



# Roll Call

Training Bulletin

Produced by: Lt. Stephen Quinn

Rick Braziel, Chief of Police  
Volume III

*November 19, 2009*

## **Fire EMS Protocol When Responding to Officer Initiated Requests for Medical Assistance**

**ISSUE:** What role does Fire Emergency Medical Services (EMS) play at a scene when either an officer requests Fire EMS or a suspect requests/refuses medical treatment?

**ANSWER:** Since Fire paramedics must be licensed to practice and are named in lawsuits, their practices are scrutinized by County and State EMS authorities. Previously, medics were comfortable “clearing” injured or ill suspects for transport and booking in the jail with little examination. Due to the County of Sacramento Office of Emergency Medical Services’ recent policies, medics will only be able to “clear” a suspect under certain criteria (not at the request of police officers on scene).

The County of Sacramento Office of Emergency Medical Services’ policy regarding patients who are released at the scene by a paramedic must meet ALL of the following criteria:

- The patient must have a clearly articulated plan for medical evaluation and/or follow-up.
- The patient plan must have a reasonable and prudent transportation plan to reach follow-up medical care in a timely manner.
- After complete assessment, the paramedic supervisor must concur with the appropriateness of scene release and the medical appropriateness of the follow-up plan.
- Patients with minor traumatic injuries shall NOT meet the critical trauma criteria.
- Medical complaints must NOT be of new onset (first time symptoms).
- The patient must sign a release form stating that the emergency evaluation has been rendered, transportation offered and that the patient chooses an alternative evaluation plan.
- The provider (Fire EMS) will audit 100% of scene releases under this policy based on available data for medical appropriateness, compliance with Department/company policy and compliance with County policies.

Paramedics under this policy will **NOT** release the following classes of patients at the scene:

- Patients requesting ambulance transport shall not be denied transport.
- Patients with any new onset medical complaints such as seizures, headache, hypoglycemia, respiratory distress, chest pain, etc. regardless of the duration of the complaint.
- Paramedics may not knowingly release a patient under this policy more than once in a 24-hour period.



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- Children under 1 year of age.
- Elderly patients who are difficult to assess or whose mental status is chronically altered.
- Minors under eighteen (18) years of age shall not be released under this policy except at the request of a parent or guardian.

Patients/suspects, while suffering from an illness or injury, may decline all or part of the assessment, emergency treatment and/or transportation only if the following factors are NOT present:

- The subject's impaired capacity to understand the emergent nature of their medical condition due to alcohol, drugs or medication, mental illness, traumatic injury or grave disability.
- The subject is under eighteen (18) years of age.

Patients/subjects who are refusing part or all treatment/transportation and who in the judgment of paramedics require treatment shall consider the involvement of law enforcement if there is a threat to self/other or if the subject is gravely disabled.

**DISCUSSION:** Fire Paramedics are the authorities who are charged with determining whether a subject/suspect is transported for medical treatment per Sacramento EMS' protocols. Law enforcement agencies should not attempt to influence paramedics to release or "clear" subjects for transport to jail.

If you have questions, please contact the Training Division at (916) 808-2418

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