

	Section 900 – Administration / Organization		Procedure & Instruction	
	<h2>Private Ambulance Services</h2>		Number	900-41
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Owner:	<i>Doug Schrage, DC Operations</i>	Steward:	<i>Michael Crotty, EMS Battalion Chief</i>	
Approval:	<i>Craig P. Goodrich, Fire Chief</i>	/ /		

Purpose

This document establishes the procedures for scheduling and dispatching patient transports performed by Private Ambulance Services (PAS) licensed and approved to operate within the Municipality of Anchorage.

Policy

It is the policy of the Anchorage Fire Department, in compliance with Anchorage Municipal Charter, Codes, and Regulations, including Title 16 (Health) and Chapter 16.100 (Private Ambulance Services), to provide for equitable and patient safety conscious procedures for the scheduling and dispatching of patient transports with licensed private ambulance service providers within the Municipality of Anchorage.

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Procedure & Instruction

1.0 Licensed Private Ambulance Services

- 1.1 TransCare Medical Services, henceforth known as TransCare, is a private ambulance service licensed to provide ambulance transport of non-emergency patients in the Municipality of Anchorage.
 - 1.1.1 Transcare is granted a Type I license in accordance with AMC section 16.100.025.
- 1.2 Guardian Flight, henceforth known as Guardian, is an Alaskan corporation offering statewide medevac services, and is also a private ambulance service licensed to provide ambulance transport of non-emergency patients in the Municipality of Anchorage.
 - 1.2.1 Guardian is granted a Type I license in accordance with AMC section 16.100.025.
- 1.3 As of December 2007, there are no other ambulance companies or services licensed in the Municipality of Anchorage. At such time as another company is granted a license to operate under AMC chapter 16.100, this document shall be revised.
 - 1.3.1 Inasmuch as MOA licensing of Private Ambulance Services, henceforth known as PAS, is an annually renewed process, the renewal of a current licensee involving a license type change (i.e. Type I to Type II) shall cause a review of this document.

2.0 Requests for Private Ambulance Service

- 2.1 Requests for PAS patient transports may be scheduled in advance or with little or no notice.
- 2.2 Requests for PAS transports originating inside the MOA and transporting to facilities both within and outside of the MOA shall be processed by AFD dispatch via non-emergency lines. This includes transports requiring a medical escort team.
- 2.3 Requests for PAS ground transports originating outside of the MOA shall be advised to contact their preferred PAS directly at (907) 562-3534 (TransCare), or (888) 997-3822 (Guardian). This includes transports requiring a medical escort team to be picked up within the MOA first. The PAS receiving such a request shall immediately inform AFD Dispatch of their status.
- 2.4 Requests for PAS transports involving aeromedical patient transports arriving at or departing from flight facilities within the MOA shall be processed by AFD dispatch via non-emergency lines.

3.0 Patient Eligibility for Private Ambulance Service Transport

- 3.1 No PAS shall transport patients in the MOA who have called 911, or who have not been evaluated per paragraph 4.4 below.
- 3.2 Should there be any concern about the status of a patient and it is unsure whether a PAS should do the transport, contact the on-duty EMS Battalion Chief.
- 3.3 AFD Dispatch, to the best of their ability, ensures all patients for PAS requiring a stretcher, and those who are ambulatory or not requiring a stretcher are referred to the TransCare Wheelchair Van at 562-3503.
 - 3.3.1 Neither the MOA nor the Anchorage Fire Department shall assume responsibility for or incur any costs if, upon arrival of a PAS, it is determined the patient may be transported by other means.

