
S.O.P. #: 300-09

SUBJECT: EMS Transport Procedures

DIVISION: Communications Division

Objective: To outline EMS transport dispatch procedures.

Section 1: General

- A. The following criteria outline the utilization of Baltimore County medic units for emergency and non-emergency transports.

Section 2: Inter-Facility Transport Criteria

- A. EMERGENCY TRANSPORTS – Baltimore County medic units will provide emergency inter-facility transport services for patients meeting the following criteria:
1. Patients with a critical, life-threatening illness or injury for which the appropriate treatment is not available at the referring hospital.
 2. Patients for whom a delay in transfer to another facility would have a negative impact on patient outcome.
 3. Examples: multi-system trauma, childbirth, neonatal resuscitation, cardiac bypass, catherization, and angioplasty.
- B. NON-EMERGENCY TRANSPORTS – Baltimore County medic units will not provide non-emergency inter-facility transports. These will be handled by commercial ambulance services. A Baltimore County medic unit called to a facility for a transport that the crew identifies as not meeting the above criteria for emergency transports shall immediately contact their respective EMS District Officer for further direction. The well being of the patient shall be the primary priority. In cases other than obviously non-critical patients, where there is a disagreement between the hospital staff and the EMS crew/District Officer regarding the emergency nature of the transport, the transport service shall be provided and the issue addressed at a later time by the District Officer. (The on-duty EMS Shift Commander or the EMS Division Chief may grant special exceptions to allow non-emergency transports.)
- C. Jurisdictional Considerations:
1. The Baltimore County Fire Department Emergency Medical Services Division will handle emergency transports from a Baltimore County hospital to another facility in the greater Baltimore metropolitan area.
 2. Emergency transports from a hospital outside of Baltimore County to a facility located in Baltimore County will be handled by the EMS system in the county in which the referring hospital is located, except as noted below.
 3. Requests made by a facility not in Baltimore County when a Baltimore County medic is already at that facility shall be honored, provided the transport satisfies the emergency transport criteria in Section 2.
- D. The following information must be obtained by Dispatch from the person calling:
1. Verify the patient meets the criteria for an emergency transport.
 2. Patient's name and transport medications/equipment required.
 3. Patient's location in the discharging hospital.
 4. Patient's destination in the receiving hospital
 5. If a physician or nurse will accompany the patient.
 6. Name and telephone number of person making the request.
 7. Dispatch will advise the person requesting an emergency transport that if the paramedics determine the patient is unstable, or requires services not enumerated in Maryland protocols, a physician or other allied health professional will be required to accompany the patient during transport.

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Section 3: Special Procedures

A. Transport of Maternity Patients:

The Baltimore County Fire Department Emergency Medical Services will transport stable maternity patients to the hospital, which they are registered. If the patient is considered unstable, the patient will be transported to the closest appropriate medical facility.

B. Non-emergency Transports of Harvested Organs:

The Baltimore County Fire Department Emergency Medical Services will provide transportation of harvested organs from organ donors and surgical transplant team.

1. Upon the receipt of a request for a harvested organ transport, Dispatch will:

- a. Ascertain the location of the organ donor.
- b. Ascertain where and when the surgical transplant team will be picked-up by the EMS unit (usually Martin State Airport).
- c. Ascertain if the EMS unit must wait at the hospital for the surgical transplant team to harvest the organ, and
- d. Advise the medic unit's EMS District Officer of the organ transport.

C. Volunteer EMS Transport Policies:

Volunteer EMS companies may handle non-emergency transports if scheduled ahead of time and approved to be handled by that volunteer company.

D. Baltimore County "Green Pre-Authorization" Transportation Card

1. In order to facilitate transporting patients with special needs, the Baltimore County Fire Department developed a pre-authorization card, issued by the EMS Office. This card is designed for specific patients that require medical treatment that may not be available at the nearest medical facility. Example: Pediatric patient with specific medical condition or treatment not found in a local institution or patients receiving specific experimental medication or part of an experimental project. This program is NOT intended for patients who wish only to be transported to one specific hospital because their attending physician only has privileges there.
2. Persons requesting a card must contact the EMS Office to obtain the necessary form. This form is sent to the physician to be filled out and returned to the EMS Office. Each card will designate only one specific medical center for transportation and one physician.
3. When the request is approved, the patient will be issued a green wallet size pre-authorization card. This card lists the patient's name and address, medical center to be transported to, physician's name and specific medical problems of the patient. The patient should carry this card at all times. The EMS office maintains a file on these persons.
4. It is the EMS provider's responsibility to:
 - a. When you are presented with this card, you may transport the patient to the designated facility listed on the card. However, if the patient's condition warrants immediate care, then the provider should transport to the closest appropriate facility.
 - b. The patient's physician, if present, may elect to take responsibility and transport to the designated facility. However, the physician **MUST ACCOMPANY** the medic.
 - c. At any time, the provider has the option to consult with the closest facility and the designated pre-authorization facility for direction if the patient appears to be unstable.