

**MID-AMERICA REGIONAL COUNCIL
EMERGENCY RESCUE COMMITTEE (MARCER)**



**EMS SYSTEM
PROTOCOLS AND POLICIES**

April 2002

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LETTER OF PROMULGATION

To All Kansas City Metropolitan Area EMSsystem Users:

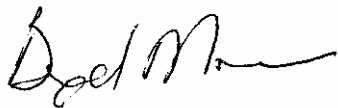
The Mid-America Regional Council Emergency Rescue Committee (MARCER) has prepared *EMSsystem Protocols and Policies* to establish the policies and procedures governing the operation of the EMSsystem in the Kansas City metropolitan area. These policies and procedures have been endorsed by a number of emergency services associations, including the Heart of America Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Council, the Johnson County Emergency Medical Services Committee, the Emergency Physicians Advisory Board of Kansas City, MO, the Wyandotte County Medical Control Board and the Mid-America Regional Council Board of Directors.

These policies and procedures will be reviewed and updated at least annually to reflect changes in policies, technology or operations that affect the emergency medical system in the greater Kansas City metropolitan area.

MARCER welcomes your comments and suggestions for improving these policies and procedures. Please direct your comments and suggestions to MARCER, 600 Broadway, 300 Rivergate Center, Kansas City, MO 64105-1554 or via e-mail to MARCER@marc.org.



Deputy Chief Rick Dye
Fort Osage Fire Protection District
Chair, Mid-America Regional Council Emergency Rescue Committee



Brad Mason
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EMSYSTEM PROTOCOLS AND POLICIES

I. INTRODUCTION

A. EMSystem Description

1. The EMSystem is a web-based program providing real-time information on hospital emergency department status, hospital patient capacity, availability of staffed beds and available specialized treatment capabilities.
2. EMSystem is used to coordinate “routine” and emergency medical operations (e.g., mass casualty incidents, or MCIs) throughout the region.
3. EMSystem participants are expected to place the personal computer that will operate EMSystem in the hub of their operations. That being in the emergency department of hospitals and in the dispatch centers of transporting EMS agencies. EMSystem users are expected to stay logged on to the system 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

B. Purpose

1. The implementation of the EMSystem across the Kansas City metropolitan area is an effort to efficiently and effectively:
 - a. Handle situations in which the diversion of an ambulance(s) may be necessary due to the existence of temporary conditions in hospital emergency departments or specialty centers that may affect patient care.
 - b. Determine hospital patient capacity, availability of staffed beds and available specialized treatment capabilities during an MCI.
2. With EMSystem, the definition of hospital status is standardized across the entire Kansas City metropolitan area. **However, EMS providers and/or emergency medical systems should continue to follow their local policies and procedures regarding the determination of hospital destinations.** It is the position of the EMSystem Task Force that no operational policy or direction is given as a part of this document. **It is up to each EMS agency to determine what they will do with the status information on EMSystem and further communicate their operational plans to their respective hospitals of interest. EMSystem provides standardized information to facilitate patient routing decisions.**

3. The diversion of ambulance patients away from the closest or normally most appropriate emergency department should be considered undesirable, but may be occasionally necessary in the interest of patient care.
4. Use of the EMSsystem and these policies is intended to effectively manage and coordinate hospital and EMS resources and avoid the following situations:
 - a. Unacceptably prolonged patient transport times.
 - b. Prolonged out-of-hospital care when definitive hospital-based resources are needed especially for unstable or critically ill patients.
 - c. Inappropriate attempts by field personnel to predict the specific diagnostic and therapeutic resources needed by individual patients.
 - d. Delays in, or lack of, ambulance availability to the community because of diversion of units to distant hospitals.

C. **EMSystem Functions**

1. Hospital Emergency Department Status

Participating hospitals update their emergency department status at defined intervals. A regional status screen displays the status of each hospital in the region. The 9-1-1 or dispatch center then uses the displayed information to appropriately alert EMS units to area emergency departments' status. Hospital and EMS services also view the regional status page to assess system capacity and potential "bottlenecks."

2. Mass Casualty Incident Support

Unplanned acute medical emergencies involving significant numbers of ill or injured people require instantaneous EMS resource allocation. Dispatch centers enter MCI details selecting the facilities required to respond. Each facility then enters its ability to accept red, yellow and green patients allowing timely, accurate and dynamic EMS transport decisions. Incident-specific evaluation and treatment protocols are easily uploaded and immediately available to all facilities in the region. Critical information can be instantaneously disseminated to health care providers and other key emergency medical personnel.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Diversion

