



# INLAND COUNTIES EMERGENCY MEDICAL AGENCY POLICY AND PROTOCOL MANUAL

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## AMBULANCE EXEMPTION POLICY

### I. **PURPOSE**

To define the process for ambulance exemption approval and response time compliance.

### II. **POLICY/PROCEDURE**

#### A. **RESPONSE TIME MANAGEMENT**

Ambulance dispatch CAD data and the FirstWatch On-line Compliance Utility (OCU) program shall be used to calculate response times. Until such time as the OCU provides performance data directly to ICEMA, ambulance providers shall submit a monthly report to ICEMA in a manner specified by the ICEMA Administrator in accordance with contractual obligation and this policy.

Ambulance Response Time measures are designed to provide the appropriate prehospital clinical care in a time frame that is appropriate to the patient situation and set forth in contract with the ambulance contractor. Response Time shall be measured in minutes and integer (whole) seconds and compliance determined on a fractile percentage basis in accordance with the ambulance contract.

Ambulance providers shall commit to employ whatever level of resources is necessary to achieve the contractual response time requirements for ambulance service requests located within each EOA. Once the ambulance provider has determined the level of resources necessary to achieve the contractual Response Time requirements for each EOA, but in no case exceeding thirty (30) days from the effective date of this policy, the ambulance provider shall provide an ongoing current deployment plan for review and approval by ICEMA.

### III. **CALCULATION OF RESPONSE TIMES**

#### A. **START OF RESPONSE TIMES:**

1. Calculation of Response Time shall begin when the following information, is transmitted to the assigned ambulance provider's communications center:
  - a. Exact address or descriptive location such as building or landmark, intersection, or freeway / highway location.
  - b. For dispatching agencies that are designated secondary PSAPs, the response time calculation will start after pre-dispatch questioning and/or caller instruction is completed (including approved EMD steps if used), and the call is in queue to send to the responding unit. For agencies that are not designated as a secondary PSAP, the response time calculation will start when the call is received from the secondary PSAP."
  - c. If an ambulance is not available at the time that the ambulance provider dispatch center receives the call, the dispatcher will make a note in the automated dispatch system record that no ambulance was available.

2. Each incident is a separate response: Each incident will be counted as a single response regardless of the number of units that are utilized.
3. The Response Time of the ambulance provider's first arriving emergency ambulance will be used to compute ambulance Response Time for that incident.

**B. STOP OF RESPONSE TIMES:**

- a. The time stamp in provider's CAD that indicates that the responding crew has advised, either electronically or verbally via radio or telephone communications, that they have arrived at the assigned address/location.
- b. If the responding crew arrives on the scene of the incident but fails to transmit this information to providers dispatch, a geofence distance from the incident address within 100 meters where 0.00 m.p.h. would be recognized as ON SCENE or policy when crew pushes "On Scene" which is defined as fully stopped (wheels not in motion or 0.00 m.p.h.) at the location where it shall be parked during the incident shall be used.
- c. In the case of encumbered/restricted access to the patient, the term "On Scene" shall be understood to mean the time the emergency ambulance arrives at the restricted access point, e.g., staging area at the gate of a closed gated area, or rendezvous point to be escorted to the patient by another individual.
- d. At the time that dispatch notifies the assigned ambulance to cancel its response.

