



**SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH
EMERGENCY
MEDICAL SERVICES**

EMS POLICY	403
Effective:	April 2025
Approval: EMS Director Travis Kusman, MPH	Signed:
Approval: EMS Medical Director Greg Gilbert, MD	Signed:

PREHOSPITAL PERSONNEL SAFETY

I. PURPOSE

This policy defines the approved use of the portable radio emergency button by EMS personnel.

II. AUTHORITY

California Health and Safety Code Division 2.5, §1797.220 and 1798

III. POLICY

- A. If the Public Safety Communications (“PSC”) dispatcher suspects that the scene may be unsafe, the dispatcher will inform units that the scene is not secure, notify the local law enforcement agency, and request assistance.
- B. In situations that are obviously dangerous (e.g., shooting, stabbing, large disturbances, etc.), the dispatcher may instruct responding EMS personnel to stage at a safe location, ideally within a two (2)-minute drive, away from the incident until the scene is determined safe by law enforcement personnel.
- C. The term “scene secure” shall be used when law enforcement is on the scene and has declared that the scene is safe for EMS personnel to enter.
- D. If, at any time, EMS personnel encounter danger and need immediate assistance, they shall activate their portable radio’s orange emergency button:
 1. With the radio turned on, press the orange emergency button.
 2. The current zone/channel is displayed on the radio screen alternately with “EMERGENCY.” The LED lights red, and EMS personnel will hear a group of short, medium-pitched tones.
 3. When EMS personnel receive the dispatcher’s acknowledgment, they will see “ACK RECEIVED” on the radio screen; four tones will sound.
 4. If the selected channel does not support emergency, the display shows “NO EMERGENCY.” If this occurs, EMS personnel shall select a channel that shows “EMERGENCY” on the radio screen.
 5. If no acknowledgment is received (e.g., a system malfunction occurs or the radio is out of a coverage area), EMS personnel will see “NO ACKNOWLEDG” on the radio screen. The alarm ends and the radio exits emergency mode.

6. Attempts should be made to make voice contact with PSC as soon as possible to update them on the situation.
7. To deactivate the Emergency mode either press and hold the emergency button for about a second or turn the radio off, then back on.
8. If EMS personnel encounter danger and need immediate assistance and they are unable to activate their portable radio's orange emergency button, they shall hail PSC over the RED channel using the phrase "COVER NOW."