



**SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH
EMERGENCY
MEDICAL SERVICES**

EMS POLICY	504
Effective:	April 2025
Approval: EMS Director Travis Kusman, MPH	Signed:
Approval: EMS Medical Director Greg Gilbert, MD	Signed:

CANCELLING OR DOWNGRADING AN EMS RESPONSE

I. PURPOSE

This policy identifies the process by which an EMS response may be cancelled or downgraded by prehospital personnel.

II. AUTHORITY

California Health and Safety Code Division 2.5, §1797.220, 1798; California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 9 §100096.03

III. DEFINITIONS

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.

Patient: Any person for whom 9-1-1 services have been activated and that EMS personnel encounter (see Patient Contact) and who meets any of the following criteria:

1. Has a chief complaint or demonstrates illness or injury;
2. Is not oriented to person, place, time or event;
3. Requires or requests an assessment, field treatment, or transport; or
4. Is a minor who is not accompanied by a parent or legal guardian and appears to be ill or injured.

Patient Contact: Any time when EMS personnel encounter a patient and perform any of the following:

1. Offer medical assistance when medically indicated;
2. Perform a visual assessment of clinical acuity;
3. Perform a hands-on physical assessment, including vital signs;
4. Determine the mechanism of injury;
5. Obtain a history of present illness; or
6. Witness any medical care rendered by other parties.

IV. POLICY

A. Cancelling an EMS Response

1. An Incident Commander (“IC”) or San Mateo County accredited paramedic who is staffing a San Mateo County resource including, but not limited to an ALS engine, emergency ambulance, SMART car, or paramedic field supervisor vehicle may cancel an EMS response if:
 - a. The IC or paramedic determines that additional paramedic resources are not needed in accordance with EMS policy;
 - b. A patient, as defined, cannot be located, or
 - c. The patient is determined to be dead according to EMS policy.
2. On-duty law enforcement officers who arrive at scene prior to the arrival of a paramedic on an ALS engine, ambulance, or field supervisor vehicle may cancel an EMS response if:
 - a. A patient, as defined, cannot be located; or
 - b. The patient is determined to be dead according to determinant of death criteria.
3. All emergency response agencies shall adhere to any cancellation request made by the IC or Public Safety Communications.

B. Downgrading an EMS Response (Priority 1 to Priority 3)

An IC or San Mateo County accredited paramedic who is staffing a San Mateo County resource including, but not limited to an ALS engine, emergency ambulance, or paramedic field supervisor vehicle, may downgrade an EMS response, as appropriate, based upon an initial patient assessment.