



TRAUMA PATIENT TRANSPORT AND HOSPITAL DESTINATION

Authority for this policy is noted in Division 2.5, California Health and Safety Code, Sections 1797.222, 1798.162, 1798.163 California Code of Regulations Section 100255

I. Purpose

- A. To establish guidelines for determining the transport mode and hospital destination for trauma patients in Santa Cruz County.

II. Definitions

- A. "PAM triage criteria" refers to Santa Cruz County's adaptation of the CDC's published method for determining the need for a trauma center using physiologic criteria, anatomic criteria, and mechanism of injury <http://www.cdc.gov/FieldTriage/>. "PAM" as opposed to "MAP" uses very similar criteria but reverses the order in terms of assessing the severity of the injuries. Physiologic criteria should be assessed before Mechanistic criteria. (See Policy 7070)
- B. "Pediatric patient" is < 15 years old.

III. Policy

- A. The trauma plan in Santa Cruz County is driven by the tenet that all patients constituting both major and minor trauma should be triaged to the most appropriate receiving hospital.
- B. All ALS and BLS field personnel will be trained in this policy (Policy 7050) and PAM triage protocol (Policy 7070)

IV. General Principles on Guiding Mode and Destination Decisions

- A. When not otherwise specified herein, paramedics will coordinate the appropriate transport mode with the Incident Commander. Base Station consultation may also be utilized to affect the best transport mode decision.
- B. Factors to consider include:
 - 1. Patient status



- a) In Extremis or unstable
 - b) Need for advanced field treatment
 - c) Need for immediate specialty care, such as pediatric, amputation, or burn
2. Distance
- a) Distance between the patient and the closest appropriate trauma center
 - b) The need to rendezvous at a distant LZ
3. Delays
- a) Status of the roadway along the transport route (traffic, obstructions)
 - b) ETA of the air ambulance
 - c) Prolonged extrication
 - d) Weather at the scene, LZ, and destination
4. Resources
- a) Extraordinary system wide demands for ambulances, such as an MCI
 - b) Need for more field treatment personnel on the scene
 - c) Hospital disaster, overload or diversion status
- C. Depending on traffic conditions, NMC is closer when south of HWY 1 and Freedom Blvd. VMC is closer when north of that intersection.
- D. When air transport is utilized, air crews will make the destination decision.

V. **Patients Meeting Physiologic and/or Anatomic Criteria (Policy 7070)**

- A. Patients who are found to meet physiologic and/or anatomic criteria may be directly flown, or driven out of County to a trauma center without base station approval or notification. Mode and destination decisions are dependent on the catchment area.
1. Dominican Catchment Area
 - a) Adult:
 - (1) Air transport should be considered according section IV B above:



- (2) Otherwise, ground transport to the time-closest trauma center will be necessary.
 - b) Pediatric:
 - (1) Air transport should be considered according section IV B above
 - (2) Otherwise, ground transport to the time-closest pediatric trauma center will be necessary
2. Watsonville Catchment Area
 - a) Adult:
 - (1) Air or ground transport should be considered according section IV B above
 - (a) In most cases ground transport to NMC from this area of the county will be faster than air transport.
 - b) Pediatric:
 - (1) Air transport to a pediatric trauma center
 - (2) Ground transport directly to NMC when air transport is unavailable.
 - (a) Contact NMC first. If declined then ground transport to closest pediatric trauma center, typically VMC.
3. North Monterey County (Auto-Aid)
 - a) Adult:
 - (1) Ground transport directly to NMC.
 - b) Pediatric
 - (1) Air transport to a pediatric trauma center
 - (a) If air unavailable contact NMC first. If declined then ground transport to closest pediatric trauma center, typically VMC.

VI. Patients Meeting Mechanism-Only Criterion



- A. Patients meeting Mechanism only criteria, with no Physiologic or Anatomic criteria or other special considerations will typically not be transported to trauma center, but rather to the local hospital. (see references supporting this conclusion)
- B. Except for North Monterey County, paramedics will make Base Station contact for destination directions on Mechanism only patients. For North Monterey County contact with NMC is required, if declined then follow Santa Cruz County protocols
- C. If the Base Station directs transport to a trauma center, a patient meeting any mechanism will be transported to the closest appropriate trauma center by ground only. The fact that only ground transport is authorized for this patient must be clearly communicated to the Base Physician.

VII. Patients Meeting No PAM Criteria

- A. Patients who meet no PAM criteria may be injured (lacerations, fractured extremity etc.) but are not considered trauma patients and should generally be transported, by ground, to a local Santa Cruz County hospital. Location of the call, patient preference and hospital status and ambulance availability should be used to guide the destination decision within the county.
- B. Special considerations (see policy 7070) may guide transportation to a trauma center or regional specialty center when no other trauma criteria are met. One example of such a patient may include those with digital amputations where the amputated part is intact and available for possible re-implantation. Base contact is recommended when such situations arise.

VIII. Patients In-extremis

- A. In extremis trauma patients are those patients in cardiac arrest, or with profound, life-threatening airway, breathing or circulatory compromise, despite pre-hospital basic and advanced life support interventions. These patients will always be transported to the closest Emergency Department.

IX. Additional Guidelines:

- A. Paramedics are encouraged to seek Base consultation when complex situations not otherwise specified in this policy arise regarding trauma transport destination or mode of transport.



- B. If a declared MCI is occurring elsewhere in the county, crews will not drive trauma patients out of county. When participating in a declared MCI, crews may drive patients no matter their PAM score, in accordance with the Transport Officer's directive.



Policy #7050: Trauma Patient Transport and Destination Matrix

Dominican Catchment Area (North of Hwy 1 and Freedom Blvd)

Physiologic	Anatomic	Mechanism	Special	Transport Destination/Mode
				Local Hospital By Ground
				Base Contact
				Base Contact
				Trauma Center: Air or Ground
				Trauma Center: Air or Ground

Watsonville Catchment Area (South of Hwy 1 and Freedom Blvd)

Physiologic	Anatomic	Mechanism	Special	Transport Destination/Mode
				Local Hospital By Ground
				Base Contact
				Base Contact
				Trauma Center: Air or Ground
				Trauma Center: Air or Ground

North Monterey County (Auto Aid)

Physiologic	Anatomic	Mechanism	Special	Transport Destination/Mode
				Local Hospital By Ground
				Trauma Center: Air or Ground
				Trauma Center: Air or Ground
				Trauma Center: Air or Ground
				Trauma Center: Air or Ground