



# County of Santa Cruz

## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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EMERGENCY MEDICAL  
SERVICES PROGRAM

Policy No. 1220  
Reviewed 01/07

### Emergency Medical Services Program

Approved

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Medical Director

**Subject: EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH (EMD) POLICY**

#### **I. PHILOSOPHY**

This policy is intended to promulgate emergency medical dispatch (EMD) standards that establish EMD training criteria, a process for certification, recertification, continuing education requirements, and a process for quality assurance.

Standardization allows for the limited resources to provide training, certification, testing and personnel certification review efficiently.

This policy is not intended, in any way, to impose upon local communications centers a requirement to be EMD capable. The policy, however, does establish standards for communication centers that do choose to implement an EMD program.

#### **II. DEFINITION**

An emergency medical dispatcher is any person employed by an agency providing emergency medical dispatch services who has successfully completed an EMD training program approved by the local emergency medical services agency.

#### **III. TRAINING STANDARD**

##### **A. Course Requirement**

1. Curriculum

Courses must use EMD curriculum and associated texts on emergency medical dispatch as approved by the National Academy of Emergency Medical Dispatch.

2. Course Length

The course must be a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours in length of which two (2) hours may be designated for testing.

3. The course must provide training in the following topics:

<b><u>Unit Number</u></b>	<b><u>Identification</u></b>	<b><u>Minimum Allocation of Time for Teaching</u></b>
1.	Medical dispatcher Orientation	4 hours
2.	Medical Dispatch protocols	10 hours
3.	Medical / legal factors	2 hours
4.	Scenarios, drills and practice	4 hours
5.	Written and practical Testing	2 hours
6.	Comprehensive implementation	2 hours

Additional training may be required which includes, but is not limited to basic telecommunications, obtaining information from callers, allocation of local EMS resources, multi-casualty incidents and disaster procedures.

The local EMSA may exempt the EMD candidate from sections of the course based upon the candidate's prior experience. As an example, communications centers just entering the EMD program may have experienced dispatchers who may not need training in some sections.

**IV. COURSE INSTRUCTOR REQUIREMENTS**

**A. Units 1-6**

Must be taught by an EMD Instructor certified through the National Academy of Emergency Medical Dispatch.

**B. Additional Training**

Instructor qualifications to teach additional training topics must, at a minimum, be:

1. A recognized instructor who has completed an instructor development course, and
2. One (1) year experience in the respective level of practice or expertise.

**C. Guest Instructors**

EMD Instructors may use guest lecturers at their discretion and under their immediate supervision for any section.

**D. Proctoring Requirements**

During course practicum instructor student ratio shall not exceed 1:4.

Proctors may be course instructors or certified EMD's. Certified EMD's who proctor need not have taken an instructor course although this would be desirable.

**V. EMD CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

**A. Certification**

1. Minimum age of 18.
2. High school diploma or GED.
3. Successfully completed an EMS approved EMD course.
4. Currently certified in first aid (Red Cross Standard American First-Aid or equivalent).
5. Passed a CPR course (American Heart Association/American Red Cross course or equivalent).
6. Successful completion and documentation of quality checks of calls handled by the EMD.
7. Sponsored by a department or agency that has responsibility for dispatching emergency medical resources.
8. Pay a reasonable fee that may be assessed to defray administrative costs associated with certification.

**B. Certification by Challenge**

EMD may be challenged by persons who meet criteria established in Section V of this policy and passes a local EMS agency approved written and practical exam.

**C. CTO Training/Coaching**

After completion of the EMD course, EMDs will receive no less than 40 hours of supervised on-the-job training and coaching with an EMD certified Communications Training Officer (CTO).

## **VI. RECERTIFICATION**

Recertification as an EMD shall be every two (2) years.

A. Requirements for recertification shall be as follows:

1. Current certificate in CPR (American Heart Association/American Red Cross course or equivalent).
2. Current certification in first aid (American Red Cross Standard First Aid or equivalent).
3. Completed 24 hours of continuing education – see Section VII.
4. Pay fee assessed to cover expenses associated with recertification.
5. Be employed by an agency or department that has responsibility for dispatching emergency medical resources.
6. Successful completion and documentation of quality checks of calls handled by the EMD.

## **VII. CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

Certified EMD's must acquire a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours of continuing education within two (2) years. Continuing education hours are obtained on an actual hour basis and shall include the following:

- A. A minimum of eight (8) hours of in-house EMD tape reviews every two (2) years.
- B. Four (4) hours of recertification in CPR (American Heart Association/American Red Cross course or equivalent).
- C. The remainder of the hours as determined by the individual within the agency that is responsible for training may be obtained by:
  1. Ride-a-longs associated with emergency medical response.
  2. Proctoring of EMD training.
  3. Didactic including lectures, courses, workshops, seminars, films, etc. relevant to EMD principles and practices.
  4. Attendance at first aid training as necessary to maintain certification.
  5. Attendance at base station tape critiques.