**C. RESPONSE TIME CORRECTIONS AND EXEMPTIONS**

1. Ambulance provider may request Response Time Correction(s) of arrival on scene time(s). In incidents when the assigned ambulance crew fails to report their arrival on scene, the time of the next communication to dispatch by crew or other on scene personnel that indicates that the ambulance has already arrived at the scene shall be used as the arrival on scene time. Alternatively, on scene time may be validated by CAD timestamp and Global Positioning System (GPS) based on Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) technology playback.
  - a. In some cases, certain specified responses will be corrected by ICEMA and thereby deemed as compliant responses to be included in Response Time compliance calculations. These Response Time Correction(s) will be for good cause only, as reasonably determined by ICEMA. The burden of proof that there is good cause for the correction shall rest with the ambulance provider.
  - b. Ambulance provider shall file a request for each desired Response Time Correction or Exemption monthly with ICEMA via the online compliance utility (OCU) within 15 business days from the end of the compliance period or in a written report until OCU is established. Such request shall list the date, the time, and the specific circumstances causing the delayed response. ICEMA contract monitor personnel shall grant or deny corrections to performance standards and shall advise the ambulance provider utilizing the OCU.
  - c. Until such time as the OCU provides performance data directly to ICEMA, the Ambulance provider shall submit these requests in a report to ICEMA in a manner specified by ICEMA contract monitor personnel in accordance with the

standard data formatting outlined in the ICEMA Response Time Submissions Guideline (8/30/2013).

Response time exemptions include, and are limited to:

See Attachment A (ICEMA Exemption List)

**D. RESPONSE TIME EXEMPTIONS**

1. Ambulance provider shall maintain sufficient resources to achieve the specified Response Time Standards. Ambulance provider shall be responsible for prudent and reasonable planning and action related to system deployment as set forth in the provider's contract. In the monthly calculation of Ambulance provider's performance to determine compliance with Response Time Standards, every request for ambulance service from the primary or secondary PSAP shall be included. Exemptions may be made on specified responses which will be excluded from Response Time compliance calculations and liquidated damages. It is the Ambulance provider's responsibility to demonstrate good cause for the Exemption. Ambulance provider may request that a response be excluded from the calculation of Response Time Standards, if that call meets the criteria defined below. If ICEMA contract monitor personnel grants an Exemption, the call will be neither late nor compliant and the call will be removed from the compliance calculation. Ambulance provider shall file a request for each desired Response Time Exemption monthly with ICEMA via the OCU within 15 business days of the end of the previous month. Such request shall list the specific Exemption Code from attachment A along with the date, time, and specific circumstances causing the delayed response. ICEMA contract monitor personnel shall grant or deny Exemptions to performance standards and shall so advise the Ambulance provider. ICEMA contract monitor personnel will respond to Exemption requests utilizing the OCU. Until such time as the OCU provides performance data directly to ICEMA, the Ambulance provider shall submit these requests in a report to ICEMA in a manner specified by ICEMA contract monitor personnel.

**E. RESPONSE TIME REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

1. Response Time performance reporting requirements and documentation of incident time shall include, but is not limited to:
  - a. Time call received by ambulance dispatch center from a Secondary PSAP. In the case where the secondary PSAP is dispatching its own ambulance, the time when the incident is sent to queue for dispatching.
  - b. Time ambulance crew assigned.
  - c. Time enroute to scene
  - d. Arrival on scene time or canceled enroute.
  - e. Total on scene time.
  - f. Time canceled on scene or enroute to transport destination.
  - g. Total time to transport to destination:
  - h. Arrival time at the destination.

- i. Time available at the destination (i.e., return to in service status).
2. Ambulance provider must synchronize its clocks with the Universal Time Coordinated (UTC) according to Pacific Standard Time PST. UTC is the basis for civil time. This 24-hour time standard is kept using highly precise atomic clocks combined with the earth's rotation.

**F. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

1. Requests for Exemptions should include documentation to support the request.

This report shall include but is not limited to:

- Run number with response date and time
- Unit number
- Units on duty across all of provider's EOA's at time of call
- Number of available units across all EOA's (Level number) at time of call
- Deployment Plan
- Busy units
- Exemption code / reason and note

**Requests for Ambulance Patient Offload Delay (APOD) should also include:**

- Units on bed delay
- Unit numbers
- Unit destination
- Time call was received
- Time arrived at destination
- Transfer of care time
- Time the unit is back in service
- Number of deployed units
- Level of service (ALS or BLS)
- Deployment plan with baseline percentage of fully staffed units
- Shift start
- Shift end

**ICEMA may request the following verification tools:**

- CAD snapshot
- Posting locations
- Map or description of route taken by responding unit

**III. DEFINITIONS**

**Ambulance Patient Offload Delay (APOD):** The occurrence of a patient remaining on the ambulance gurney and/or the emergency department has not assumed responsibility for patient care beyond the local emergency medical system authority approved ambulance patient offload time.

