



# Prehospital Care Interfacility Transportation

**A Guide for Skilled Nursing, Medical Care Facilities, &  
Physicians**

**EMS Reference #808**

**Revised March 2016**



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## Use of Interfacility Ambulance Services

### ***Who should use interfacility ambulance services?***

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- Facilities requesting non-emergency patient transportation
- Skilled Nursing Facilities
- Physician Offices
- Clinics
- Custodial Care Centers (Facilities with a prescribing practitioner) including jails, rehabilitation centers, etc.
- Acute Care Hospitals
- Home/Hospice Care Facilities
- Board and Care Facilities
- Urgent Care Centers

### ***Why should our facility utilize interfacility ambulance services rather than calling 9-1-1?***

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The 911 System was designed to provide a universal access number for requesting emergency assistance. Calls to 911 are assumed to be of an emergent nature and are handled by the local law, fire, and emergency medical services responsible for the jurisdiction.

There is no provision for non-emergency medical calls to be managed through this system. ***The 911 System should be used for life/limb threatening calls only.*** The emergency response system does not provide adequate resources for interfacility transport and receives no financial support for the provision of such services.

When the 911 System is used for interfacility transportation, resources allocated for emergency response are effected thus decreasing the availability of life-saving resources and/or creating delays in response time for those who are in critical need of prehospital care services.

## System Use

### ***When should a facility call 911?***

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In many cases it is appropriate for a facility to call 911 rather than an interfacility ambulance service. **If an emergency exists, call 911.** Some examples include:

- **Onset of acute illness or injury such as a fall, acute development of altered levels of consciousness, acute onset of chest pain, shortness of breath, etc.**

### ***Why does the fire and police department come when a facility calls 911?***

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In the State of California, the Public Safety Agency for the jurisdiction holds the responsibility for 911 response. Counties often contract the emergency medical component to a private ambulance service, in cooperation with the fire service responsible for the jurisdiction. In some cases, such as in the City of Sunnyvale, police officers are also Emergency Medical Technicians and can begin lifesaving care prior to paramedic arrival.

### ***Why does a fire engine and firefighters arrive at a facility when they call 911?***

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The fire service also provides emergency medical care. In most Santa Clara County jurisdictions this includes firefighters who are also licensed paramedics. The fire department paramedics can begin life-saving treatment until the 911 emergency paramedic ambulance arrives. Also, it is not uncommon for a patient in critical condition to require many sets of hands to assist in the delivery of care.

### ***What happens if a facility makes an incorrect call and utilizes 911 for an interfacility transport?***

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The Emergency Medical Services System will ensure that the patient receives prompt and effective care when called to any facility. The EMS Agency is dedicated to providing resources and assistance to facilities to ensure the best care and to assist in the development of company procedures as necessary.

Your support and efforts to “Make the Right Call” will surely make a difference to the impact on our 911 system. However, we must also take a very proactive approach to resolution of this situation. Since December 1, 2002 facilities that routinely utilize 911 for interfacility transfers may be subject to the following:

- The contracted 911 emergency ambulance provider may bill the facility for the response rather than the patient.
- The EMS Duty Chief may respond to determine the reason for the use of the emergency medical services system. A written notice may also be issued at that time.
- Corrective action letters will be sent monthly to the administrative offices of facilities that inappropriately utilize the emergency medical services system.
- Data illustrating the total responses to a facility will be provided to the municipalities in the jurisdiction. The municipalities may elect to levy fees for inappropriate 911 system utilization similar to those used for false fire alarm responses.

## Transfer Requirements

### ***What is required to transfer a patient by interfacility ambulance services?***

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- A prescribing practitioner (physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner) must order the transfer of the patient (this may also be accomplished through written standing orders).
- The prescribing practitioner must determine the appropriate method of transportation in consultation with the ambulance service provider (BLS, ALS, and CCT-Nurse).
- The sending facility must coordinate the transfer with the receiving facility.
- The sending physician must coordinate with the receiving physician.

