

BULLETIN

NO.: 22-014

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TO: All Personnel

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SUBJECT: Transportation of Patients on Fire Apparatus

The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department is arguably facing the most challenging time in its history. Not the least of the obstacles is the difficulty with our emergency medical services transportation system. Hospital delays, increased calls for service and staffing shortages are only a few causes.

Although rare, there have been instances where company officers have decided to transport a patient on a fire apparatus. Certainly, transporting a patient on a fire apparatus is not ideal; however, the Department understands the current environment and critical incidents often requiring rapid action.

Transporting a patient on a fire apparatus should be an extraordinary event. The company officer and paramedic of record, if they are different, should agree that transporting on a fire apparatus is the best option to prevent a negative outcome for patients receiving advanced life support treatments. If differing opinions exist, contact the base hospital for directions and follow current treatment protocols.

The safest method of transportation is seated and seat belted; however, this is understandably not always possible. Transporting a patient on a fire apparatus in an emergent situation in a horizontal position is permissible but should be done with care. The crew will do their best to secure the patient to provide safety to the patient and fire personnel. An example may be to secure a patient on to backboard to assist with loading, off-loading, and increased handholds while the vehicle is in motion. All transports should follow County Protocol S-415 Base Hospital Contact and DMS notification.

We are in the midst of challenging and difficult times, yet, all personnel have demonstrated an incredible resilience and adaptability to continue to serve our community in the best way.