1. The rerouting of an ambulance(s) from the intended receiving facility to an alternate receiving facility due to a temporary lack of critical resources in the intended receiving facility.
2. The following hospital status categories will be used with EMSsystem:
 - a. ***Open***
 - (1) The hospital emergency department or specialized center is open to all ambulance traffic.
 - (2) This category will be displayed in green letters on the EMSsystem hospital status screen.
 - b. ***Trauma Diversion***
 - (1) A specific alert of a trauma diversion. The Trauma Diversion category is only for use by Level I and II Trauma Centers in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Detailed information should be listed in the “comments” section of the hospital status screen.
 - (2) This category will be displayed in yellow letters on the EMSsystem hospital status screen.
 - d. ***Closed to Ambulances***
 - (1) The emergency department is functioning but cannot accept ambulance patients due to a temporary resource limitation.
 - (2) This category will be displayed in red letters on the EMSsystem hospital status screen.
 - e. ***Out of Service***
 - (1) The emergency department has suffered structural damage, loss of power, an exposure threat or other condition that precludes the admission and care of any new patients in the emergency department. The actual status should be further defined in the “comments” section of the hospital status screen.

- (2) This category will be displayed in black letters on the EMSystem hospital status screen.
- (3) The EMCC designated to oversee the facility will attempt contact with the facility to verify this status.

f. ***Forced Open***

- (1) The hospital(s) emergency department has been forced open due to multiple closures in a catchment area.
- (2) This category will be displayed in purple letters on the EMSystem hospital status screen.

B. Regional Administrator

1. The regional administrator serves as the local area manager of the EMSystem and the liaison between local EMSystem users and Infinity Health Care, the system's developer and vendor.
2. MARCER will serve as the regional administrator for the Kansas City metropolitan area.
3. The regional administrator will have full access to the system. The following EMSystem features are available to the regional administrator:
 - a. Viewing and editing password accounts.
 - b. Initiating, editing and stopping system alerts and MCIs.
 - c. Adding, editing or deleting hospitals, EMS providers and helicopter services.
 - d. Viewing and editing regional information for all participating hospitals, EMS providers and helicopter services.
 - e. Creating and editing specialty center designations, diversion and caution categories and bed capacities.
 - f. Uploading documents.
 - g. Creating links to other helpful web sites.
4. The regional administrator will have full access to EMSystem data. The following policy is in place for data access:
 - a. Each hospital and dispatch center shall have access to its individual data elements.
 - b. MARCER members seeking data queries of a specific facility's information should direct their request to the regional administrator.
 - c. The Health Alliance of Mid America will provide staff support and develop diversion statistics and reports for the KC Metro EMSystem users. Reports will be issued at least once per quarter

and will be representative of the system. MARCER may request the Health Alliance create special reports as the situation warrants.

- d. Requests from the public and media for diversion statistics should be given to the regional administrator or the MARCER Chairperson for fulfillment.

C. **EMSystem Coordination Centers**

1. The Johnson County Emergency Communications Center, MAST and Lee's Summit Fire Department (Region A of the Missouri Mutual Aid System) will serve as the EMSystem Coordination Centers (EMCCs) and manage daily EMSystem coordination (*see EMSystem Organizational Structure* in Section III, *Policies and Procedures*).
2. EMCCs will be the only EMS dispatch centers with read/write access to EMSystem. EMCCs will create and edit system and/or MCI alerts, diversion status and passwords. In addition, all functions available to primary users are available to these dispatch centers.

D. **Primary Users**

1. Primary users are the participating hospitals across the Kansas City metropolitan area. Primary users may also be air ambulance services desiring read/write access.
2. Primary users may view regional status information and update their respective hospital or helicopter service data. Historical data can also be retrieved for data collection, downloading or printing.

E. **Secondary Users**

1. Secondary users are those agencies, primarily EMS agencies that have read only access to the system.
2. Secondary users may only view regional status information. These users cannot update or alter any system information.

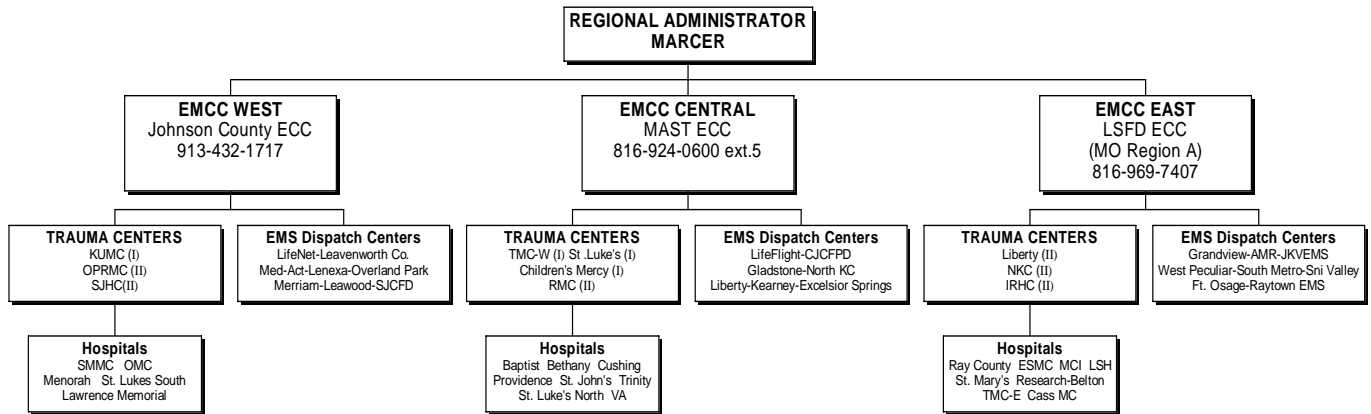
III. **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

