



TITLE

PROVINCIAL BARIATRIC RESPONSE FOR GROUND AND AIR AMBULANCE

SCOPE

Provincial: Emergency Medical Services

DOCUMENT #

PS-EMS-06-01

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Executive Director, Clinical Compliance, Training & Standards, Emergency Medical Services

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Provincial Air Ambulance Operations & Inter Facility Patient Transfer Strategy

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Not applicable

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Provincial Bariatric Response for Ground and Air Ambulance Policy (#PS-EMS-06)

SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE

September 15, 2018

NOTE: The first appearance of terms in bold in the body of this document (except titles) are defined terms – please refer to the Definitions section.

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OBJECTIVES

- To provide Alberta Health Services (AHS) **Emergency Medical Services (EMS) staff**, EMS Operations Supervisors/Managers, **EMS Dispatch, Communications and Deployment Centres** with direction regarding the deployment and dispatch of **bariatric resources** and minimum levels of **supporting providers** for **emergency response** and inter-facility transfer of **bariatric patients**.

APPLICABILITY

Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).

ELEMENTS

1. Emergency Scene Calls

- 1.1 First **Emergency Response Vehicle** presented with a bariatric patient shall;
 - a) Determine level of **bariatric patient (Level 1 or Level 2** see definition) early in standard ongoing assessment and approach.
 - b) Consider utilizing bariatric resources and supporting providers for bariatric patients in consideration of the environment and urgency of medical presentation.

- c) Notify Supervisor or Team Lead of event.
 - d) Contact EMS Dispatch, Communications and Deployment Centres; identify level of bariatric patient, identify if bariatric resources and supporting providers are being requested, and ask for an Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA).
 - e) Determine if patient condition allows waiting for bariatric resources and notify EMS Dispatch, Communications and Deployment Centres if bariatric resource request is still required.
 - f) Requests for additional medical back up should be clearly stated and are outside the scope of this procedure.
 - g) If bariatric resources are requested, continue with the provision of treatment in accordance with Provincial Medical Control Protocols (MCPs) until the arrival of bariatric resources.
 - h) Patient care remains the responsibility of the requesting Emergency Response Vehicle for the duration of the event or until **Clinical Handover** occurs at a receiving facility or consolidation occurs with an appropriate level of care specific to the patient.
- 1.2 For bariatric patients, EMS Dispatch, Communications and Deployment Centres shall;
- a) If requested, identify most appropriate bariatric resources and Emergency Response Vehicle as outlined by EMS Operations Zone **Local Service Standards (LSS)** and by information provided on bariatric patient subset by requesting Emergency Response Vehicle.
 - b) Provide ETA to requesting Emergency Response Vehicle.

- c) If required, utilize the following guideline for bariatric resources and minimum supporting providers.

<p>Level 1 Bariatric Patient –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Ferno</u> standard or power assisted stretcher with expandable deck or • <u>Stryker</u> bariatric stretcher or • Specialized Bariatric Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Ferno</u> - Minimum 4 supporting providers • <u>Stryker</u> - Minimum 6 supporting providers
<p>Level 2 Bariatric Patient –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized Bariatric Unit or • Stryker bariatric stretcher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 6 supporting providers

- d) If required, use the following priority sequence for Level 1 Bariatric Patients:
- (i) Bariatric resource delivered to requesting Emergency Response Vehicle by most appropriate designated Emergency Response Vehicle or Supervisor. (Request that EMS staff delivering bariatric resources switch stretchers with requesting Emergency Response Vehicle, if compatible, to remain deployable.)
 - (ii) Air Ambulance bariatric response with coordinated ground support (as per priority sequence) in consultation with Air Ambulance Manager on Call and the Provincial Air Ambulance Bariatric Transport Request Flowchart and Dispatch Questions.
 - (iii) **Specialized Bariatric Unit** (Responding service delivers/operates Specialized Bariatric Unit, patient care maintained by requesting service).
- e) If required, use the following priority sequence for Level 2 Bariatric Patients:
- (i) Specialized Bariatric Unit (Responding service delivers/operates Specialized Bariatric Unit, patient care maintained by requesting service).
 - (ii) Bariatric resource delivered to requesting Emergency Response Vehicle by most appropriate designated Emergency Response Vehicle or Supervisor. (Request that EMS staff delivering bariatric resources switch stretchers with requesting Emergency Response Vehicle, if compatible, to remain deployable.)

