

SUBJECT: **DOCUMENTATION OF PREHOSPITAL CARE**

PURPOSE: To identify the base hospital and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) provider procedures for documentation of prehospital care.

AUTHORITY: California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Sections 100128, 100129, 100170, 100171

DEFINITIONS

EMS Response: The physical response of an EMS provider due to activation of the EMS system with a request for medical evaluation.

Multiple Casualty Incident (MCI): The combination of numbers of ill/injured patients and the type of injuries going beyond the capability of an entity's normal first response.

Patient: A person who seeks or appears to require medical assessment and/or medical treatment.

Patient Contact: An EMS response that results in an actual patient or patients.

Public Assist: EMS is dispatched to a scene for assistance for nonmedical issues.

PRINCIPLES:

1. The EMS Record and the Base Hospital Form are:
 - a. Patient care records
 - b. Legal documents
 - c. Quality improvement instruments
 - d. Billing resources (EMS Record only)
 - e. Records of canceled calls, no patient found, public assist involving a person, and person contact/no patient (EMS Record only)
2. Any assessment or treatment provided to, and medical history obtained from, the patient shall be accurately and thoroughly documented on the EMS Record.
3. Any person who alters or modifies the medical record of any person, with fraudulent intent, or who, with fraudulent intent, creates any false medical record, is guilty of a misdemeanor (section 471.5 of the California Penal Code).
4. An EMS Record must be completed for every EMS response regardless of patient disposition.

POLICY:

- I. EMS Record Completion – Paramedic/EMT Personnel

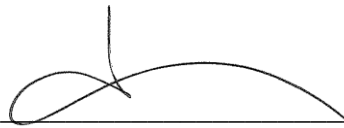
EFFECTIVE DATE: 06-25-74

REVISED: 04-01-24

SUPERSEDES: 04-01-21

PAGE 1 OF 6

APPROVED: 
Director, EMS Agency


Medical Director, EMS Agency

- A. EMS providers shall document prehospital care according to procedures identified in the LA-EMS National Emergency Medical Services Information System (NEMSIS) Data Dictionary.
- B. Electronic EMS Patient Care Record (ePCR) Completion
 - 1. Paramedic/EMT personnel shall complete one EMS Agency approved ePCR (one for each patient) for every EMS response which includes the following:
 - a. Patient contact made
 - b. Cancelled on scene
 - c. Cancelled prior to arrival at scene
 - d. No patient contact
 - e. No patient found
- C. Paper-Based EMS Report Form Completion
 - 1. Paramedic/EMT personnel may document on a paper-based EMS Report Form if ePCR system failure occurs.
 - 2. Private EMS providers shall utilize a paper-based EMS Report Form only for patients where base contact is made unless approved to electronically submit ePCR data.
- D. Multiple Providers
 - 1. In the event of an automatic or mutual aid incident when two first responding providers have each completed an EMS Record, or patient care is transferred from one ALS provider agency to another, each provider agency shall document the Original Sequence Number from the other provider's patient care record in the space designated for Original Sequence Number. If utilizing a paper EMS Report Form, document in the space designated for Second Sequence number. DO NOT cross out or line through the imprinted Sequence Number if utilizing a paper EMS Report Form.
 - 2. The provider agency transferring patient care must have a mechanism in place to provide immediate transfer of patient information to the transporting agency.
- E. Multiple Casualty Incidents (MCI)
 - 1. One standard EMS Record must be initiated for each patient transported in an MCI. Provider agencies may use alternate means of documenting MCIs if the EMS Agency is notified prior to implementation and agrees with the proposed process.
 - 2. Documentation should include the following, at minimum:
 - a. Name
 - b. Provider Impression
 - c. Chief Complaint
 - d. Mechanism of Injury, if applicable
 - e. Age and units of age

- f. Gender
- g. Brief patient assessment
- h. Brief description of treatment provided
- i. Transporting provider (provider code and unit number) and level of service (ALS, BLS or Helicopter)
- j. Destination
- k. Receiving facility

- 3. Non-transported patients should be documented on a standard EMS Record or a patient log.
- 4. Each provider agency should submit copies of all records and logs pertaining to an MCI to the EMS Agency within 10 business days of the incident. MCI documents should be hand carried or delivered to the EMS Agency in an envelope clearly marked with the incident date and location.

F. Completion of the EMS Record Prior to Distribution

- 1. EMTs and paramedics responsible for documenting prehospital care shall ensure that EMS Records are completed in their entirety prior to dissemination to the receiving facility. In most instances, this means that the record is completed at the scene or upon arrival at the receiving facility.
- 2. An exception to this is when a first responding agency utilizing paper-based EMS Report Forms is giving the receiving hospital (red) copy to a transporting agency. In the interest of expediting the transfer of care, it is recognized that information such as the unit times may not be documented on the receiving hospital (red) copy of the EMS Report Form.

