



# Hot Topics



The Genesee County Medical Control Authority's

Newsletter for EMS Providers - Also now available online at [GCMCA.org](http://GCMCA.org)

One Hurley Plaza, Flint 48503

Office Phone 810-262-2555

December 2024

## Patient Prioritization

### *Categorizing Patients and Transporting Appropriately*

Earlier this year we adopted a new protocol that combines our traditional Patient Prioritization Protocol and state language on the use of lights and sirens. The goal and hope is our EMS crews recognize that most patients do not need to be transported to the hospital with lights and sirens, thus protecting them, their patients, and the community.

The protocol specifically states that Priority 1 is for “critically ill or injured patient(s) with an immediate life-threatening condition, including unstable or deteriorating vital signs.” It further states that only Priority 1 patient should be transported with lights and sirens. All other patients fall into the Priority 2 or 3 categories and should not be transported lights and sirens. These latter two priorities classify patients into serious without immediate life threat (Priority 2) and minor (Priority 3) and helps better communicate the patient’s status to the hospital. Some examples of Priority 2 patients includes: chest pain, STEMI, stroke, suspected sepsis, and non-life-threatening respiratory distress.

Finally, there is often confusion over how a unit is dispatched (Tier 1 or 2) and patient Priority (1, 2, or 3). These are very different and should not be confused when responding to calls and transporting patients. Currently our county EMD system does not specify when to respond to a 911 call lights and sirens, but typically EMS crews will view Tier 1 calls as a required lights and sirens response. This is not necessarily true. While we are looking at ways to better clarify and classify dispatched calls so not all current Tier 1s are responded to with lights and sirens, there is still some judgement left to crews and agencies. Regardless of the ambiguity of lights and sirens responses for Tier 1s, Tier 2s should never be responded to with lights and sirens.



## Hospital Handoff

### *Make it quick & Don't Linger*

Completing a thorough and quick handoff of patient care to the hospital is vital for both that patient’s care and getting crews back on the road to help the next patient. In some cases it can be interesting for EMS personnel to observe hospital treatment of patients they bring in and can be a learning opportunity as well. Make sure you don’t “wear out your welcome” and limit your time in the trauma or patient room, and only stay as long as it takes to provide a quality report and handoff of the patient. If you are looking for feedback from hospital staff on your patient care, follow up later with their EMS coordinator or other staff.



Have a Merry Christmas  
and

A Happy and Healthy New Year!!