Patient Prioritization and Use of Lights and Siren

This protocol is designed to provide a safe and orderly response to all requests for emergency medical care in the State of Michigan.

Patient Prioritization

Lights and sirens will only be used with Priority 1 patients as outlined below. Priority 2 and 3 patients will be transported without lights and sirens.

1. Priority 1
   A. Critically ill or injured patient with an immediate life-threatening condition, including unstable or deteriorating vital signs.

2. Priority 2
   A. Seriously ill or injured patient without immediate life-threatening Condition.
   B. Examples include, but are not limited to:
      1. GCS 11-14
      2. Medical conditions such as chest pain, STEMI, suspected stroke, suspected sepsis, respiratory distress without immediate threat to life.
      3. Altered level of consciousness, responding to verbal or painful stimuli
      4. Significant mechanism of injury in patient with stable vital signs

3. Priority 3
   A. Ill or injured patients not fitting the above two categories who require medical attention and do not have a life-threatening problems.

Lights and Sirens Usage

A. **Michigan Motor Vehicle Code** *(§257.603 and 257.653)*
The Michigan Motor Vehicle Code governs the driving of emergency vehicles. All licensed life support vehicles will abide by the Michigan Motor Vehicle Code.
1. This protocol does not supersede the Michigan Motor Vehicle Code.

B. **Authority to Require Lights and Siren Use**
Neither the patient's sending nor receiving physician has the authority to require the use of lights and siren during transport; this policy shall be followed at all times. Only the EMS transport crew can determine transport mode, based on patient priority.

C. **Use of Emergency Medical Dispatch**
Where Emergency Medical Dispatchers (EMD) and/or a tiered EMS response are/is available, the EMS Agency is encouraged to develop procedures that reduce unnecessary use of lights and sirens. The procedures may include, but are not limited to, the use of established EMD call screening protocols and evaluation of the scene/patient by first responder personnel.

D. **Returning from the transport, returning to a service area**

1. EMS units may ONLY utilize lights and sirens to return to their area IF THEY ARE RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY CALL.
2. Lights and sirens will **NOT** be used to return to an area when the unit is not responding to another emergency call.

E. **Education**

Life Support Agencies shall ensure MCA approved annual training surrounding the Michigan Motor Vehicle Code, safe use of lights and siren, this protocol and related agency polices.

F. **Agency and Medical Control Authority Specific Policies**

This protocol does not preclude MCAs from developing protocols and/or individual agencies from developing internal policies on this subject, as long as it includes the contents of this protocol as a minimum.

G. **Response and Transport**

Response to the scene and transport to the hospital is determined by patient priority.

1. If the on-scene patient priority is different from the dispatch priority, follow the on-scene patient priority for transport.
2. If the patient priority changes during transport follow the appropriate use of lights and sirens for the new patient priority.

H. **Prohibition on the Use of Lights and Sirens**

Lights and sirens will not be used regardless of the patient priority under the following circumstances (according to agencies' internal policies):

1. During road conditions that exist which could either place the emergency vehicle at risk of an accident or if doing so could result in wake effect accidents by nearby vehicles.
2. Visibility would be such that lights and sirens would have no effect.