## Types of Services

### ***What types of interfacility ambulance services are available in Santa Clara County?***

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- **Basic Life Support (BLS)** ambulances are staffed with Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). EMTs provide basic care and patient monitoring including oxygen therapy, bandaging and splinting, etc.\*
- **Advanced Life Support (Paramedic)** ambulances are staffed with at least one Paramedic. Paramedics provide advanced life support care and monitoring including ACLS.\*
- **Critical Care Transport – Nurse (CCT-RN)** ambulance are staffed with at least one nurse. The nurse is able to perform those procedures and assessments authorized by a prescribing practitioner.\*
- **Neonatal Transport** ambulances are staffed with a least two EMTs from the transport service and a Neonatal Transport Team from either the sending or receiving medical facility. The Neonatal Transport Team is typically staffed with a least one Registered Nurse, one Respiratory Therapist and may include a Physician. The EMTs provide support to the Neonatal Transport Team.

\*Refer to the Prehospital Care Interfacility Transport Scope of Practice Table

### ***How do I choose an interfacility ambulance service?***

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The Santa Clara County Health and Welfare Code established general provisions for the enactment of policies and regulations necessary for the public health and safety regarding the dispatching and operation of ambulances. The Agency is responsible for the permitting of private ambulances.

Table 4 and Table 5 of this booklet provides a listing of the authorized ambulance service providers for Santa Clara County.

### ***Do interfacility transport EMTs and paramedics have the same scope of practice as 911 EMTs and paramedics?***

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Yes. Some interfacility services provide additional training to their personnel focusing on chronic illness, patient transportation considerations, etc.

## Hospital Diversion

### ***Are interfacility transports subject to hospital diversion?***

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Interfacility transports are not subject to diversion as the sending and receiving facilities and physicians have ensured that arrangements are made for the patient. **If these arrangements are not in place, the patient will be transported to the Emergency Department of the closest hospital and will be subject to hospital diversion.**

## Ambulance Service Agreements / Contracts

### ***When a facility contracts with a private ambulance provider, what should be included in the agreement?***

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The most important fact to understand is that this is a business agreement. It is to your benefit to dedicate ample resources to the development of your agreement or contract. The Agency does not regulate private contracting of interfacility ambulances and so the items below are simply suggestions of items that may be included.

- Cost of service. Is there a difference for urgent response vs. time calls? What will be billed (night charges, oxygen, mileage, etc.)
- Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA). What is the maximum amount of time it will take to service your facility? What if their ETA is too long...will they call for another closer service?
- What services are you contracting for? BLS, ALS (Paramedic), CCT-Nurse?
- Who is your contact person for problems?
- Will they provide training and in-services to your staff?
- How do they handle customer service issues?
- How well maintained is the service's equipment? Ask to look at several of the units that may be sent to your facility.
- Meet the EMTs, paramedics, nurses, and managers.
- What is the level of clinical care provided by the service with whom you plan to contract?
- How will billing be handled?
- Make sure they address Knox-Keene regulations related to anti-kickback laws.

### ***Who should a facility contact if they have a problem with the interfacility ambulance provider?***

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The first step is to contact the ambulance service directly. In most cases, the management of the service will be able to assist you and provide any information you may need. If you feel that your issue has not been addressed properly, please feel free to call the Emergency Medical Services Agency at 408-794-0600. If of an emergent nature, contact the EMS Duty Chief through County Communications.

It is also important to understand that the Agency has no jurisdiction related to the fee schedule, billing, contract points, etc. The Agency does have jurisdiction in the area of Policy and Procedure compliance, clinical care, and licensing/permitting issues.

## COBRA / OBRA / EMTALA

### ***What responsibility do ambulance personnel have in relation to COBRA/OBRA/EMTALA?***

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Prehospital care providers are bound by EMS Destination Policy for 911 responses and are not responsible for COBRA/OBRA/EMTALA regulations. Sending and receiving facilities may be liable when authorizing an interfacility transfer.

## Urgent Response

### ***Can a facility request an ambulance respond with lights and siren?***

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A facility may request an emergency response with lights and siren if a prescribing practitioner writes an order for the response. The prescribing practitioner holds liability related to such a request. Only 911 system units may respond to an incident with lights and siren without a prescribing practitioner's order. Very few interfacility transport responses indicate the need for emergency response – some examples include emergency cardiac catheterization, critical trauma transfers, critical medical patients, etc.