**Exemption:** Any response or group of responses that should be exempt from response time standards due to unusual circumstances beyond a provider's reasonable control.

**Response Time Performance Requirement:** The overall response time performance requirement for services under contractual agreement is intended to ensure that the provider responds to each incident with an appropriate resource in accordance with ICEMA policies and procedures. The standards set forth herein establish the level of response time performance required by provider for calls within the designated EOA.

**Response Time Performance Calculation:** Response times are measured and calculated on a fractile basis using CAD data, where available.

**Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD):** A combination of hardware and software that provides data entry, makes resource recommendations, and notifies and tracks those resources before, during, and after emergency 911 calls, preserving records of those emergency 911 calls and status changes for later analysis

**CAD to CAD:** A dedicated electronic connection between two or more CAD systems that provides a reciprocal flow of specified data elements that can populate designated fields in each of the connected CAD systems.

**Automatic Vehicle Locating (AVL):** A Global Positioning System based tool used for determining the precise geographic location of a vehicle or other resource, and transmitting this information to dispatchers, supervisors and/or into a CAD or other tracking/recording system.

**Automatic Vehicle Locating (AVL) Playback:** A software program that uses historic AVL records from tracked vehicles to plot a path in a mapping environment showing the routes and speed that the vehicle traveled during a specific time.

**Recognition Time:** Time that an incident is recognized as a reportable emergency.

**Date Incident Report:** The date the call is received by the Public Service Answering Point or other designated entity.

**Time Incident Reported- Primary PSAP:** Time call is first received by the Primary Public Safety answering Point.

**Time Dispatch Notified- Secondary PSAP:** Time call is first received by the Secondary Public Safety answering Point.

**Call in dispatch queue:** The point in time where pre-dispatch questioning/EMD is completed, and the call is ready to be dispatched to a response unit.

**Date Unit Notified:** Date response unit is notified by EMS dispatch.

**Time Unit Notified:** Time response unit is notified by the EMS dispatch.

**Time Unit Responding:** Time that the response unit begins physical motion, i.e., wheels begin to turn.

**Time Arrival at scene/Staging:** Time EMS unit stops physical motion at scene or staging area, i.e., wheels stop turning.

**Time Unit Left Scene:** Time when the response unit begins physical motion from scene, i.e., when the wheels begin to turn.

**Time Arrival at Destination:** Time when patient arrives at destination or transfer point, i.e., wheels stop turning.

**Time of Receipt of Patient at receiving Facility:** Time when receiving facility or transfer agency accepts transfer and care of the patient.

**Time back in Service- Not Available:** Time response unit back in service and not available for response.

**Time back in Service- Available:** Time response unit back in service and available for response.

**Time Unit Canceled Enroute:** Time provider agency dispatch is notified that call is canceled.

**Time Unit Upgraded Code 3:** Time when provider agency dispatch is notified that response is upgraded to code 3 from Code 2.

**Time Unit Downgraded Code 2:** Time when provider agency dispatch is notified that response is downgraded to code 2 from Code 3.

**PSAP** (Public Safety Answering points): Answering location for 911 calls originating in a given area.

ICEMA Response Time Submissions Guideline (8/30/2013) File Format:

BUCode
ResponseDate
MapBook
Response_Area
ServiceType
Unit_Number
Run_Number
ResponseTimecode
OperatingArea
OnsetDateTime
RecognitionTime
PrimaryPSAP
DispNtfScnd
Time_Call_Received
Time_Assigned
Time_Enroute
Time_At_Scene
ArrivePatient
Time_Depart_Scene
Time_Arrived_Destination
RecFac
BackInService
Time_Call_Cleared
Time_Call_Canceled
Time_Upgrade
Time_Downgrade
Exemption_Reason
Exemption_Note
Longitude
Latitude