

Springdale Fire Department

Policy & Procedures Manual

Volume 2 – Operations

Section 204 – EMS Operations

204.6 – Hospital Emergency Department Diversion

Emergency Department “Divert” status does not apply to patients with life or death injuries or medical conditions. The nature of the patient’s complaint, such as serious trauma, cardiac, or obstetrical, may dictate the need to transport to a hospital with appropriate resources although that Emergency Department is on “Divert”. If the nearest appropriate facility is on “Divert” and patient condition is potentially life threatening (transport to that facility is indicated) personnel must notify Medical Control as soon as possible to allow time to prepare for the arrival of the patient.

“Divert” status implies that the resources of the emergency department are at maximum capacity, as a result of high in-patient and or emergency department census. Hospitals may elect to go on Emergency Department “Divert” under these circumstances.

SFD personnel shall reference this policy explicitly, in order to comply with the various legal requirements of the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA) and to ensure the safe delivery of patients to appropriate medical receiving facilities, when the patient (or the patient’s legal guardian, or other legally responsible decision maker, or referring patient physician {hereinafter referred to as etal}) requests patient transport to a hospital that is on Emergency Department “Divert”. Deviations from this policy (although rare) shall be documented thoroughly within the EMS Patient Care Report.

Available “In Service” SFD squads should also be considered by EMS personnel in making the “Divert, Don’t Divert” decision. SFD squads transporting to hospitals outside SFD’s normal response area results in increased down time before the squad can return to service. When SFD has 2 squads outside the city due to “Diversion” transports, additional squads are authorized to transport to the closest appropriate facility. The number of squads outside the city on divert transports does not preclude transporting a patient to the hospital of their choice. EMS Personnel should contact Medical Control of the closest appropriate facility as soon as possible to provide the hospital time to prepare for the arrival of the patient.

If Northwest Medical Center of Washington County is on “Divert” status but Washington Regional Medical Center is NOT on “Divert” status, EMS personnel should consider WRMC as the “Off Divert” closest appropriate facility for most of the SFD response area.

If Washington Regional Medical Center is on “Divert” status but Northwest Medical Center of Washington County is NOT on “Divert” status, EMS personnel should consider Northwest Medical Center of Washington County as the “Off Divert” closest appropriate facility for most of the SFD response area.

Whenever both Northwest Medical Center of Washington County and Washington Regional Medical Center are on “Divert” status, EMS personnel should consider Northwest Medical Center of Benton County as the “Off Divert” closest appropriate facility for all but the

northeastern section of the SFD response area. In the northeast area, Mercy Medical Center may be the “Off Divert” closest appropriate facility.

Personnel, when requested by a patient (etal) to be transported to a hospital on “Divert” status shall follow the procedures identified below.

- Confirm the requested hospital of patient (etal) choice “Divert” status by contacting that hospital’s Emergency Department
- Inform the patient (etal) that the requested hospital is on “Divert” status. Suggested language:

The hospital you request to be transported to (Example: NWMC of Washington County) is on “Divert”. This means they may currently lack the staff, facilities or equipment to examine you promptly, their current resources are at maximum capacity and there will be an extended wait time. I recommend that we transport you to the nearest appropriate hospital, which is (Examples: WRMC; or NWMC of Benton County; or St. Mary’s).

- If the patient (etal) agrees to be transported to an alternate, appropriate hospital (patient accepts “Diversion”) the EMS patient care report shall include documentation reflecting who made the decision to “Divert”.

If the patient (etal) **DOES NOT** agree to “Diversion”, and insists on being transported to a hospital that is on “Divert” status, personnel shall:

- Immediately contact Medical Control of the requested hospital. Advise the Medical Control physician that the patient (etal) has been made aware of the hospital’s “Divert” status, and the patient remains insistent in being transported to that hospital.
 - The physician may elect to speak to the patient (etal) directly. Such conversation may only occur over a telephone or cell phone.

SFD personnel may transport a patient to a hospital on “Divert” under certain circumstances. Decisions should be made to transport to a hospital on “Divert” only when

- The patient (etal) remains insistent and is informed of potential risks, in which case personnel shall inform the Medical Control physician of the situation and ETA to facility

Or when

- The Medical Control physician agrees to receive the patient

Documentation of transport to a hospital on “Divert” status shall be included in the EMS patient care report and the Release from Responsibility Form under the Divert section.