



County of San Diego

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December 16, 2022

SAN DIEGO COUNTY EMS TRANSFER TO ED WAITING AREA OPTION

The San Diego County EMS Office actively monitors the health of the 9-1-1 delivery system. The ongoing surge in patients with respiratory infections has increased demands on the county's entire healthcare continuum. As part of a comprehensive strategy to preserve critical healthcare resources, including ambulance availability, the County of San Diego EMS Medical Director has issued a temporary adjustment to the EMS emergency department (ED) transfer of care procedure.

Effective **December 19, 2022, at 0700**, patients being transported by ambulance to the ED (within or outside the 9-1-1 system)¹ may be transferred to the ED waiting area under certain conditions.

To exercise the Transfer to ED Waiting Area Option, **EMS professionals must first communicate with the ED triage nurse.**

Prehospital and hospital personnel must confirm that all the following criteria are met:

- Anticipated Transfer of Care time is >30 minutes
- Age ≥18 years or accompanied by a parent/caregiver if <18 years of age
- Normal mental status (GCS 15 and oriented to person, place, time, and event)
- Normal vital signs for adults (or [age-appropriate vital signs for pediatrics](#))
 - SBP ≥ 90 mmHg
 - HR 60-100 bpm
 - RR 12-20/min
 - SpO2 ≥ 94% on room air
- Ambulatory with steady gait without assistance (as appropriate for age)
 - **OR**, for limited mobility patients, able to sit safely in wheelchair, if hospital staff available to provide ambulatory assistance
- Not suicidal
- Not on an involuntary hold, conservatorship, or when safety monitoring indicated
- No suspicion of acute substance ingestion or overdose
- No chest pain, syncope, dyspnea on exertion, or acute neurologic symptoms (e.g., focal weakness, dizziness, vertigo, imbalance)
- No ALS medications were administered in the field, including fluid boluses²
- No indication for ongoing monitoring or anticipation of repeat treatments administered in the field

¹ Enrollment in the LEMSIS ePCR platform is a requirement for EMT ambulance providers outside of the 9-1-1 system to use the Transfer to ED Waiting Area Option.

² If an IV TKO has been established, convert it to a saline lock prior to patient transfer to ED waiting area.

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EMS professionals must adhere to hospital requirements for infection control. A patient shall only be transferred to the ED waiting area if COVID-19 and other infection control precautions, including source patient masking and physical distancing, can be maintained.

When exercising the Transfer to ED Waiting Area Option, EMS professionals shall deliver a full transfer of care report to the receiving ED staff and obtain a signature from the receiving facility's staff member.

EMS personnel shall document in the ePCR:

- fulfillment of all Transfer to ED Waiting Area Option criteria, and
- the patient's location in the ED waiting area (e.g., wheelchair, waiting area chair, triage tent, cot)

Thank you for the outstanding care you provide to our patients. We recognize and appreciate your dedication during the special conditions of this pandemic.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kristi Koenig".

Kristi L. Koenig, MD, FACEP, FIFEM, FAEMS, Medical Director
San Diego County Emergency Medical Services Office
San Diego County Fire

cc: Eric McDonald, MD, MPH, Chief Medical Officer
Jeff Collins, Director
Andrew Parr, EMS Administrator