

# SAN FRANCISCO EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AGENCY

Policy Reference No.: 3000  
Effective Date: September 9, 2013  
Supersedes: August 1, 2007

## MEDICAL DISPATCH CENTER STANDARDS

### I. PURPOSE

To establish the minimum standards for Medical Dispatch Centers serving the San Francisco Emergency Medical Services system.

### II. POLICY

- A. Only Medical Dispatch Centers designated by the San Francisco EMS Agency may provide emergency medical dispatching for permitted Basic or Advanced Life Support Ambulance providers.
- B. Advanced Medical Priority Dispatch System<sup>®</sup> (AMPDS) is the designated Emergency Medical Dispatch Priority Reference System authorized for use within the San Francisco EMS system.

### III. REQUIREMENTS

- A. Be designated by the San Francisco EMS Agency as a Medical Dispatch Center by demonstrating compliance with this policy and applicable State and Federal statutes, codes and regulation through written internal policies and procedures and by allowing announced or unannounced audits and on-site inspections.
- B. Maintain a written agreement with the San Francisco EMS Agency to provide emergency medical dispatch services.
- C. Have a current Federal Communications Commission (FCC) license.
- D. Have internal policies for the retention of medical dispatch call logs, records, and tapes for a minimum of 180 days, or as required by departmental or company record retention and destruction policies, whichever is greater.
- E. Every dispatcher must have current certification as an Emergency Medical Dispatcher (EMD) that meets the standards defined in *Policy 3000.1 Emergency Medical Dispatch Standards*.
- F. At least one certified Emergency Medical Dispatcher must be available to perform dispatching at all times.

- G. Have available at all times a Dispatch Supervisor for the emergency medical dispatchers. All Dispatch Supervisor(s) must meet the standards in *Policy 3000.1 Medical Dispatcher Standards*.
- H. Provide a structured training program for dispatchers that minimally includes:
  - 1. Certifying call taking personnel as Emergency Medical Dispatchers.
  - 2. Orientation to the EMS System including any current or updated revisions to applicable EMS Agency policies and procedures.
- I. Medical Dispatch Centers must use the AMPDS Card Set or the Pro QA computerized system. Each on-duty call taker workstation must be provided with an AMPDS Card Set or properly enabled computer terminal for AMPDS.
- J. AMPDS must be used on every request for medical assistance. This includes:
  - 1. The standardized caller interrogation and response assignment protocols; and
  - 2. Pre-arrival instructions when appropriate for a call.
  - 3. Use of AMPDS may be suspended during disaster situations or during periods of unusual extreme call demand. The Medical Dispatch Center must notify the EMS Agency Medical Director of all incidents that trigger suspension of AMPDS. Notification must occur within 1 business day after the suspension.
- K. Have a Quality Improvement program that meets the standards listed in Section V of this policy.
- L. Provide a dedicated web enabled computer to display EM System on a continuous 24-hour per day basis.
- M. Have designated representative(s) that participate in the relevant EMS Agency committee meetings.
- N. Participate in research studies on prehospital care approved by the San Francisco EMS Agency Medical Director.
- O. Participate in EMS system-wide disaster training exercises as determined by the EMS Agency.
- P. Maintain a disaster plan that defines medical dispatch center actions to assure continuous operations during a disaster that includes:
  - 1. Personnel disaster response roles;
  - 2. Call-back procedures for staff;
  - 3. Disaster training and exercise plan;
  - 4. Coordination with other disaster response agencies; and
  - 5. Contingency plans for off-site medical dispatch operations in the event the Medical Dispatch Center is rendered inoperable.

#### **IV. DESIGNATION PROCESS**

- A. The EMS Agency shall evaluate all Medical Dispatch Centers through a designation survey for their compliance with the standards listed in this policy. This survey maybe combined with a Certificate of Operation application process for a new ambulance provider agency.
- B. Prior to the designation survey, the EMS Agency shall provide to Emergency Medical Dispatch Centers the evaluation criteria and the minimum passing score requirements. After the survey completion, the EMS Agency will provide to Emergency Medical Dispatch Centers a written survey evaluation and score. The Medical Dispatch Center must attain a passing score to be designated as a San Francisco EMS provider.
- C. If the Medical Dispatch Center fails to achieve the minimum passing score on the initial designation survey, they may petition the EMS Agency for a re-survey within three months of the initial survey date. The Medical Dispatch Center must correct the deficiencies noted in the initial designation survey to pass the second survey. Failure to attain the minimum passing score requirement may result in the EMS Agency Medical Director terminating the Emergency Medical Dispatch Center's participation as an Emergency Medical Dispatch Center in the San Francisco EMS system. The decision of the Medical Director is final.

#### **V. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Appoint at least one quality improvement (QI) coordinator(s) to implement and manage the Medical Dispatch Center's QI program.
- B. Have a QI Plan approved by the EMS Agency Medical Director that describes the following:
  - 1. Methods for evaluating dispatch services using objective structure, process, and outcome indicators.
  - 2. Identifies the QI feedback methods (e.g. tape review, documentation or training) for individual dispatchers, dispatch management, internal medical dispatch review committees, other EMS providers, and the EMS Agency.
  - 3. Internal policy and procedures for submitting QI data reports and Sentinel Event and Exception Reports to the EMS Agency.
  - 4. Internal policy and procedure for providing tapes or call logs to the EMS Agency, other City and County of San Francisco agencies or other external agencies external for quality improvement review.
  - 5. The formal means to recognize excellence through employee recognition initiatives.

VI. **AUTHORITY**

California Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Section 1797.220 and Section 1798(a);  
California EMS Authority Publication #132: Emergency Medical Services Dispatch  
Program Guidelines, March 2003