OBJECTIVES

- To provide direction to Emergency Medical Services (EMS) staff on performance and response standards including the maximum time permitted to initiate the en route (physical movement) of a response vehicle to its dispatched event and event progression en route (e.g., arrived dangerously, arrived, transporting, pending available, clear, or moving).

- To provide clarity on performance reporting.

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. Points of Emphasis

   1.1 This Policy does not apply to the EMS Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) program or Air Ambulance program.

2. Turnout Interval

   2.1 Once an EMS crew receives an event notification on one of their assigned notification devices, the crew shall press the read receipt on their Alberta First Responders Radio Communication System (AFRRCS) radio; this places the
crew into Acknowledge Status (A1). The EMS crew shall immediately begin preparation to respond to the event.

2.2 The EMS crew shall mark themselves en route (EN) as soon as possible once the event notification is received.

a) An **assembled crew** should mark themselves en route (EN) within 90 seconds of dispatch (**chute interval**) and should initiate physical emergency response vehicle response (**turnout interval**) within 120 seconds of dispatch.

2.3 The EMS crew shall turn their AFRRCS radio to the appropriate AHS event channel.

2.4 The EMS crew shall respond cold to the **pre-alert** until such time as the event is coded. The EMS crew shall respond to the event in accordance with the dispatch priority assigned by the **Emergency Communication Officer (ECO)**.

2.5 The EMS crew shall utilize the provided mapping technologies to support their routing while responding in accordance with the AHS **Use of EMS Mobile Data Terminals** Policy.

2.6 Once the EMS crew has arrived at the event, they shall status themselves as **Arrived (AR)**. If the crew-initiated AR status is missed in the response, the EMS crew can verbally request their status be updated on the assigned event channel.

a) If the EMS crew is ready to arrive at the event prior to the event being coded, a verbal request for an update shall occur. The EMS crew shall status themselves as **Arrived Dangerous (AD)** until such time as the event is coded or there is verbal confirmation from the ECO that the event is not staged/dangerous.

3. **Scene Interval**

3.1 The scene interval time is calculated from the time the emergency response vehicle arrives and the crew initiates AR status until such time as the crew initiates Transporting (TR), Transfer of Care / Pending Available (TC), or Available Mobile (AM).

3.2 The EMS crew shall consider the importance of scene intervals for time-dependent illnesses within 20 minutes and major trauma within 10 minutes as per the EMS **Medical Control Protocols V3.0 Standard Approach**.

3.3 EMS management or their delegate should review extended scene intervals attributed to missed, AR, TR, TC, or Available (AM).

3.4 When the EMS crew is ready to transport, they shall apply the mandatory transport destination criteria, request a destination that aligns with zone processes and patient needs where applicable, and mark their transport destination on the **mobile data terminal (MDT)**.
3.5 If the event is a cancellation, the EMS crew shall status themselves as clear AM to complete the appropriate documentation. In urban environments, Transfer of Care / Pending Available (TC) shall be used while documentation is completed. If the expected time to clear is greater than 15 minutes, the EMS crew shall notify dispatch on the appropriate dispatch channel.

3.6 An EMS crew leaving the event location by greater than 200 metres shall proceed to AM status using their MDT. Leaving the event location in any other status shall require direct EMS Supervisor discussion.

4. Destination Interval

4.1 The destination interval is calculated from the time the emergency response vehicle indicates a Transport Arrived (TA) until it is AM or enters into Destination Standby (DS).

4.2 When the EMS crew arrives at the facility or setting, the crew shall restock the emergency response vehicle for a return to service as soon as is possible. Upon triaging, EMS crews shall initiate return to service cleaning and restocking procedures.

a) **Rural destination** - emergency response vehicles unable to be response capable due to an offload delay (AM or DS) within 30 minutes shall notify their regional AHS Supervisor of the delay and any expected outcomes including offload, consolidation, or documentation, and their estimated intervals.

b) **Regional destination** - emergency response vehicles unable to be response capable (AM or DS) within 45 minutes shall notify their regional AHS Supervisor of any offload delay and any expected outcomes including offload, consolidation, or documentation, and their estimated intervals.

c) **Metro destination** - emergency response vehicles unable to be response capable (AM or DS) within 45 minutes shall notify their regional AHS Supervisor in the Real Time Operations Centre (RTOC) of any offload delay and any expected outcomes including offload, consolidation, or documentation, and their expected intervals.

4.3 Once a patient disposition is known, the EMS crew should consider a Transfer of Care / Pending Available (TC) status as soon as practical. If this status is expected to exceed a 15-minute interval, an expected timeframe shall be provided to the ECO on the appropriate channel.