G. Field Transfer of Care

- 1. When patient care has been transferred from the first responding ALS or BLS provider agency to a BLS provider agency for transport to a receiving facility, the provider agency receiving the patient should **NOT** generate an ePCR with a new Sequence Number (this will result in the same patient being entered into the ESO Repository with two different sequence numbers).
- 2. The provider agency that receives the BLS patient for transport to a receiving facility shall complete their agency's ePCR and document the Sequence Number generated by the first responding ALS or BLS provider agency's ePCR on their ePCR or paper-based EMS Report Form.
- 3. If utilizing a paper-based EMS Report Form, the receiving hospital (red) copy of the EMS Report Form, as well as the PCR from the BLS transport provider (red copy), must accompany the patient to the receiving facility where it becomes part of the patient's medical record.
- 4. It is the responsibility of the EMS Provider to ensure that a completed copy of the EMS Record is provided to the receiving facility upon transfer of care.

- H. Completion of Advanced Life Support Continuation Form
 - 1. If utilizing a paper-based EMS Report Form, required for each patient on whom advanced airway management is necessary.
 - 2. Paramedics completing this form must ensure that the demographic information (patient name, date, provider code/unit, incident #) and Sequence Number are legibly and accurately transcribed from the EMS Report Form.
- II. Base Hospital Form - MICN and/or Physicians
 - A. Base hospital personnel (MICNs and physicians) shall document prehospital care according to procedures identified in the Base Hospital Documentation Manual.
 - B. Base Hospital Form Completion
 - 1. MICNs and/or physicians shall complete one EMS Agency approved Base Hospital Form (one for each patient in which medical direction is given) for every base hospital paramedic radio/telephone contact.
 - 2. MICNs and/or physicians may document base hospital data electronically in lieu of the standard Base Hospital Form if the base hospital has received prior authorization from the EMS Agency.
 - C. Base Hospital Directed Multiple Casualty Incidents (MCI)
 - 1. EMS Agency-approved MCI Base Hospital Forms may be utilized for incidents involving three or more patients.
 - 2. Physicians and MICNs should limit requested information to **only** that which is essential to determine destination or medical management. Additional information and Sequence Numbers should be obtained after the MCI has cleared.
 - 3. The following should be documented for MCIs involving three or more patients, when base contact is made for online medical control:
 - a. Date
 - b. Time
 - c. Sequence number/Triage tag number
 - d. Provider and unit
 - e. Chief complaint
 - f. Mechanism of injury, if applicable
 - g. Age and units of age
 - h. Gender
 - i. Brief patient assessment, when possible
 - j. Brief description of treatment provided, when possible
 - k. Transporting provider, method of transport (ALS, BLS or Helicopter)
 - l. Destination
 - m. Receiving Facility

4. Upon request of the EMS Agency the base hospital should submit all records pertaining to an MCI to the EMS Agency within 10 business days.
5. Provider agencies may use alternate means of reporting MCIs. Base Hospitals will be notified by the EMS Agency when alternate reporting methods will be implemented by various provider agencies.
6. MCIs involving **ONLY** BLS patients: BLS patients who are transported to a receiving facility should be documented on one Base Hospital Form in the Comments Section (provided no medical direction is given).
7. MCIs involving ALS **and** BLS Patients:
 - a. One standard Base Hospital Form or one EMS Agency-approved MCI Base Hospital Form must be completed for each ALS patient.
 - b. BLS patients on whom no medical direction has been given do not require a Base Hospital Form. The number and disposition of the BLS patients may be documented on the Base Hospital Form of an ALS patient in the Comments Section.
8. Alternate methods of documenting MCIs may be initiated by base hospitals with the approval of the EMS Agency.

III. Modification of Patient Care Records

- A. Modifying the Patient Care Record (additions, deletions or changes) after the Patient Care Record has been completed or disseminated:
 1. An audit trail of changes made to an electronic record will be included on the ePCR.
 2. For paper-based EMS Report Forms, make corrections by drawing a single line through the incorrect item or narrative (the writing underneath the single line must remain readable).

Make the changes on the original, noting the date and time the changes were made, with the signature of the individual making the changes adjacent to the correction. Ideally, changes should be made by the individual who initially completed the form. Under no circumstances should changes to either patient assessment or patient treatment documentation be made by an individual who did not participate in the response.
- B. Making substantive changes (documentation of additional medications, defibrillation attempts, pertinent comments, complaints, etc.) to the EMS Record:
 1. For electronic documentation systems, patient care related corrections are to be made as per provider agency policy. The provider agency shall notify its receiving hospital(s) of the mechanism by which ePCRs are updated and when an ePCR is updated. If the receiving hospital receives a printed copy of the record, a printed copy of the revised record will be provided directly to them.

2. Photocopy the paper-based EMS Report Form with the changes and send the copy, along with a cover letter, to all entities that received the original form (EMS Agency, receiving facility). The cover letter should explain the modifications and request that the modified copy be attached to the original copy.
3. Do not re-write the incident on a new paper-based EMS Report Form because this would result in a mismatch in Sequence Number. If the form requiring corrections has been mutilated or soiled and cannot be photocopied, then a new form may be used to re-write the incident provided the Sequence Number of the new form has been replaced with the Sequence Number from the original form.

CROSS REFERENCES:

Prehospital Care Manual:

Ref. No. 519, **Management of Multiple Casualty Incidents**
Ref. No. 607, **Electronic Submission of Prehospital Data**
Ref. No. 608, **Retention and Disposition of Prehospital Patient Care Records**
Ref. No. 640, **LA-EMS NEMSIS Data Dictionary**
Ref. No. 644, **Base Hospital Documentation Manual**