




EMS SYSTEM ADVISORY #2022-01/01

TO: Riverside County EMS System

FROM: Trevor Douville, EMS Administrator 

SUBJECT: 2021/22 EMS Surge Escalation (Week 51)

DATE: January 1, 2022

The Riverside County EMS Agency (REMSA) continues to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the Riverside County EMS system and part of that monitoring includes time interval tracking, resource utilization, and patient safety. During **Week 51ⁱ**, there were a total of 3,115 emergency ambulance transports, which was expected based on current system trends. Conversely, there were 1,034 Ambulance Patient Offload Delays (APODs), totaling 592.0 hours. APODs this severe are actively delaying ambulances from responding to 9-1-1 patients, creating an unsafe level of delayed responses.

REMSA understands that hospitals are also seeing increased Emergency Department (ED) volume and are activating their surge plans. Unfortunately, current efforts to mitigate APODs have not been effective enough to ensure ambulance availability for the 9-1-1 system. With patient safety at the forefront of this direction, REMSA is activating, **APOD Unusual Event Proceduresⁱⁱ** within Policy 4109, effective immediately.

1. It is expected that ambulance patients are promptly received by hospital ED and that the transfer of patient care occurs within thirty (30) minutes of arrival.
2. If the ED is unwilling or unable to accept turnover of care within sixty (60) minutes of arrival at the hospital, the EMS crew is permitted to, and should, utilize the APOD Unusual Event Procedures.
3. If the turnover of care delay exceeds ninety (90) minutes from arrival at the hospital, the hospital ED will be placed on **Ambulance Redirectionⁱⁱⁱ**.
 - a. Additionally, notifications to the California Department of Public Health Licensing and Certification Program may be made when a hospital is non-compliant with the thirty (30) minute standard and/or repeatedly causes delays of greater than ninety (90) minutes.

To support this direction and to bring additional temporary resources into the County:

- Out-of-County ambulances may be permitted provisional certification to operate within Riverside County, effective immediately.
- Additional ED staffing (EMTs & Paramedics) has been requested to assist with the management of APODs, effective ETA is 2 weeks.
- **Policy #3308^{iv}** (ALS to BLS Downgrade) has been modified and the requirement for the EMD determinant code to be either ALPHA or /OMEGA has been temporarily suspended, effective immediately.
- AMR has requested, and continues to receive, additional paramedics to supplement their staffing.

APOD and resource utilization data will be re-evaluated regularly to determine the continued need for these escalated mitigation efforts.

ⁱ Special Seasonal Report Week 51: <http://remsa.us/documents/reports/APOT/2021APOTSPECIALweek51.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Policy 4109 <http://www.remsa.us/policy/4109.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Policy 6109 <http://www.remsa.us/policy/6104.pdf>

^{iv} Policy 3308 <http://www.remsa.us/policy/3308.pdf>

