

Chapter: COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
Key Words: Policy/Procedure/Protocol

SUBJECT: Ground Ambulance EMS Radios

POLICY NO: S-880

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DATE: July 1, 2017

AUTHORITY: Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Section 1797.103; and San Diego County Board of Supervisors Policy K-12.

I. PURPOSE

To set standards for all Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies mandating the acquisition and maintenance of Regional Communication System (RCS) for EMS communications equipment to be immediately available and capable of multi-lateral communications using the County's RCS and within the guidelines set forth in the Local EMS Agency (LEMSA) EMS Plan.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Definitions

Assignee Agreement:

The agreement signed by both the County and the Assignee which describes the terms of use and responsibilities of each party in support of the agreement.

Disaster Medical Communications:

The process of multi-lateral communication with the scene of a disaster (or exercise) to assure appropriate coordination of patient care and receiving hospital designation. The term disaster may include activations of the San Diego County Emergency Plan, Annex D.

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EMS Credentialed Providers: Those persons holding Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Advanced EMT (AEMT), Paramedic, and Mobile Intensive Care Nurse (MICN) credentials with the County of San Diego, Emergency Medical Services (CoSD EMS).

EMS Platform: Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Basic Life Support (BLS) level care as provided from air and ground ambulances, emergency vehicles (aircraft, marine, ground) capable of providing patient care (non-transport) and special assignment units as defined by CoSD EMS Policy P-410 "San Diego County Special Assignment – Paramedic".

Hospitals: Hospitals located within San Diego County who are designated as Base Station Hospitals or Satellite Hospitals capable of receiving emergency patients on a 24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year basis (24/7/365).

Local Emergency Medical Services Agency (LEMSA): The regulatory body that oversees the provision of EMS throughout San Diego County.

Multi-lateral Communications: EMS Communication occurs on three levels:

1. Unit to Unit (or Unit to Communications Center)
2. Unit to Hospital
3. Hospital to Hospital communications

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Regional Communication

System (RCS):

The County owned and operated Regional Communication (Radio) System. EMS system capabilities, permissions, and compatible equipment must meet the standards of the RCS as operated by the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, Wireless Division.

Regional Communication

System (RCS) for EMS:

The 'Talk Group(s)' assigned on the RCS for the sole and exclusive use of CoSD EMS as set forth by San Diego County Board of Supervisors Policy K-12, Subsection 3.

San Diego County Board of

Supervisors Policy K-12:

A policy designating CoSD EMS as the County's LEMSA and setting other standards for EMS.

III. POLICY

All EMS credentialed providers operating from EMS platforms who may encounter a patient, or are otherwise operating within the LEMSA, must have EMS communications immediately available to the providers so that they may establish Disaster Medical Communications or EMS treatment and transport communications and coordination as appropriate. Use of the EMS Regional Communications System is expressly designed for purpose but is contingent on the following qualifications being met:

A. County Owned Assets

1. CoSD EMS will maintain and fund all Network Operations Center (NOC) fees (air time) for all of County owned radio currently assigned to EMS providers subject to the assignee agreement.

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2. CoSD EMS will discontinue any and all provision of all new/additional EMS radios for public and/or private EMS units.
3. County owned and maintained communications equipment assigned to EMS providers **WILL NOT BE REPLACED BY THE COUNTY** in the event that:
 - a. The equipment is no longer compatible with the RCS.
 - b. The equipment is no longer technologically operable on the RCS.
 - c. The equipment is not operating and not feasibly repairable as determined by Sheriff's Wireless (totaled).
 - d. The County owned equipment has been removed from the direct control of the assignee or the RCS without authorization (stolen) and/or placed in "reward mode" for more than ten days.
 - e. The County owned equipment is no longer within the direct control of the assignee (lost) and/or is placed in "reward mode" for more than ten days.
 - f. The assignee is in violation of any part of the assignee agreement.
4. CoSD EMS radio assignees are responsible to notify CoSD EMS of any missing (lost/stolen), malfunctioning, or damaged communications equipment as per the terms of the assignee agreement which will be strictly enforced. Radios that are temporarily turned off from the RCS or physically removed from the assignee for a violation of the assignee agreement **WILL NOT BE RESTORED/RETURNED**.

B. Agency/Company Owned Assets

1. Agency/Company owned assets operating on the RCS are required to be registered on the system with RCS AND CoSD EMS. Registration shall include all radio identification information, including the System Registration (TN) Number.
2. Agency/Company owned equipment may only be operated on the RCS for EMS within the guidelines established by the RCS and CoSD EMS.
3. CoSD EMS reserves the right to remove any radio from the RCS for EMS talk groups being operated in violation of this policy or malfunctioning on the system without notice.