4.0 Processing and Scheduling the Call

- 4.1 Requests for PAS shall be processed through the AFD dispatch non-emergency lines. The 911 line(s) are not to be used in processing a request for Private Ambulance Service.
- 4.2 Requests for PAS received via the 911 line(s) shall be directed to call back on non-emergency lines, if the patient meets criteria as stable set forth in paragraph 4.4 below. Otherwise, the call shall be processed as an emergency call and an AFD MICU shall be dispatched.
- 4.3 Dispatchers shall utilize the Scheduled Call Taking screen in CAD and obtain the necessary information to initiate the transport.
- 4.3.1 Information taken shall include the name of the person calling, and the name and medical certification or licensing level of the person currently in charge of patient care.
- 4.3.2 The AFD Dispatcher taking the call shall determine whether the request for ground ambulance transport via a PAS is:
- A request for a specific PAS. These requests shall be honored if appropriate per 4.3.3 below.
 - A non-specific request for a ground ambulance transport. These requests shall result in a rotational dispatch of a PAS unit.
- 4.3.3 In the case of a request for a specific PAS, AFD Dispatchers shall obtain the name of the person requesting the PAS, and their company, agency or organizational affiliation. These requests shall be honored with the following exceptions:
- Guardian is a statewide corporation, and as such is frequently the operating agency of medevac flights inbound to the Municipality of Anchorage. AMC section 16.100.060C prohibits Guardian representatives from requesting Guardian ground ambulances to transport patients.
 - A request for a specific PAS to transport an arriving medevac patient may originate from an agency or entity at the point of origin of the medevac flight (such as a clinic or hospital outside of the MOA). If a patient transport request for Guardian ambulance is made by an agency or entity at the point of origin to AFD Dispatch *before* any call is received from Guardian representatives, the request shall be honored.
- 4.3.4 AFD Dispatchers shall document all call information required in 4.3.1, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 above in the incident comments.
- 4.4 Patients shall be categorized as either stable or unstable. Patients that do not fall outside of the following shall be deemed stable:
- 4.4.1 Pre-evaluation by a Physician, Physicians Assistant, Nurse Practitioner, Registered Nurse or AFD Paramedic occurred within a 72-hour period prior to the transport.
- 4.4.2 The patient shall be transported for the same condition they were treated or seen for in the 72-hour window and not experiencing a new condition or emergency.
- 4.4.3 The patient is currently stable and expected to remain stable during transport.
- 4.4.4 The patient has a diagnosed or confirmed pre-existing medical condition (i.e., quad/paraplegic, other debilitating condition or palliative care) requiring stretcher

transport to a routine scheduled appointment, extended care facility or residence. A request of this nature does not have to be made by the doctor or care facility.

- 4.4.5 Psychiatric patients or any patient diagnosed with or being treated for or suffering from a mental disability that does or may require restraints shall be scheduled for PAS ambulance service.
- 4.5 Patients not meeting the criteria in 4.4 above shall be deemed unstable and may require an AFD MICU to be dispatched.
- 4.6 If there is any indication while processing the call that the patient is not stable enough for PAS response, the Dispatcher shall immediately press the Emergency Button icon on the scheduled call taking screen and complete the remainder of the call as an emergency call. The dispatcher shall continue to process the call using the appropriate protocols.

5.0 Dispatching Private Ambulance Services

- 5.1 Scheduled transports shall present in the waiting incident queue of CAD thirty (30) minutes prior to the designated pick-up time unless the transport was arranged for immediate pick-up or less than 30 minutes notice of arrival.
 - 5.1.1 Scheduled transports may or may not involve a request for a specific PAS.
- 5.2 The Dispatcher shall assign a PAS unit to the incident as soon as it presents in the waiting incident queue.
- 5.3 Requests for a specific PAS deemed appropriate during the call processing shall be honored:
 - 5.3.1 If a unit from the requested PAS is immediately available for the dispatch.
 - 5.3.2 If no unit from the requested PAS is immediately available, then a unit from the next PAS shall be dispatched. In this instance, the PAS dispatched shall complete the call.
 - 5.3.3 If no PAS units are available, an AFD MICU shall be dispatched if an emergent transport.
 - 5.3.4 In the case of an inability to honor an appropriate request for a specific PAS for any reason, the circumstances shall be documented in the incident comments.
- 5.4 If no specific PAS is requested, a deliberate effort shall be made to rotate PAS companies on a call-by-call basis.
- 5.5 AFD dispatchers shall endeavor to avoid contractual or competitive entanglements between PAS providers and their contracted facilities or entities. While appropriate requests for a specific PAS shall be honored, if a unit from the requested PAS is not available callers may not avoid the next rotational PAS provider by requesting AFD for stable patient transports.
- 5.6 When the unit has been assigned to the call, the dispatcher shall wait for the unit to confirm they received their dispatch page, and then provide the incident information to the responding unit.
 - 5.6.1 PAS units from the same company may, at their discretion, opt to swap with the unit originally assigned to the call. The unit taking the call shall ensure AFD Dispatch is apprised of any change.
 - 5.6.2 PAS units shall acknowledge their dispatch page within five (5) minutes. Failure to do so shall result in another PAS unit from the same company being assigned to

the call, *only if they are available and respond to the page immediately*. If no PAS unit from that company acknowledges the page and all reasonable attempts are exhausted to make contact, then a unit from the next company in the rotation shall be dispatched.

