



**SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH
EMERGENCY
MEDICAL SERVICES**

EMS POLICY	530
Effective:	July 2026
Approval: EMS Director Travis Kusman, MPH	Signed:
Approval: EMS Medical Director Greg Gilbert, MD	Signed:

EMS PHYSICIAN TO SCENE REQUEST – SURGICAL DISENTAGLEMENT

I. PURPOSE

This policy establishes a mechanism for requesting a qualified physician to the scene of a 9-1-1 incident where immediate surgical assistance is needed to disentangle a patient for transport to an appropriate hospital.

II. AUTHORITY

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

III. DEFINITIONS

Emergency Medical Services Agency (“LEMSA”) [or “Agency”]: The San Mateo County EMS Agency is designated as the Local Emergency Medical Services Agency (LEMSA) and is statutorily charged with primary responsibility for administration and medical control of emergency medical services in San Mateo County.

EMS Physician: The LEMSAs Medical Director or Assistant Medical Director.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

- A. A request for surgical assistance may be made when life-saving surgical disentanglement is required due to an inability to extricate a patient from their environment (e.g., machinery, vehicle, collapse, etc.).
- B. EMS Physician response includes the delivery of additional equipment and supplies that are not carried by prehospital providers and shall only be used by the EMS Physician.
- C. EMS Physician response time to the scene may be extended.

V. POLICY

- A. Surgical disentanglement should be an option of last resort. Paramedics at scene should consult with the Incident Commander (“IC”) prior to requesting EMS Physician response.
- B. If EMS Physician response is deemed necessary for surgical disentanglement, the IC shall request such through Public Safety Communications (“PSC”). PSC shall contact the EMS Agency Duty Officer who will coordinate the EMS Physician response.
- C. If an EMS Physician is available, the EMS Agency Duty Officer will transport the EMS Physician to the incident scene.

1. The EMS Agency Duty Officer will arrange alternate transportation for the EMS Physician if they are unable to transport them to the incident based on the location and/or other prevailing circumstances.
- D. The EMS Agency Duty Officer will advise the IC of the estimated time of arrival of the EMS Physician.
 - E. If an EMS Physician is not available, the EMS Agency Duty Officer may approve an alternate physician qualified in trauma, general or orthopedic surgery to perform the surgical disentanglement.
 - F. Prehospital personnel shall assist the EMS Physician at scene within their scope of practice. Pharmaceuticals including controlled substances required for procedural sedation and analgesia shall be provided by prehospital personnel and administered in accordance with direction from the physician performing the surgical disentanglement.

VI. AT SCENE SAFETY

- A. EMS Physicians working in the field should consult with a safety officer at the scene of the emergency to gain awareness of incident-based operational and safety considerations.
- B. Assuring personal protection and safety shall override the provision of any potential augmented medical services. The EMS Physician may elect not to provide services after evaluating the conditions at the scene of the emergency.
- C. The EMS Agency Duty Officer will support the EMS Physician while at scene. This will include communications, integration with the incident command structure, and safety needs.
- D. If the EMS Physician renders care to a patient at the incident scene, they may accompany the patient to the hospital in the ambulance. The EMS Physician will document the care they provided.

VII. REPORTING AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT

EMS Physician responses under this policy may be medically reviewed by a trauma surgeon affiliated with a LEMSA designated trauma receiving center.