



## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

### Emergency Medical Services Agency

POLICY #302.00

TITLE: **ALS/BLS TIERED DISPATCH AND AMBULANCE RESPONSE (Priority 1, 2 and 3)**

APPROVED: ON-FILE

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ON-FILE

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**Authority:** California Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Section 1797.200 – 226.

**Purpose:** To establish standards and guidelines for Merced County Emergency Medical Services utilizing Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) standards to dispatch ambulances in a tiered manner.

**Definitions:** Priority 1 CODE 3 REQUEST FIRE – This response is for a potentially life threatening emergency medical condition. There will be the need for a Fire First Responder's response based upon the determinate code.

Priority 2 CODE 3 – This response is for a non-life threatening emergency medical condition. There may be the need for a Fire First Responder's response based upon the determinate code and distance to the response.

Priority 3 CODE 2 – This response is for an urgent yet non-life threatening medical response. The initial ALS or BLS response is based upon the determinate code.

Priority 4 Code 2 – This is an Interfacility Transfer which could be performed by a BLS or ALS ambulance depending on the patient's medical needs. See EMS Policy 520.00 - *EMT and Paramedic Interfacility Transfer*.

ALS/BLS Tiered Dispatch and Ambulance Response - Means dispatching an Advanced Life Support (ALS) or Basic Life Support (BLS) response to emergency and non-emergency requests for prehospital emergency medical care. The Merced County EMS Agency allows the primary response to be a BLS ambulance; the level of service is defined in Attachment A of this document. Responses are dispatched as defined by the determinate codes. If the request is schedulable, it may be considered for scheduled Priority 4 status. If the destination for a prehospital incident is the emergency department or acute treatment area of an acute care facility, then the ambulance response should be no less than a Priority 3. If the destination is a diagnostic or scheduled treatment area of an acute care facility, evaluate the call for scheduled priority status.

Advanced Life Support Ambulance – An emergency ambulance staffed with a minimum of one (1) Paramedic and one (1) Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).

Basic Life Support Ambulance – An emergency ambulance staffed with a minimum of two (2) EMTs.

**Policy:** It is the policy of the Merced County Emergency Medical Services Agency that designated Emergency Medical Services Dispatch Centers shall dispatch and respond Advanced Life Support ambulance units to Priority 1 and Priority 2 CODE 3 requests for emergency medical service. Priority 3 CODE 2 requests for service shall receive either Advanced Life Support or Basic Life Support ambulance units as shall be determined by the Determinate Codes approved by the Merced County EMS Medical Director. Attachment A to this policy contains all of the approved Determinate Code Problems, with the recommended Response Priorities and ALS or BLS Patient Assessment Levels.

**Procedure:** The Merced County Emergency Medical Services Agency shall authorize and designate Emergency Medical Services Dispatch Centers for the receipt and handling of Emergency Medical Service requests. Designated Emergency Medical Services Dispatch Centers shall use and maintain the National Academies of Emergency Medical Dispatch Protocols, which includes the Medical Priority Dispatch System and Pre-arrival Care Instructions. Emergency Medical Services Dispatch Centers shall ensure that each request for ambulance service is managed in a manner consistent with established EMS Policies and Procedures.