



**Department of Public Health  
Emergency Medical Services Agency**

**John Volanti, M.P.H.**  
*Director of Public Health*

**James Andrews, M.D.**

260 E. 15th Street  
Merced, CA 95340  
(209) 381-1250  
(209) 381-1259 Fax  
[www.co.merced.ca.us/health/ems](http://www.co.merced.ca.us/health/ems)

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This policy supersedes any other existing policy on this subject.

Equal Opportunity Employer

- Subject: CONVALESCENT TRANSPORT PROVIDER STANDARDS**
- Authority:** California Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Section 1798, California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Section 51151 et. al., Merced County Code 9.44 et seq.
- Purpose:** The purpose of the Convalescent Transport Provider Standards Policy is to ensure that all providers of convalescent transportation services meet the personnel, equipment and operational standards adopted by the County to ensure the health and safety of the public served by such providers, and to ensure that such providers operate in a manner consistent with the medical control standards established in Merced County.
- Policy:** All providers of convalescent transportation services shall adhere to the standards delineated herein with regard to equipment, personnel and operations.

**1. Definitions:**

- A. *Agency* – means the Merced County EMS Agency.
- B. *Ambulance* – means any vehicle specifically constructed, modified, or equipped and used for the purpose of transporting sick, injured, convalescent, infirmed, or otherwise incapacitated persons and which meets any and all state, federal and/or local licensing requirements.
- C. *Litter Van* – means a vehicle which is modified, equipped and used for the purpose of providing non-emergency medical transportation for those patients with stable medical conditions not requiring the specialized staffing and equipment provided by an ambulance service.
- D. *Wheelchair Van* – means a vehicle which is modified, equipped and used for the purpose of providing non-emergency wheelchair medical transportation for those patients with stable medical conditions not requiring the specialized staffing and equipment provided by an ambulance service.
- E. *Acute Care Setting or Acute Care Facility* shall, for the purpose of this policy, mean a general acute care hospital as defined in the California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 5, Section 70005, or a similar facility possessing a license for either basic or standby emergency medical services. Urgent Care Centers shall be considered an acute care facility for the purpose of this policy.

APPROVED:

ON-FILE

John Volanti, MPH  
Director of Public Health

James Andrews, MD  
EMS Medical Director

- F. *Non-acute care setting* shall mean a physicians office, clinic, convalescent or extended care facility, patient's residence, or a free standing diagnostic or therapeutic facility.

## 2. General Provisions:

- A. All providers of convalescent transportation services shall complete a Convalescent Transportation Provider Application from the Agency and submit same along with any documentation required by said application.
- B. All providers of convalescent transportation services shall have the ability to respond to requests for service 24 hours a day, seven (7) days a week. This requirement may be satisfied by an on-call staff person with the ability to respond to requests for service within 30 minutes of the receipt of said request.
- C. All providers of convalescent transportation services shall provide and maintain at their own expense the following programs of insurance covering their operations. Such programs and evidence of insurance shall be satisfactory to County's Risk Manager. Certificates or other evidence of coverage shall be delivered to County's Emergency Medical Services Agency prior to commencing convalescent transportation services within Merced County.
- 1) Liability: General liability insurance written on a commercial general liability form covering bodily injury, personal injury and property damage with a combined single limit of not less than \$ \$3,000,000 per occurrence.
  - 2) Workers' Compensation: A program of Workers' Compensation insurance in an amount and form to meet all applicable requirements of the Labor Code of the State of California, covering all persons providing services on behalf of the Convalescent Provider.
  - 3) Automobile Liability: \$1,000,000 combined single limit per accident for bodily injury and property damage, or split limits of \$500,000 per person/\$1,000,000 per accident for bodily injury and \$250,000 per accident for property damage.

## 3. Vehicle Standards

All providers of convalescent transportation services shall ensure that vehicles utilized to perform convalescent transportation services meet all applicable statutes and regulations regarding the operation of such vehicles, including but not necessarily limited to:

- A. Vehicles safety items such as tire wear, lighting and warning devices, turn signals and emergency flashers, foot and emergency brakes and all general maintenance requirements so as to ensure a reasonable degree of operational reliability.
- B. Wheelchair or litter strapping, restraints, locking devices and or other mechanisms to ensure the security of the person being transported against injury from sudden movement of the vehicle.
- C. Heating and air conditioning systems adequate to ensure that the interior environment of the transport vehicle can be maintained within a range of 60<sup>0</sup> - 80<sup>0</sup> Fahrenheit.
- D. In the case of wheelchair vans, safe and operational lifts and/or ramps to ensure the safe movement of the person being transported between the ground and the vehicle.

