to monitor health care system strain and evaluate the usefulness of this option.

Thank you for continuing to provide outstanding care to our patients.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kristi Koenig". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kristi L. Koenig, MD, FACEP, FIFEM, FAEMS, Medical Director  
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CC: Eric McDonald, MD, MPH, Chief Medical Officer  
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