## Patients with DNR Orders

### ***What type of ambulance should a facility request for a patient with a valid DNR order and/or with Advance Directives?***

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In most cases, a basic life support ambulance is the most appropriate. In some cases, a CCT unit may be able to provide varied levels of supportive and pain management care.

### ***What happens if an inappropriate ambulance arrives at the facility for a transfer?***

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The facility may either: (1) if safe and appropriate, discontinue the intervention or therapy that is beyond the scope of practice of the providers or (2) request the dispatch of another appropriate ambulance, or (3) have the sending physician maintain care and accompany the patient to the hospital.



**Table 1: Scope of Practice  
Prehospital Care Interfacility Transport**

General Description	EMT	Paramedic	CCT Nurse
Oxygen Therapy	⌞	⌞	⌞
Medication Administration – IV		⌞	⌞
Medication Administration – via electronic pump. (Paramedics may monitor any medication given IV as identified in Santa Clara County Prehospital Protocols)		⌞	⌞
Endotracheal Intubation		⌞	⌞
Dual Lumen Airway Intubation		⌞	⌞
Oro/Nasopharyngeal Suctioning	⌞	⌞	⌞
Deep Tracheal Suctioning		⌞	⌞
ECG Monitoring		⌞	⌞
Defibrillation and Synchronized Cardioversion		⌞	⌞
Insertion of Oro/Nasopharyngeal Airways	⌞	⌞	⌞
Pulse Oximetry		⌞	⌞
Capnography/Capnometry		⌞	⌞
Monitor Chest Tubes		⌞	⌞
Indwelling Vascular Access Lines (not central lines)	⌞	⌞	⌞
Establish and Monitor IVs		⌞	⌞
Monitor Foley Catheters	⌞	⌞	⌞
Monitor Nasogastric Tubes	⌞	⌞	⌞
Indwelling Pain Management Pumps	⌞	⌞	⌞
Indwelling Insulin Pumps	⌞	⌞	⌞
Monitor IV Solutions of Normal Saline, Dextrose, and Lactated Ringers.	⌞	⌞	⌞
Monitor patient-regulated ventilators	⌞	⌞	⌞
Monitor patients on ventilators			⌞
Ventilation via Bag Valve Mask (BVM)	⌞	⌞	⌞
Administration of Oral Glucose	⌞	⌞	⌞
Administer Chronic Pain Management Medications			⌞
Patients on 5150 Holds	⌞	⌞	⌞
Honor DNR Orders / Advance Directives	⌞	⌞	⌞
Blood Sugar Monitoring		⌞	⌞
Central, PIC, and Arterial Lines			⌞
Saline/Heparin Locks	⌞	⌞	⌞
Skills and Procedures not Identified			⌞
CPAP		⌞	

**Table 2: Pharmacology Formulary  
Prehospital Care Interfacility Transport**

Pharmacology Formulary	EMT	Paramedic	CCT Nurse
Activated Charcoal		⌞	⌞
Adenosine		⌞	⌞
Albuterol		⌞	⌞
Aspirin		⌞	⌞
Atropine Sulfate		⌞	⌞
Calcium Chloride		⌞	⌞
Dextrose 50% in Water		⌞	⌞
Diazepam		⌞	
Diphenhydramine		⌞	⌞
Dopamine		⌞	⌞
Epinephrine 1:1,000		⌞	⌞
Epinephrine 1:10,000		⌞	⌞
Epinephrine Drips			⌞
Furosemide (IV or Drip)		⌞	⌞
Glucagon		⌞	⌞
Lidocaine			⌞
Lidocaine Drips		⌞	⌞
Midazolam		⌞	⌞
Morphine Sulfate (IV or Drip)		⌞	⌞
Narcan		⌞	⌞
Nitroglycerine (SL/Paste/TM only)		⌞	⌞
Ondansetron		⌞	
Oral Glucose	⌞	⌞	⌞
Oxygen	⌞	⌞	⌞
Sodium Bicarbonate		⌞	⌞