- E. Vehicles licensed as wheelchair or litter vans may not display any advertising or labeling of the vehicle using terms such as “ambulance,” “emergency,” “urgent care” or other terms that might confuse the public regarding the type of service provided. Additionally, wheel chair and litter vans shall not be equipped with any emergency warning devices such as "Beacon Rays" or sirens, which are restricted to licensed emergency vehicles.
- F. Wheel chair and litter vans shall be equipped with a two-way communications device to ensure immediate communications capability. This requirement may be satisfied by either of the following:
  - 1) a radio transmitting and receiving unit capable of directly communicating with the dispatching operation for the convalescent service, or
  - 2) a cellular or digital wireless communications device.
- G. The Agency retains the right to inspect any convalescent transport vehicles licensed pursuant to Merced County Code 9.44 et seq. Such inspections shall be coordinated through and conducted by the California Highway Patrol and Agency staff.

#### 4. Personnel Requirements:

- A. Wheelchair Transportation Services
  - 1) All personnel employed to operate a wheelchair van shall be certified in Basic First Aid (American Red Cross or equivalent) and CPR (American Heart Association or equivalent).
  - 2) All personnel employed to operate a wheelchair van shall be licensed by the State of California, Department of Motor Vehicles with a current Class C license or higher.
- B. Litter Van Transportation Services
  - 1) All litter van transportation services shall be staffed by a minimum of two persons, certified as described below:
    - a) Personnel employed to operate a litter van shall be certified in Basic First Aid (American Red Cross or equivalent) and CPR (American Heart Association or equivalent).
    - b) Personnel employed to operate a litter van shall be licensed by the State of California, Department of Motor Vehicles with a current Class III license or higher.
    - c) Personnel employed to function as an attendant on the litter van shall be currently certified as an EMT-1 and in good standing with the Agency.
- C. All convalescent transport employees with direct patient contact are required to submit a Department of Justice background check prior to employment.

## 5. Operational Standards

- A. All convalescent transportation services shall ensure that they are in compliance with the following standards with regard to the types of transports that are authorized for either a wheel chair or litter van.
- 1) The transportation shall be pre-arranged, scheduled and non-emergency in nature. The transportation must originate from a non-acute care setting and terminate at a similar, non-acute care setting. The only circumstance in which a convalescent transport provider may engage in a transportation which delivers a patient at an acute care setting is for a pre-arranged, scheduled appointment for out-patient diagnostic services, and said transportation may not terminate at said acute care facility. Transportations that terminate at an acute care setting shall, by definition, require the services of an ambulance.
  - 2) The transportation may originate at an acute care setting in which the person to be transported has been discharged from the care of said facility and requires transport services to a non-acute care setting.
- B. Under no circumstances shall a wheel chair or litter van service provider transport a person with an acute medical condition or acute alteration of an existing medical condition that has not been diagnosed by a physician and which requires transportation to an emergency department or urgent care center.
- C. If at any time prior to the transport or during the transport of a person, personnel from the convalescent transport provider have any question regarding the appropriateness of transporting a person or the person's condition appears to be inconsistent with the pre-scheduled, non-emergency nature of transports authorized herein, they shall contact the Merced County EMS Dispatch Center via the 911 emergency phone number and request assistance.
- D. Transportations of persons for "rule out" diagnostic service at an acute care setting, wherein the person may be admitted to the acute care facility depending on the outcome of the diagnostic procedure, shall require ambulance transportation to the acute care facility. Return transports of said persons to a non-acute care setting may be performed by a convalescent transport provider.
- E. Convalescent transport providers shall be allowed to transport patient-delivered medication and devices so long as the patient remains in control of the delivery, e.g. oxygen, feeding tube devices, etc. Convalescent transport providers may not initiate the delivery of any medication, including oxygen, to any patient that does not have a prescription for same and their own such medication and device as described above.