

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY**

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Purpose

To establish the County's responsibility for providing emergency ambulance transportation services in the unincorporated areas of San Diego County and where the Board of Supervisors has the rights and responsibilities.

Background

Presently, there are portions of the unincorporated County where emergency ambulance services are adequately provided and funded locally. Provisions of emergency ambulance services in these areas should remain the responsibility of local districts and service areas.

To ensure every resident and visitor has equal access to emergency ambulance transportation services, the Board of Supervisors has taken several actions to increase resources for public and private ambulance transportation services throughout the region.

On May 23, 2023 (19), the Board of Supervisors authorized the Chief Administrative Officer to enter into a contract with the San Diego County Fire Protection District to exclusively provide and/or manage emergency ambulance services in the areas where the County has, or will have, the responsibility for ambulance transportations services in compliance with California Health and Safety Code Sections 1797.230-231. This provided around-the-clock advanced life support (ALS) ambulance transportation to the most rural communities in San Diego County and established a framework for future service enhancements upon the expiration of existing ambulance contracts.

~~There are also portions of the unincorporated County, which are sparsely populated, and contain many of the County's major highways and recreational facilities and where emergency ambulance services cannot be provided adequately without County support.~~

~~Large numbers of non-local residents utilize these sparsely populated areas for recreation and travel, with the result that they account for a majority of medical emergencies.~~

~~It has been demonstrated that private industry cannot provide adequate ambulance service for these areas without financial support from the County. There is also no feasible way that local taxation in these areas could raise the necessary funds to support an ambulance service.~~

~~On July 13, 2010 the Board of Supervisors embarked on a ten-year plan called "Live Well, San Diego!" to guide County services to promote a healthy, safe and thriving San Diego County. Providing emergency ambulance services in the underserved unincorporated areas of San Diego County supports Live Well, San Diego! by ensuring the health and safety of~~

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~~local citizens.~~

Policy

It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors that:

- A. Medical direction and oversight of ambulance services remain under the authority of the Board-designated Local EMS Agency. The County is responsible for reviewing the need for emergency ambulance services in the unincorporated area of the County.
- B. The San Diego County Fire Protection District is responsible for exclusively providing and/or managing ambulance transportation services in the areas where the County has, or will have, this responsibility. The goal of this policy is to assure a maximum planned emergency ambulance response time of thirty minutes in the rural areas of the County.
- C. The San Diego County Fire Protection District will assume the management and/or delivery of ambulance services in new Exclusive Operating Areas, where the County has this responsibility, upon the expiration of existing contracts. The funding of existing emergency ambulance services will continue to be provided by districts and service areas.
- D. The goal of the Local EMS Agency and the San Diego County Fire Protection District policy is to improve emergency medical services patient outcomes for all residents, increase the availability of critical resources, and ensure patients receive the appropriate level of care during a medical emergency. In the remainder of the unincorporated County, where services are not provided by existing special districts or service areas, the preferred method of providing such services is through the formation of special districts or service areas. Special districts or service areas may be formed for this purpose whenever the Board of Supervisors finds that in the interest of public health and safety, the service is necessary and the method of funding is equitable and feasible.
- E. The funding of existing and future emergency ambulance services will be through cost-recovery fees/ambulance bills, property taxes, and General Purpose Revenue. When the Board of Supervisors finds that in the interest of public health and safety, the service is necessary, but that special district or service area funding is not equitable or feasible, the County will provide emergency ambulance services in such quantity and at a level of quality as is compatible with the availability of

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~~funds. County-funded emergency ambulance services may be provided directly or through contract.~~

Sunset Date

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 12-31-~~3225~~.

Board Action

5-24-77 (1)
 7-26-88 (43)
 12-12-89 (49)
 3-27-90 (47)
 8-3-99 (7)
 3-23-04 (4)
 5-15-07 (3)
 12-09-08 (33)
 01-24-12 (10)
 11-13-18 (17)

CAO Reference

~~Health and Human Services Agency~~
Public Safety Group