A. **EMSystem Organizational Structure**

1. For administrative and organizational purposes, EMSystem participants will be divided into three zones—west, central and east—for EMSystem coordination.
2. An EMSystem Coordination Center (EMCC) will direct EMSystem coordination in each zone. Zones and their respective EMCCs include the following:

- a. West EMCC – Johnson County Emergency Communications Center.
 - b. Central EMCC – MAST.
 - c. East EMCC – Lee’s Summit Fire Department (Region A of the Missouri mutual aid system).
3. Each zone will include a number of hospitals and trauma centers. These are divided as follows:
- a. West Zone
 - (1) Trauma Centers – KU Med, Overland Park Regional Medical Center and St. Joseph Health Center.
 - (2) Hospitals – Shawnee Mission Medical Center, Olathe Medical Center, Menorah Medical Center, St. Luke’s South Hospital and Lawrence Memorial Hospital.
 - b. Central Zone
 - (1) Trauma Centers – Truman Medical Center West, St. Luke’s Hospital, Children’s Mercy Hospital and Research Medical Center.
 - (2) Hospitals – Baptist-Lutheran Medical Center, Cushing Hospital, Providence Hospital, St. John’s Hospital, St. Luke’s Northland Hospital and the Veterans Administration Hospital.
 - c. East Zone
 - (1) Trauma Centers – Liberty Hospital, North Kansas City Hospital and Independence Regional Health Center.
 - (2) Hospitals –Medical Center of Independence, Lee’s Summit Hospital, St. Mary’s Hospital of Blue Springs, Research Belton Hospital, Truman Medical Center Lakewood and Cass Medical Center.

- d. The following figure depicts EMSystem zones in the Kansas City metropolitan area:



B. MCI Alerts and System Advisories

1. MCI Alerts and System Advisories will only be issued by the Regional Administrator or an EMCC.
2. EMS agencies that require an MCI Alert or System Advisory must contact their assigned EMCC and request the alert.

C. Accessing EMSYSTEM Help

1. In the Kansas City metropolitan area, the EMCCs will be the primary contacts for EMSYSTEM help 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
2. Typical help provided will be:
 - a. User unable to log on.
 - b. User forgot user name or password.
 - c. User's computer network or Internet access is down and user must request EMCC to update EMSYSTEM status.
3. If possible, EMSYSTEM primary and secondary users (hospitals and EMS agencies) should attempt to correct or resolve EMSYSTEM problems themselves before contacting their EMCC or the Regional Administrator for assistance.
4. Infinity Health Care has a 24-hour help desk to assist users with technical issues with the operation of EMSYSTEM. They can be reached at 1-888-290-6710

D. Diversion Policy

1. With EMSsystem, the definition of hospital status is standardized across the entire Kansas City metropolitan area. **However, EMS providers and/or emergency medical systems should continue to follow their local policies and procedures regarding the determination of hospital destinations.** It is the position of the EMSsystem Task Force that no operational policy or direction is given as a part of this document. **It is up to each EMS agency to determine what they will do with the status information on EMSsystem and further communicate their operational plans to their respective hospitals of interest. EMSsystem provides standardized information to facilitate patient routing decisions.**
2. Hospitals should attempt to avoid ambulance diversion. If diversion becomes necessary, however, emergency departments must update their status (i.e., open, trauma diversion, closed to ambulances and out of service) on EMSsystem.
3. Emergency departments must update their status in accordance with the defined intervals listed on the Kansas City region EMSsystem web site. EMSsystem will prompt these updates with an audible tone and on-screen message. *See the EMSsystem Users Manual for the specific information required to update diversion status.*
5. Emergency departments that are unable to update their status on EMSsystem must contact their EMCC and request that the EMCC update emergency department status.
6. Dispatch centers, or EMCCs, must ensure that EMS units in the field are informed of the status of hospitals in their zones so that patients can be routed to the most appropriate facility.
7. Air ambulance services must update their status in accordance with the defined intervals listed on the Kansas City region EMSsystem web site to ensure EMCCs are aware of the availability of air ambulance resources.
8. All EMSsystem users are strongly encouraged to use and adopt the document: Kansas City Metropolitan Area Community Plan for Diversion, as their principle policy and procedure for ambulance diversion. This document was developed in concert with MARCER and The Health Alliance of Mid America.

