



## SURGEON TO SCENE REQUEST AND RESPONSE

**Effective:** June 1, 2019  
**Replaces:** October 31, 2011  
**Review:** June 1, 2022

### I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a formal mechanism for requesting trauma surgeon assistance, from the Base Hospital, in the prehospital environment by public safety departments and/or the EMS Agency.

### II. Considerations for Surgeon Response

- A. A request for surgeon assistance may be made where a life-saving procedure or surgical extrication (that is not within the scope of practice of a paramedic provider) is required due to the inability to extricate a patient from his/her environment (trench, vehicle, collapse, machinery, etc.).
- B. In accordance with Santa Clara County Prehospital Care Policy, paramedics shall first establish Base Hospital Contact for consultation *prior* to requesting a surgeon field response through the Incident Commander (IC).
- C. County authorized surgeon response includes the delivery of additional equipment or supplies that are not carried by prehospital care providers and may only be used by the surgeon (not paramedics).
  - 1. The surgeons may not provide medical direction that exceeds the established scope of practice in Santa Clara County.
  - 2. Prehospital personnel may assist a County authorized on-scene surgeon according to Santa Clara County EMS Policy 601.

### III. Considerations for Requesting Response

- A. Considerations for requesting a surgeon response include, but are not limited to:
  - 1. Critical care that may be beneficial for the patient exceeds the capabilities of on-scene paramedic personnel.
  - 2. Base Hospital consultation has occurred.
  - 3. The patient would be considered medically salvageable if the entrapment were mitigated.



4. In most cases, the minimum response time for surgeons will likely exceed forty-five (45) to sixty (60) minutes.
  - B. If the conditions above exist, then the paramedic may request the dispatch of surgeons to the scene through the IC. The IC shall determine if the request is appropriate for the scene conditions and then shall notify the EMS Duty Chief via County Communications.
  - C. The on-scene paramedic shall advise the Base Hospital that a request for a surgeon has been made by the IC. The Base Hospital shall then evaluate its ability to provide a surgeon and contact the EMS Duty Chief.
  - D. If a surgeon is available, the EMS Duty Chief will respond to Santa Clara Valley Medical Center (VMC), or other designated location, to transport the surgeon and anesthesiologist to the incident scene.
    1. Based on the location and/or nature of the incident, the EMS Duty Chief may facilitate air transportation in lieu of ground transportation.
    2. If the EMS Duty Chief is not able to respond to transport the surgeon to the incident, alternate emergency transportation will be arranged for the surgeon by the EMS Duty Chief.
  - E. The EMS Duty Chief will advise the Incident Commander of an Estimated Time of Arrival for the surgeon or that surgeon response is not available through respective public safety answering points (PSAPs).
  - F. If a surgeon field response is not available, the IC may discuss other potential medical/health resource options, if any, with the EMS Duty Chief.

#### IV. On-Scene Operations

- A. Surgeons operating in the field shall always have a safety escort while working on the scene of an emergency. This shall normally be provided by the EMS Duty Chief.
- B. The surgeons shall not be placed in any environment that is deemed hazardous and may elect not to provide services after evaluating the scene of the emergency. Personal protection and safety shall override any potential augmented medical services.
- C. The EMS Duty Chief shall serve as the guide to the surgeons while on scene. This shall include communications, integration with the Incident Command System (ICS), and safety. The Duty Chief shall serve as the liaison between prehospital care providers and the surgeons in relation to permissible prehospital care provider medical care activities.



- D. The surgeons shall report to the EMS Duty Chief while responding to, at the scene of, and returning from an emergency response in relation to operational practices of the EMS System.
- E. The EMS Duty Chief shall provide basic personal protective equipment (PPE) for the surgeons prior to entry into the scene. This will include jacket/pants, helmet, goggles, boots/safety shoes, and work gloves.
- F. If the surgeons provide care to a patient in the field, they shall accompany the patient to a hospital (per Santa Clara County EMS Policy 602), in the ambulance. If the patient is not transported, the actions of the surgeons must be documented in the prehospital provider's prehospital care report (PCR) prior to departure from the scene.

**V. Reporting and Quality Management**

- A. All field surgeon responses shall be medically reviewed by the EMS Medical Director and appropriate EMS quality management committee(s).