





**SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH
EMERGENCY
MEDICAL SERVICES**

EMS POLICY	503
Effective:	April 2025
Approval: EMS Director Travis Kusman, MPH	Signed: 
Approval: EMS Medical Director Greg Gilbert, MD	Signed: 

PHYSICIAN AT SCENE

I. PURPOSE

This policy provides direction for prehospital personnel when a bystander at the scene of injury or illness identifies themselves as a physician.

II. AUTHORITY

California Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Sections 1797.220 and 1798.6(a)

III. DEFINITIONS

Advanced Life Support (“ALS”): Special services designed to provide definitive prehospital emergency medical care, including, but not limited to, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, cardiac monitoring, cardiac defibrillation, advanced airway management, intravenous therapy, administration of specified drugs and other medicinal preparations, and other specified techniques and procedures administered by authorized personnel under the direct supervision of a base hospital as part of a local EMS system at the scene of an emergency, during transport to an acute care hospital and while in the emergency department of an acute care hospital until responsibility is assumed by the emergency or other medical staff of that hospital.

Basic Life Support (“BLS”): Emergency first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation procedures which, as a minimum, include recognizing respiratory and cardiac arrest and starting the proper application of cardiopulmonary resuscitation to maintain life without invasive techniques until the victim may be transported or until advanced life support is available.

Emergency Medical Technician (“EMT”): A certified prehospital care provider who operates within the BLS scope of practice.

Medical Emergency: A condition or situation in which an individual has a need for immediate medical attention, or where the potential for such need is perceived by prehospital personnel or a public safety agency.

Paramedic: A licensed prehospital care provider who operates within the ALS scope of practice.

Physician: A licensed Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (“DO”) or Doctor of Medicine (“MD”) licensed in the State of California.

IV. POLICY

- A. If a bystander at an emergency scene identifies her/himself as a physician and wishes to direct patient care, prehospital personnel shall show the card issued by the State of California entitled, "Note to Physician on Involvement with EMTs/ Paramedics" (attached).
- B. Prehospital personnel should provide endorsed alternatives for physician involvement, which include:
 - 1. "After identifying yourself by name as a physician licensed in the State of California, and, if requested, showing proof of identity, you may choose to do one of the following:
 - a. Offer your assistance with another pair of eyes, hands, or suggestions, but let the life support team remain under Base Hospital control.
 - b. Request to talk to the Base Hospital physician and directly offer your medical advice and/or assistance.
 - c. Take responsibility for the care given by the life support team and physically accompany the patient until the patient arrives at the hospital and responsibility is assumed by the receiving physician. In addition, you must sign for all instructions given in accordance with local policy and procedure. (Whenever possible, remain in contact with the Base Hospital physician.)"
- C. If the physician on scene desires option B(1)(a), the Base Hospital will retain medical control if Base Hospital contact was established.
- D. If the physician on scene desires option B(1)(b) or B(1)(c), prehospital personnel will:
 - 1. Ask to see the physician's valid California medical license, unless the prehospital provider knows the physician.
 - 2. Immediately contact the Base Hospital and speak to the Base Hospital Physician.
 - 3. Paramedics will make ALS equipment and supplies available to the physician and help within their scope of practice only.
 - 4. Ensure the physician accompanies the patient to the receiving hospital in the ambulance.
 - 5. Ensure the physician signs for all instructions and medical care given on the EMS patient care report.



STATE OF CALIFORNIA

California Medical Association

NOTE TO PHYSICIAN ON INVOLVEMENT WITH PARAMEDICS (PARAMEDIC)

A life support team (PARAMEDIC) operates under standard policies and procedures developed by the local EMS agency and approved by their Medical Director under the Authority of Division 2.5 of the California Health and Safety Code. The drugs they carry and procedures they can do are restricted by law and local policy.

If you want to assist, this can only be done through one of the alternatives listed on the back of this card. CMA, State EMS Authority, CCLHO, and BMQA have endorsed these alternatives.

Assistance rendered in the endorsed fashion, without compensation, is covered by the protection of the "Good Samaritan Code" (see Business and Professions Code, Sections 2144, 2395-2398 and Health and Safety Code, Section 1799.104).

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ENDORSED ALTERNATIVES FOR PHYSICIAN INVOLVEMENT

After identifying yourself by name as a physician licensed in the State of California, and, if requested, showing proof of identity, you may choose to do one of the following:

1. Offer your assistance with another pair of eyes, hands, or suggestions, but let the life support team remain under base hospital control; or,
2. Request to talk to the base station physician and directly offer your medical advice and assistance; or,
3. Take total responsibility for the care given by the life support team and physically accompany the patient until the patient arrives at a hospital and the receiving physician assumes responsibility. In addition, you must sign for all instructions given in accordance with local policy and procedures. (Whenever possible, remain in contact with the base station physician).