- (iii) Air Ambulance bariatric response with coordinated ground support (as per priority sequence) in consultation with Air Ambulance Manager on Call and the Provincial Air Ambulance Bariatric Transport Request Flowchart and Dispatch Questions.

2. Inter-Facility Transfers (IFT)

2.1 EMS Dispatch, Communications and Deployment Centres shall;

- a) On determination that inter-facility patients weigh greater than 150 kg (330 lbs.), ask further questions to requesting facilities regarding patient abdominal width. Determine if patient is a Level 1 Bariatric Patient or Level 2 Bariatric Patient. If a patient has abdominal width greater than 68.58 cm (27 inches) but weighs less than 150 kg (330 lbs.), deployment of bariatric resources shall also be considered. Minimum supporting providers shall be determined as per the following chart.

<p>Level 1 Bariatric Patient –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Ferno</u> standard or power assisted stretcher with expandable deck or • <u>Stryker</u> bariatric stretcher or • Specialized Bariatric Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Ferno</u> - Minimum 4 supporting providers • <u>Stryker</u> - Minimum 6 supporting providers
<p>Level 2 Bariatric Patient –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized Bariatric Unit or • Stryker bariatric stretcher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 6 supporting providers

- b) Dispatch bariatric resources for **Known IFT Level 1 Bariatric Patients** under the following priority sequence:
 - (i) EMS or IFT resource sent to designated station/location housing bariatric resources preceding response.
 - (ii) Air Ambulance bariatric response with coordinated ground support (as per priority sequence) in consultation with Air Ambulance Manager on Call and the Provincial Air Ambulance Bariatric Transport Request Flowchart and Dispatch Questions.
 - (iii) Specialized Bariatric Unit (Responding service delivers/operates Specialized Bariatric Unit, patient care maintained by requesting service).

- c) Dispatch bariatric resources for Known IFT Level 2 Bariatric Patients under the following priority sequence:
- (i) Specialized Bariatric Unit (Responding service delivers / operates Specialized Bariatric Unit, patient care maintained by requesting service).
 - (ii) EMS or IFT resource sent to designated station/location housing bariatric resources preceding response.
 - (iii) Air Ambulance bariatric response with coordinated ground support (as per priority sequence) in consultation with Air Ambulance Manager on Call and the Provincial Air Ambulance Bariatric Transport Request Flowchart and Dispatch Questions.
- d) Dispatch bariatric resources for **Unknown IFT Level 1 Bariatric Patients** under the following priority sequence:
- (i) Bariatric resource delivered to requesting Emergency Response Vehicle by most appropriate designated Emergency Response Vehicle or Supervisor. (Request that EMS Staff delivering bariatric resources switch stretchers with requesting Emergency Response Vehicle, if compatible, to remain deployable.)
 - (ii) Air Ambulance bariatric response with coordinated ground support (as per priority sequence) in consultation with Air Ambulance Manager on Call and the Provincial Air Ambulance Bariatric Transport Request Flowchart and Dispatch Questions.
 - (iii) Specialized Bariatric Unit (Responding service delivers/operates specialized bariatric unit, patient care maintained by requesting service).
- e) Dispatch bariatric resources for Unknown IFT Level 2 Bariatric Patients under the following priority sequence:
- (i) Specialized Bariatric Unit (Responding service delivers/operates Specialized Bariatric Unit, patient care maintained by requesting service).
 - (ii) Bariatric resource delivered to requesting Emergency Response Vehicle by most appropriate designated Emergency Response Vehicle or Supervisor. (Request that EMS Staff delivering bariatric resources switch stretchers with requesting Emergency Response Vehicle, if compatible, to remain deployable.)
 - (iii) Air Ambulance bariatric response with coordinated ground support (as per priority sequence) in consultation with Air Ambulance Manager on Call and the Provincial Air Ambulance Bariatric Transport Request Flowchart and Dispatch Questions.