**Table 3: Fire Service EMS Representatives  
Prehospital Care Interfacility Transport**

Department	Prehospital Services
<p>CAL FIRE 15670 Monterey Road Morgan Hill, CA 95037 408-779-2121</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMT/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic Ambulance Contract with County Ambulance</li> </ul>
<p>City of Gilroy Fire Department 7070 Chestnut Gilroy, CA 95020 408-846-0370</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMT/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic Ambulance Contract with County Ambulance</li> </ul>
<p>City of Milpitas Fire Department 777 South Main Street Milpitas, CA 95035 925-946-1229</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMT/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic Ambulance Contract with County Ambulance</li> </ul>
<p>City of Morgan Hill Fire Department 18300 Old Monterey Road Morgan Hill, CA 95037 408-778-3259</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMT/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic Ambulance Contract with County Ambulance</li> </ul>
<p>City of Mountain View Fire Department 1000 Villa Street Mountain View, CA 94041 650-903-6804</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMT/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic Ambulance Contract with County Ambulance</li> </ul>
<p>NASA Ames Fire Department Bldg. 158-1 P.O. Box 1 Moffett Field, CA 94035-0001 650-604-6960</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMT/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic Ambulance Contract with County Ambulance</li> </ul>
<p>City of Palo Alto Fire Department 250 Hamilton Avenue Palo Alto, CA 94301 650-329-2220</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMT/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic Ambulance Service Provided by the City of Palo Alto.</li> </ul>
<p>City of San Jose Fire Department 255 South Montgomery Street San Jose, CA 95110 408-277-4084</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMT/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic Ambulance Contract with County Ambulance</li> </ul>

**Table 3: Fire Service EMS Representatives  
Prehospital Care Interfacility Transport (cont.)**

Department	Prehospital Services
<p>City of Santa Clara Fire Department 777 Benton Street Santa Clara, CA 95050 408-615-4954</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMT/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic Ambulance Contract with County Ambulance</li> </ul>
<p>Santa Clara County Fire Department 14700 Winchester Boulevard Los Gatos, CA 95032 408-378-4010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMT/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic Ambulance Contract with County Ambulance</li> </ul>
<p>City of Sunnyvale Dept. of Public Safety 700 All American Way Sunnyvale, CA 94086 408-730-7133</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMT/Firefighters</li> <li>• Paramedic Ambulance Contract with County Ambulance</li> </ul>

**Table 4: Aeromedical Ambulance Services  
Prehospital Care Interfacility Transport**

Department	Prehospital Services
<p>CALSTAR 590 Cohansey Avenue Gilroy, CA 95020 800-252-5050 <a href="http://www.calstar.org">www.calstar.org</a></p> <p>Base located in Gilroy</p>	<p>CALSTAR is a non-profit community service air ambulance with bases throughout Northern California. All aircraft are staffed with two flight nurses, each with at least five years of critical care experience, as well as specialized training in trauma, pediatrics, and obstetrics. In addition to its fleet of helicopters, CALSTAR operates a fixed-wing aircraft for longer distance transport.</p>
<p>Stanford Life Flight 300 Pasteur Stanford, CA 94305 800-321-STAT <a href="http://www.med.stanford.edu/shs/lifeflight/index.html">www.med.stanford.edu/shs/lifeflight/index.html</a></p> <p>Base located at Stanford University Hospital</p>	<p>Lifeflight operates custom-configured BK 117 that can fly under both visual and instrument flight rules with two nurses. This aircraft will accommodate 2 patients with this team or one patient and up to 4 caregivers, plus one pilot. Our range is approximately 150 miles for emergent calls, and up to 200-250 miles for other calls. Overall we complete between 500-600 flights per year.</p>

\*Only providers authorized and permitted to transport patients from Santa Clara County

