

TITLE O P E R A T I O N S M A N U A L	STANDARD INSTRUCTION 09		DEPARTMENT F I R E - R E S C U E
SUBJECT: EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES BLS DOWNGRADE POLICY	SECTION 05	PAGE 1 of 2	EFFECTIVE DATE 27 November 2021

I. PURPOSE

To provide first responders and ambulances the process for downgrading an advanced life support (ALS) call to a basic life support (BLS).

II. SCOPE

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

III. AUTHORITY

The fire chief authorizes the information within this policy.

IV. POLICY

- A. Following a complete ALS assessment, if the determination has been made that the patient does not or will not require ALS intervention, the company officer or the ALS ambulance crew will contact Emergency Command and Data Center (ECDC) on the assigned command channel and request the estimated time of arrival (ETA) of a BLS ambulance and the current system status.
- B. If the ETA is greater than 15 minutes, the ALS ambulance will continue with response and transport. If appropriate, the company officer will request that the ALS ambulance ‘reduce code’.
- C. If the ETA of the BLS ambulance is less than 15 minutes, a “no code” BLS ambulance may be dispatched.
- D. A paramedic shall make base hospital contact and give an appropriate radio report, including a request for a BLS downgrade.
- E. If BLS downgrade request is approved by the base hospital and the BLS ETA is less than 15 minutes:
 1. An ALS first responder or ALS ambulance will remain at scene until the BLS ambulance has arrived.
 2. The on-scene company officer will determine the appropriate resource to stay on scene until the BLS ambulance arrives taking into consideration the following but not limited to:
 - a. Current availability and overall volume of first responder calls
 - b. Fire weather and activity
 - c. Other system impacts for either first responders or the ambulance system
- F. Upon arrival of the BLS ambulance, the paramedic will give a complete turnover to the BLS crew, including the transfer of the ePCR that was initiated by the ALS provider.
 1. Units shall utilize agency code 506 in the ePCR for both ALS and BLS units
 2. The BLS unit will complete the transferred ePCR

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- G. Once the patient is loaded into the BLS unit, the ALS first responder or ALS ambulance unit may go available.