- f) Notify the appropriate Operations Supervisor/Team Lead regarding any event requiring additional bariatric resources.
- g) Develop a plan, in collaboration with the applicable Operations Supervisor or Team Lead, to return bariatric resources back to their point of origin post bariatric events.

3. EMS resources assigned to emergency or inter-facility transfer bariatric events shall:

- 3.1 Wherever possible, ensure the attendant is seated in the airway chair or seat with the most space between stretcher and seat for transport of bariatric patients and not hindering patient care.
- 3.2 As requested by EMS Dispatch, Communications and Deployment Centres, return bariatric resources to their point of origin or designated area and notify the EMS Dispatch, Communications and Deployment Centres when the bariatric resource has been removed from the unit.
- 3.3 In events where the bariatric resource deployed is a Specialized Bariatric Unit (presently Edmonton and Calgary), patient care is maintained by the requesting service. Operation of the Specialized Bariatric Unit is to be maintained only by those EMS Staff trained in its use and in accordance with their LSS.

4. Use of Bariatric Resources for Non-Bariatric events

- 4.1 Legislation requires a licensed ambulance to have minimum aisle way clearances around the stretcher. Whenever a unit does not meet the aisle way standards, it can only be tasked to non-bariatric emergency calls as a first responder. Therefore, EMS may respond units that are equipped with permanent bariatric stretchers or bariatric decks to emergency events for initial care and treatment only of non bariatric patients. A second resource for transport of the non bariatric patient must be dispatched as the initial responding unit cannot transport as long as those bariatric stretchers or bariatric decks remain in place.
- 4.2 Bariatric patients may be transported with bariatric resources in an emergency situation.
- 4.3 AHS/EMS has been given an exemption specific to transporting non bariatric IFT patients on units equipped with permanent bariatric stretchers or bariatric decks. If a unit responds on a **long distance bariatric IFT**, that unit may be used to do a return IFT of a non-bariatric patient. Once the return IFT has been completed and the unit is back at its start station, it remains out of service for all non-bariatric transport events until the standard cot has been re-installed.

5. EMS Operations Supervisors/Team Leads

- 5.1 Shall monitor all bariatric events and respond to assist EMS resources as appropriate or as requested.

6. EMS Zone Operations

- 6.1 Shall provide EMS Dispatch, Communications and Deployment Centres with LSS specific to bariatric response that are in alignment with the Provincial Bariatric Response for Ground and Air Ambulance Policy and Procedure. LSS should include a plan clearly outlining pre-determined locations for housing of bariatric resources.

7. Air Ambulance

- 7.1 EMS Dispatch, Communications and Deployment Centres shall utilize the Provincial Air Ambulance Bariatric Transport Request Flowchart and Dispatch Questions to consider requests for bariatric patient flights.
- 7.2 Ground support bariatric resources and supporting providers shall be determined by sections 1.2 and 2.1 of this procedure.
- 7.3 Variances exist in fire support for Alberta airports. External Fire Resources shall not respond to airports unless mutually agreed upon by both the Air Medical Crew (AMC), supporting ground crew, and then only by approval through Central Communications Centre (CCC).

8. Business Standards and Operations Support

- 8.1 Shall maintain an up to date inventory of bariatric transport capable ambulances and provide that information to EMS Dispatch, Communications and Deployment Centres on a regular basis.

DEFINITIONS

Bariatric Patient means any patient that weighs in excess of 150 kg (330 lbs.) and is also broken down into two subsets.

1. **Level 1 Bariatric Patient** means patients weighing (actual or estimate) between 150 kg (330 lbs.) and 225 kg (500 lbs.) and or having an abdominal width greater than 68.58 cm (27 inches).
2. **Level 2 Bariatric Patient** means patients weighing (actual or estimate) greater than 225 kg. (500 lbs.)

Bariatric Resources means all equipment designed or intended to transport bariatric patients. This includes, but is not limited to dedicated units, stretchers, tarps or sheets, and decks.