- 5.6.3 Incidents of a PAS not responding to a page within five (5) minutes shall be documented by AFD Dispatch for Quality Assurance review.
- a. An email shall be sent documenting the run number and a brief statement of the circumstances to the Fire Communications Officer, AFD Medical Director, EMS District Chief and EMS Battalion Chiefs.
- 5.7 PAS units dispatched to a patient transport may not refuse the call (AMC section 16.100.060D.). In the case of a refusal, AFD Dispatch shall:
- a. Dispatch the next PAS in the rotation;
 - b. Immediately notify the on-duty EMS Battalion Chief; and
 - c. Document the circumstances by email to the Fire Communications Officer, AFD Medical Director, EMS District Chief and EMS Battalion Chiefs.
- 5.7.1 Refusal means declining or refusing a dispatch to perform a patient transport for any reason, including foreknowledge of a specific transport request that may not have occurred or been scheduled with AFD Dispatch.
- 5.7.2 Instances of refusal to respond to a dispatch shall result in a circumstantial review at the next Medical Advisory Board Meeting.
- 5.8 All initial PAS incidents shall be dispatched code yellow. No PAS shall respond code red to a patient transport.
- 5.9 PAS units may transport patients code red at the request of a medical escort team, physician, or based on the patient's condition as assessed by the unit's personnel.
- 5.10 PAS companies shall provide incident documentation and/or patient care reports associated with all code red transports (involving the use of lights and sirens) to the Anchorage Fire Department Fire Chief or his/her designee.
- 5.10.1 PAS companies shall provide documentation on all code red transports on a monthly basis, or upon immediate request by the AFD for any incident, to the EMS District Chief or designated EMS Battalion Chief.
- 5.10.2 PAS companies shall participate in a periodic quality assurance review of code red transports.
- 5.11 PAS personnel shall contact AFD Dispatch for any and all information needed to complete their reports.
- ## 6.0 Stable Patient Transports
- 6.1 If a PAS unit is unable to immediately accommodate a facility-to-facility transport of a stable patient, the call is kept in queue for the next available PAS unit in the rotation.
- 6.1.1 The requesting facility shall be advised of the delay and estimated availability of the next PAS unit. The attending physician may request an AFD MICU if they feel the delay compromises or further delays patient care.
- 6.2 If a PAS is unable to immediately respond a unit to accommodate an arriving Medevac patient, a unit from the next PAS company in the rotation shall be dispatched, irrespective of a request for a specific PAS.

- 6.2.1 If no PAS units are available, an AFD MICU shall be dispatched.
- 6.3 Specific requests by a hospital emergency department physician for an AFD MICU to perform an interfacility transport shall be honored, irrespective of protocol or policy requirement. In this instance, the requesting physician's name shall be documented by AFD Dispatch.
- 6.3.1 An email shall be sent, documenting the run number, a brief statement of the circumstances and the name of the physician making the request, to the AFD Medical Director, EMS District Chief and EMS Battalion Chiefs.

7.0 Unstable Patient Transports

- 7.1 PAS may transport patients deemed unstable under paragraph 4.4 above, when the patient is in the care of a medical escort team.
- 7.2 If the PAS unit, or another unit from the same PAS, is unable to immediately accommodate a facility-to-facility transport of an escorted unstable patient, the next company in the rotation shall be dispatched.
- 7.2.1 If no PAS units are immediately available for dispatch, an AFD MICU shall be dispatched.
- 7.3 Requests for all patient transports between hospital facilities within the MOA and Elmendorf AFB shall be called into AFD Dispatch via non-emergency lines.
- 7.3.1 All requests shall be made by the hospital facility bearing current physical care and responsibility for the patient.
- 7.3.2 Requests for unstable patients shall not be made by callers or entities representing third party medical escort teams not currently located in the same hospital facility as the patient.

8.0 Private Ambulance Service Unavailability

- 8.1 PAS Operations Managers or their designees shall immediately contact AFD Dispatch if an available assigned PAS is unable to immediately respond to a dispatch.
- 8.1.1 In the event the dispatched PAS confirms it is not able to take the call and no other PAS units are available, AFD Dispatch shall dispatch an AFD MICU to complete the transport.
- 8.2 An AFD MICU shall be dispatched to any calls not accommodated by PAS due to call volume and or lack of available PAS units. Once an AFD MICU makes patient contact, it shall complete the call and transport the patient, except as noted in 8.2.1 and 8.2.2 below.
- 8.2.1 Dispatchers or AFD paramedics may confer with flight crews or flight coordinators, and if the flight crew agrees to a longer wait for a PAS unit, it shall be accommodated.
- 8.2.2 If the flight crew agrees to a delay, the AFD MICU shall remain on scene until the arrival of the PAS unit. In this instance, the delay shall be limited to the first available PAS unit, even if it is not the requested PAS. If the first available PAS unit is not acceptable to the flight crew, then AFD shall complete the transport.

9.0 Version History

Supersedes:		
P&I		
Memo		
Revisions:		
Date:	Version #	Changes
8/10/07	1.0	➤ New P&I, adapted from Communications Manual
11/30/07	2.0	➤ Rev P&I