4.4 An EMS emergency response vehicle should become Available (AM) from the transport location prior to leaving the site. Travel from a site prior to clearing can result in a transport arrived to clear exception. It is imperative that the statuses are an accurate reflection of the emergency response vehicle tasking.
4.5 If there is an offload delay, the EMS crew shall identify and coordinate consolidation with another EMS crew if available. At the time of consolidation, the TC status should be initiated.

4.6 EMS management or their delegate shall review exception reports to identify instances of transport arrived to clear exceptions.

5. EMS Performance

5.1 AHS EMS Operations shall review EMS exception reporting, allowing for frontline feedback to recognize excellence and build high performance behaviours and workflows. This continuous improvement shall be done through increased awareness on an ongoing basis, utilizing information sharing between frontline leadership and staff. This frontline leadership and staff discussion shall support the establishment of an informed workforce’s ability to achieve identified goals.

5.2 It is expected that all EMS health care professionals shall meet their expected performance targets at the 90th percentile. This measurement recognizes that the target interval may not be achieved 100% of the time and recognizes that reasonable exceptions shall occur.

DEFINITIONS

90th percentile means the performance measurement for which system and staff performance is measured. With respect to chute intervals, this expectation would be that all EMS staff in an assembled status with the emergency response vehicle physically located within the same facility shall have initiated a physical response of greater than 50 metres within 120 seconds.

Arrived Dangerous (AD) means an EMS unit has been dispatched to a computer-aided dispatch event. The event has been deemed a dangerous location based on call information. The unit has arrived at a staged location based on scene safety standard operating procedures.

Assembled crew means a regularly staffed unit where crew members are expected to remain in close proximity to their assigned partner (unless on a PRU) and in close proximity to their response vehicle.

Chute interval means the time interval from unit dispatch (DP) to the crew marking en route (EN) on their mobile data terminal (MDT).

Dispatch means an EMS unit has been recommended and selected for a CAD event. Event information has been sent to the identified unit via pager, radio, or mobile communications device.

Emergency Communication Officer (ECO) means an officer who answers, call evaluates, and delivers emergency communications from a caller to the appropriate party following approved guidelines from Alberta Health Services (AHS) Medical Direction and the International Academy of Emergency Medical Dispatch.
Emergency response vehicle means an EMS vehicle including, but not limited to, ambulances and paramedic response units that are equipped with emergency warning devices as well as aircrafts. These vehicles are used or intended to be used for providing emergency medical services.

EMS crew means to refer to EMS staff; this may mean one or more persons, who are assigned to active duty and as part of their duty, are responsible to operate an emergency response vehicle.

Health care professional means an individual who is a member of a regulated health discipline, as defined by the Health Professions Act (Alberta), and who practises within scope and role.

Metro destinations means:

- Calgary - Foothills Medical Centre, Peter Lougheed Centre, Rockyview General Hospital, South Health Campus
- Edmonton - Royal Alexandra Hospital, Grey Nuns Community Hospital, Misericordia Community Hospital, Sturgeon Community Hospital, University of Alberta Hospital

Mobile data terminal (MDT) means a computer mounted in the cab of an emergency response vehicle that is used for communicating event information between dispatch and operations staff.

Notification device means any AHS communications device which may include any of the following: AFRRCS radio, cell phone, pager, Logis mobile device, satellite phone, station phone or mobile data terminal (MDT).

Pre-alert means the task of notifying (dispatching) the crew upon initial address verification prior to undertaking the call evaluation.

Regional destinations means the Chinook Regional Hospital, Medicine Hat Regional Hospital, Northern Lights Regional Health Centre, Queen Elizabeth II Hospital, and Red Deer Regional Hospital.

Rural destinations means all sites not listed as metro or regional destinations.

Supervisor means a leadership role in AHS EMS that reports directly to a Manager. This position is responsible and accountable for providing frontline direction and leadership towards the activities of EMS in support of the vision, mission and business plan of Alberta Health Services. A supervisor can be from either a direct delivery service or a contracted provider.

Transport arrived to clear means the distance from the transport arrived location to where an EMS emergency response vehicle physically becomes clear and available from the event.

Turnout interval means the time interval from event dispatch to the time there is sustained physical movement of the unit of 50 metres to the EMS event within 120 seconds.
REFERENCES

- Alberta Health Services Governance Documents:
  - Use of EMS Mobile Data Terminals Policy (#ITM-EMS-03)
- Alberta Health Services Resource Documents:
  - GV-DCD-065 CAD Data Standard - Unit Statuses
  - Medical Control Protocols V3.0 Consolidation of Patient Care
  - Medical Control Protocols V3.0 Standard Approach
  - Quarterly Emergency Medical Services Dashboard

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