Clinical Handover means the transfer of professional responsibility and accountability for some or all aspects of care for a patient, or group of patients, to another person or professional group on a temporary or permanent basis. Clinical Handover requires a minimum amount of

information to be contained and transferred in an individual patient handover (as outlined in Clinical Handover Accreditation Canada Required Operational Practice).

Emergency response Vehicle means an EMS Vehicle including, but not limited to, Ambulances, and paramedic response units that are equipped with Emergency Warning Devices and used or intended to be used for providing emergency medical services.

EMS Dispatch, Communications and Deployment Centres means under the mandate of the Emergency Health Services Act, responsible to receive community requests from EMS and inter facility transport requests from health care sites along with the deployment and dispatching of all ground and fixed wing EMS resources in Alberta through three AHS dispatch centres and three contracted satellite dispatch centres.

EMS staff means all AHS EMS contracted and direct delivery providers, including casual, part-time employees as well as volunteers of EMS.

Known IFT Bariatric Patient means a patient that has been identified through the IFT requesting process and can be planned for in advance.

Local Service Standards (LSS) (Practice Support Document) means a document that is used to implement details of how work will be done at a service level. A LSS can be used for one service or for multiple services that share the same need. The services that are to adhere to the LSS will be identified in the Applicability Section.

Long distance bariatric IFT means any IFT where the transporting unit is travelling outside of the community where it is normally located.

Specialized Bariatric Unit means a dedicated EMS Resource that has specialized bariatric equipment, including, but not limited to, stretchers, tarps, sheets, ramps, winches, and hydraulic lift systems.

Supporting providers means all EMS staff as well as external support such as Fire Department personnel and other healthcare providers. Air Ambulance pilots are not considered as supporting providers.

Unknown IFT Bariatric Patient means a patient that has not been identified through the IFT requesting process and is similar to an emergency scene call in which bariatric resource support must now be retroactively coordinated.

REFERENCES

- Appendix A: *Bariatric Patient and Resources Allocation Procedure Tool*
- Alberta Health Services Governance Documents:
 - *Provincial Bariatric Response for Ground and Air Ambulance Policy* (#PS-EMS-06)
- Alberta Health Services Resources:
 - Provincial Air Ambulance Bariatric Transport Request Flowchart and Dispatch Questions.
 - Provincial Medical Control Protocols - Standard Ongoing Assessment and Approach
- Non-Alberta Health Services Documents:
 - *Ambulance Vehicle Standards Code* January 2010 (Alberta)

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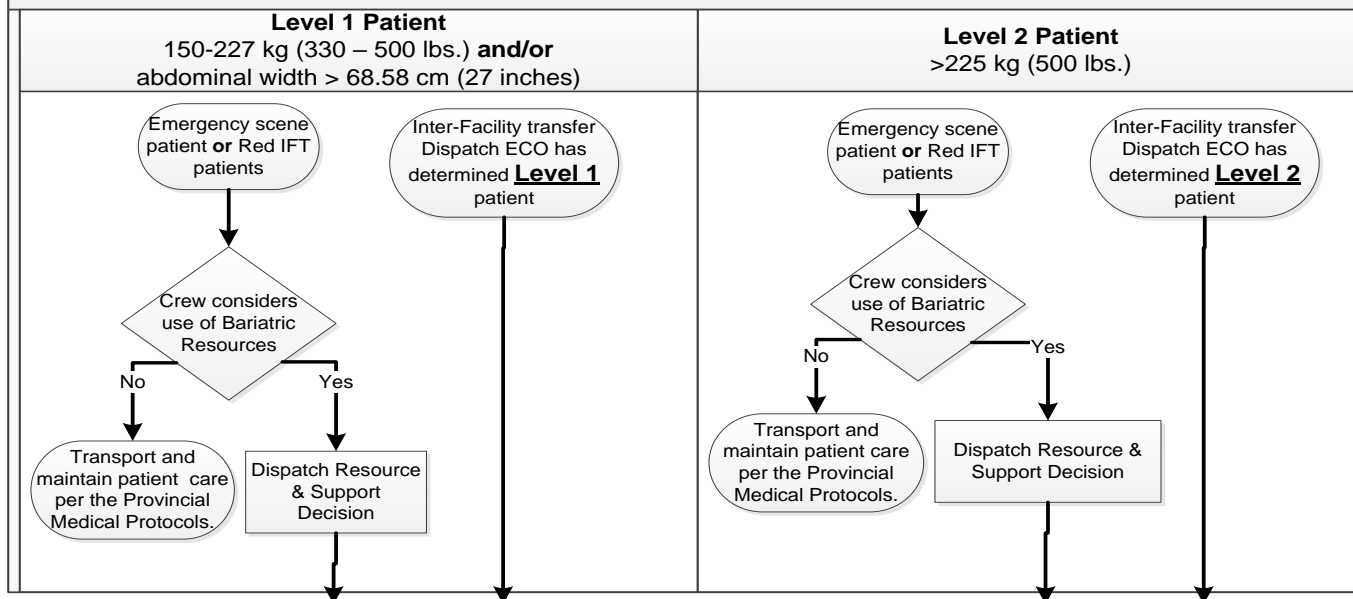