6. Demonstration or practice sessions utilizing telecommunications equipment and/or EMD adjuncts.
7. Local training, planning or management meetings scheduled to review EMS procedures and/or communications.
8. Outreach presentations to community groups and user agencies.
9. EMT level course for recertification. A maximum of four (4) hours may be applied towards EMD recertification.
10. Volunteer work at local EMS agencies. A maximum of four (4) hours may be applied towards EMD recertification.

All continuing education hours approved by the individual within the agency that is responsible for training must be documented. Failure to provide documentation of attendance in approved CE programs may result in denial of recertification by local EMS agency.

### **VIII. CERTIFICATE REVIEW PROCESS**

Certification as an EMD is done by local Emergency Medical Services Medical Director by authority of Health and Safety Code, Section 2.5, subsections 1797.62, 1797.72, 1797.78, 1797.90, 1797.200, 1797.204, 1797.252, 1798 et al.

Therefore, in all aspects, a certified EMD is considered to be subject to certificate review process by the local EMSA as defined in the Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Chapter 7, Section 1797.200, 1797.204, 1797.206 and 1797.208.

### **IX. QUALITY ASSURANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMUNICATIONS CENTERS WHICH IMPLEMENT AN EMD PROGRAM**

A quality assurance process needs to be in place to track the performance of the EMD system, identify problem areas and recommend appropriate corrective action, and identify and recognize areas of exemplary performance.

The quality assurance process should be performed by representatives of the County agencies affected by EMD.

#### **A. Committee Composition**

1. Chairperson  
The Chairperson of the Quality Assurance (QA) Committee will be the County Emergency Medical Services Medical Director, or an alternate may be selected by him/her.
2. EMS Program Manager  
The EMS Program Manager or his/her designee shall be a member.

3. Communications Center  
One Communications dispatcher/middle management representative, training coordinator, and one public safety dispatcher will be members of the QA Committee.
4. Contract Paramedic Provider  
The local EMS County contract paramedic provider agency having transport capability will appoint one representative to serve on the Committee.
5. Fire Representative  
One representative of the local fire agencies will be selected by the County Fire Chief's Association and serve as a member of the Committee.
6. Law Enforcement  
One representative of all law enforcement agencies will be selected by the Santa Cruz County Law Enforcement Chiefs' Association.
7. PSAP's  
A representative from each PSAP within the county.

Each of the representatives in categories 3, 4, and 5 will serve for a term of 1 year. Individuals may be reappointed to the position by their respective agencies for consecutive annual terms of service.

B. Authority

Since the EMD medical policies are operable under the signature and medical license of the County EMS Medical Director, any unresolved disputes or disagreements which may occur during committee deliberations will ultimately be resolved by decision of the EMS Medical Director.

C. Committee Process

Three types of QA activities will be performed: retrospective review, concurrent review, and prospective program review.

1. Retrospective Review  
Retrospective review will be performed by the following process:
  - a) A random selection of calls for the previous period will be audited. Cases to be reviewed may be selected from among the following categories:
    - 1) calls in which pre-arrival instructions were given;
    - 2) calls determined to be of a difficult nature, and marked for review on the EMD run cards:

And

- 3) calls in which the dispatcher performed optimally.
  - b) Any calls which involved the dispatch process and which generated an incident report or comments regarding pre-hospital patient care will be subject to review. Such reports or comments may be generated by local EMS agency, pre-hospital care personnel, members of the QA Committee, communications super-visors or administration.
  - c) All calls which were deemed by any emergency medial care agency to involve an over or under response as determined by the EMD process will be reviewed to assess the appropriateness of response as determined by EMD.
2. Concurrent review activities will consist of periodic review of END personnel credentialing, compliance with the continuing education requirements of the EMD position, and review of any proposed changes in EMS policies.
  3. Prospective review activities will be periodic, at least annually, review of the current EMD cards, existing EMD policies, and the EMD certification curriculum.

D. Committee Findings

The Committee will report its findings to the County EMS Medical Director in a manner to protect the findings from discovery. Such reports will be prepared on a quarterly basis and will include evaluations of the cases reviewed, problems encountered and data collected by the communications center (number of calls, their classification, and direction of contact with caller).

E. Recommendations

1. Training

The Committee may recommend topics and instructors for in-service training of EMD staff.

2. Personnel

The Committee shall not recommend punitive action or commendations for EMD's, but will provide feedback to the communication center's administration and local EMS agency.

F. Frequency of Meetings

The QA Committee will meet at least quarterly. It may meet more frequently at the request of any one of the Committee members.