SAN FRANCISCO EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AGENCY

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BARIATRIC PATIENT TRANSPORTS

I. PURPOSE

A. To establish standards for the transport of bariatric patients that assures their comfort, safety and dignity.

B. To authorize the temporary use of non-permitted bariatric ambulances to operate in the San Francisco EMS system for the transport of bariatric patients.

II. AUTHORITY

A. California Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Sections 1797.204, 1797.206, 1797.222, 1798.170, and 1798.172

B. California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Sections 100063, 100145, 100147, 100172, 100175, and 100266

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Bariatric Patient: A patient weighing > 350 pounds and/or has a body habitus that exceeds the capacity standards for a normal ambulance gurney in either height, width or both.

B. Bariatric Ambulance: Specially equipped ambulances specifically designed for the transport of bariatric patients.

IV. POLICY

A. Bariatric ambulances not permitted by the City and County of San Francisco, which are operated by a company possessing an ALS or BLS permit from the San Francisco EMS Agency, are authorized to temporarily operate within the San Francisco EMS system for the purposes of transporting bariatric patients when it is determined by either an ambulance provider, hospital or other health institution provider to be in the best interest of patient safety.

B. zNon-San Francisco permitted bariatric ambulances must be permitted by the California Highway Patrol, and if applicable, by the local EMS agency from which the ambulance originates.

C. Ambulance personnel must be knowledgeable about the extrication and transport needs for bariatric patients that assures for their comfort, safety and dignity.

D. Bariatric patients meeting the critical patient triage criteria as defined in Policies 5000 Destination or 5001 Critical Trauma Criteria should be transported to an appropriate receiving hospital as rapidly as possible whether or not a bariatric ambulance is available. Ambulance crews may request assistance from SFFD.

E. Medically stable bariatric patients may be held at the scene until a bariatric transport ambulance becomes available. Required transport times from the scene to a hospital as identified in EMS Agency Policy 4000 Pre-hospital Provider Standards are waived as long as the bariatric patient remains medically stable. At no time should the patient be unattended by medical personnel. If necessary, additional staff should be arranged to attend to the patient. At a minimum, this shall be an EMT with a defibrillator and an 800 MHz radio.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Any field crew may request a bariatric ambulance through the Division of Emergency Communications (DEC). DEC will contact the private ambulance providers for an available bariatric ambulance.

B. If necessary during 9-1-1 calls, the transporting unit may request additional assistance from the SFFD in order to safely extricate and load a patient.

C. Private ambulance company crews for inter-facility transports will request a bariatric-equipped ambulance through their respective dispatch centers. Proper equipment and the proper number of personnel necessary to handle the patient safely must be assured. If an extraordinary situation arises with little or no advance notice, and with the approval of a Paramedic Captain, the SFFD may be asked to assist.

V. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

A. Ambulance provider companies shall report scene transports of bariatric patients to the EMS Agency within 24 hours by completing and submitting a "Confidential Exception Report Form." This includes transports without a bariatric-equipped ambulance for critical calls by either the SFFD or a private provider. The EMS Agency shall cumulate and analyze this data annually.

B. Continuing education of all EMS personnel shall address new findings on providing emergency medical care to the bariatric patient in both emergency and non-emergency situations.