**Table 5: Private Ground Ambulance Services  
Prehospital Care Interfacility Transport**

Department	Prehospital Services
Bayshore Ambulance Company PO Box 4622 Foster City, CA 94404 800-525-9788 <a href="http://www.bayshoreambulance.com">www.bayshoreambulance.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLS</li> <li>• CCT – RN</li> <li>• Neonatal</li> </ul>
Falck Northern California 2190 South McDowell Street, Suite A Petaluma, CA 94954 800-344-9955 <a href="http://www.verihealth.com">www.verihealth.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLS</li> <li>• ALS (Paramedic)</li> <li>• CCT - RN</li> </ul>
NORCAL Ambulance 6761 Sierra Court, Suite G Dublin, CA 94568 866-755-3400 <a href="http://www.norcalambulance.com">www.norcalambulance.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLS</li> <li>• CCT – RN</li> </ul>
Pro Transport-1 720 Portal Street Cotati, CA 94931 800-650-4003 <a href="http://www.protransport-1.com">www.protransport-1.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLS</li> <li>• ALS (Paramedic)</li> <li>• CCT – RN</li> <li>• Neonatal</li> </ul>
Royal Ambulance 14472 Wicks Boulevard San Leandro, CA 94577 888-510-3687 <a href="http://www.royalambulance.com">www.royalambulance.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLS</li> <li>• CCT – RN</li> </ul>
Rural/Metro Ambulance 550 Sycamore Dr. Milpitas, California 95035 408-708-9010 <a href="http://www.ruralmetrowest.com">www.ruralmetrowest.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLS</li> <li>• CCT – RN</li> </ul>
Silicon Valley Ambulance 181 Martinvale Lane San Jose, CA 95119 408-225-2262 <a href="http://www.sva-ems.com">www.sva-ems.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLS</li> <li>• ALS (Paramedic)</li> </ul>
United Ambulance 1181 Chess Drive Foster City, CA 94404 855-525-1277 <a href="http://www.unitedambulancesmc.com">www.unitedambulancesmc.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLS</li> </ul>

\*Only providers authorized and permitted to transport patients from Santa Clara County

**Santa Clara County Emergency Medical Services  
 Prehospital Care Interfacility Transportation  
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**Table 5: Private Ground Ambulance Services  
Prehospital Care Interfacility Transport (cont.)**

Department	Prehospital Services
Westmed Ambulance 14275 Wicks Boulevard San Leandro, CA 94577 888-331-1420 <a href="http://www.westmedambulance.com">www.westmedambulance.com</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLS</li> <li>• ALS (Paramedic)</li> <li>• CCT – RN</li> <li>• Neonatal</li> </ul>

\*Only providers authorized and permitted to transport patients from Santa Clara County

**Table 6: Interfacility Transfer Check-List (Sending)/  
Prehospital Care Interfacility Transport**

- Physician Order for transfer.
- Sending/Receiving Physician communication.
- Sending/Receiving Facility communication.
- Select appropriate level of ambulance in consultation with ambulance service provider.
- Provide a copy of the face sheet for the ambulance crew.
- Arrange for the transfer of the patient's belongings by family or other resources. It is not appropriate for ambulance crews to move patient belongings other than incidentals.
- Provide transfer orders and medical records.
- Provide a verbal report of the patient's condition to the ambulance crew.
- Provide a current set of vital signs to the crew (within 15 minutes) including pulse, blood pressure, respiration rate, level of consciousness, etc.
- Provide DNR status and appropriate orders.
- Disconnect all monitoring devices as appropriate
- Empty Foley catheters.
- Ensure IV lines are patent and adequate solution is provided.
- Confirm appropriate access for paramedic and CCT transfers.
- Discontinue feeding tubes, flush and secure as appropriate.
- IMMEDIATELY INFORM CREWS OF PATIENTS THAT REQUIRE COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PRECAUTIONS.**
- Help move the patient from the bed to the ambulance gurney.

*Consult your interfacility ambulance provider for a detailed checklist.*



## Notice

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***Our Service*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Responded to*** \_\_\_\_\_

***On*** \_\_\_\_\_

**The use of a non-911 emergency ambulance may have been more appropriate. Please review this booklet and feel free to contact the following representative of our service if you have any questions or concerns.**

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_