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| TITLE OPERATIONS MANUAL | STANDARD INSTRUCTION 09 | | DEPARTMENT FIRE-RESCUE |
| SUBJECT: SPECIAL TRANSPORT CONSIDERATIONS | SECTION 26 | PAGE 1 of 2 | EFFECTIVE DATE March 14, 2024 |

I. PURPOSE

To provide direction to personnel regarding people requesting rides to the hospital with a friend and/or family member and transport of service animals.

II. SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all sworn San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) and Emergency Ambulance Provider personnel, excluding Lifeguard personnel.

III. AUTHORITY

The Fire Chief authorizes the information within this policy.

IV. POLICY

A. Family and/or Friends Requesting to Ride with the Patient in an Ambulance to the Hospital

1. The ambulance crew will decide if family members and/or friends may ride in the ambulance during transport.
2. Appropriate reasons for denying family and/or companion the ride during transport include but are not limited to poor hygiene, flu-like symptoms, nausea/vomiting, altered mental status, intoxication, or if the crew feels threatened.
3. The number of friends and/or family that may ride during the transport to the hospital is limited to available seat belts and ambulance crew discretion.

B. Transport of [Service Animals](#)

Refer to City of San Diego [Administrative Regulation 96.20](#) Individuals with Disabilities.

1. Inquiries about a [service animal](#) or [service animal in training](#):
 - i. Personnel will not inquire regarding the nature or extent of a person's disability or request or require documentation about the animal, such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed.
 - ii. Personnel will not ask the handler to have the service animal demonstrate the work or task.
2. In cases where it is unclear what service an animal is providing, personnel may ask:
 - i. Is the animal required due to a disability?
 - ii. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?
3. There are multiple scenarios for service animal care when the patient/handler is being transported by ambulance.
4. The Company Officer should take into consideration the status of the patient (unconscious, acute status, etc.) when deciding a course of action.

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- i. The service animal may be transported in the ambulance with the crew if the animal is safe, under control, does not interfere with patient care, or affect crew safety.
- ii. The Company Officer may decide to secure the service animal at the residence or another location (neighbor, family, etc.) if acceptable to the patient/handler.
- iii. The Company Officer may contact the Emergency Ambulance Provider supervisor to assist with transport of the service animal to the hospital if the animal is safe and under control.
- iv. The Company Officer may contact animal control/humane society via Emergency Command and Data Center (ECDC) if the service animal is unsafe, out of control, or a threat to either the crew or public.
 - a) Request “San Diego Humane Society for emergency boarding”
 - b) Anticipate a 30-minute ETA within San Diego City limits
5. Comfort care and emotional support animals for veterans may be transported with prior base hospital consultation.

C. Transport of Non-Service Animals

1. Patients requesting transport of a non-service animal will be refused if not permitted by the receiving hospital.
 - i. On a case-by-case basis, the non-service animal must be cleared through the base hospital for acceptance by the receiving hospital.
 - ii. The patient being transported must be able to care for the non-service animal, including taking the non-service animal outside as needed.
 - iii. The non-service animal must be clean, free of infestation, and not pose a threat to crews or hospital personnel or impede patient care.
 - iv. All crew members (SDFD and Emergency Ambulance Provider) must agree to the transport.

V. **DEFINITIONS**

- A. Service Animal: Any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with a Disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental Disability. The work or tasks performed by a Service Animal must be directly related to its handler’s Disability. The crime deterrent effect of an animal’s presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purpose of this definition. Service animals are not pets. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purpose of this definition, except miniature horses. [RETURN](#)
- B. Service Animal in Training: Any dog or miniature horse being trained to be a service animal shall be treated as a service animal. [RETURN](#)