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APPENDIX A

Bariatric Patient and Resources Allocation Procedure Tool

BARIATRIC PATIENT AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION PROCEDURE TOOL



Priority Sequence

Level 1 Patient – Ferno PowerFlexx or Ferno Stretcher with bariatric deck (minimum 4 supporting providers) or Stryker bariatric stretcher (minimum 6 supporting providers) or Specialized Bariatric Unit.

On scene emergency or IFT (Unknown Bariatric Patient)

1. Bariatric resource delivered to requesting Emergency Response Vehicle by most appropriate designated Emergency Response Vehicle or Supervisor. (Request that EMS Staff delivering bariatric resources switch stretchers with requesting Emergency Response Vehicle, if compatible, to remain deployable.)
2. Air Ambulance bariatric response with coordinated ground support (as per priority sequence) in consultation with Air Ambulance Manager on Call and the Provincial Air Ambulance Bariatric Transport Request Flowchart and Dispatch Questions.
3. Specialized Bariatric Unit (Responding service delivers/operates specialized bariatric unit, patient care maintained by requesting service).

IFT (Known Bariatric Patient)

1. EMS or IFT resource sent to designated station / location housing specialized equipment preceding response.
2. Air Ambulance bariatric response with coordinated ground support (as per priority sequence) in consultation with Air Ambulance Manager on Call and the Provincial Air Ambulance Bariatric Transport Request Flowchart and Dispatch Questions.
3. Specialized Bariatric Unit. Responding service delivers / operates specialized bariatric unit, patient care maintained by requesting service.

Priority Sequence

Level 2 Patient – Specialized Bariatric Unit or Stryker Bariatric Stretcher (minimum 6 supporting providers).

On scene emergency or IFT (Unknown Bariatric Patient)

1. Specialized Bariatric Unit. Responding service delivers / operates specialized bariatric unit. (Patient care maintained by requesting service.)
2. Bariatric resource delivered to requesting Emergency Response Vehicle by most appropriate designated Emergency Response Vehicle or Supervisor. (Offer lift assistance and switch stretchers for transport if compatible to remain in services.) (Patient care maintained by requesting service.)
3. Air Ambulance bariatric response with coordinated ground support (as per priority sequence) in consultation with Air Ambulance Manager on Call and the Provincial Air Ambulance Bariatric Transport Request Flowchart and Dispatch Questions.

IFT (Known Bariatric Patient)

1. Specialized Bariatric Unit. Responding service delivers / operates specialized bariatric unit, patient care maintained by requesting service.
2. EMS or IFT resource sent to designated station / location housing specialized equipment preceding response.
3. Air Ambulance bariatric response with coordinated ground support (as per priority sequence) in consultation with Air Ambulance Manager on Call and the Provincial Air Ambulance Bariatric Transport Request Flowchart and Dispatch Questions.