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## HOSPITAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (HERT) POLICY

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### I. PURPOSE

To establish a formal mechanism for providing rapid advanced surgical care at the scene, in which a higher level of on scene surgical expertise, physician field response, is requested by the on scene emergency medical services (EMS) provider.

### II. AUTHORITY

California Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Section 1798 (a)

### III. DEFINITIONS

Hospital Emergency Response Team (HERT): Organized group of healthcare providers from a designated Level I or II Trauma Center, with local emergency medical services agency (LEMSA) approval as a HERT provider, who are available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week (24/7) to respond and provide a higher level of on scene surgical expertise.

Incident Commander (IC): Designated officer with overall responsibility for the management of the incident.

### IV. PRINCIPLES

- A. In general, a HERT is utilized in a situation where a **life-saving** procedure, such as an amputation, is required due to the **inability to extricate** a patient. Life before limb concept is utilized as a life-saving measure, not as a time saving measure.
- B. HERT should be assembled and ready to respond within twenty (20) minutes of a request with standard life-saving equipment in accordance with the HERT provider's internal policy on file with ICEMA.
- C. The standard life-saving equipment referenced above shall be predetermined, preassembled, readily available, clearly labeled, and stored in a predetermined location. Based upon the magnitude and nature of the incident, the standard life-saving equipment may require augmentation.

### V. POLICY

#### A. Composition of a HERT

- 1. The composition of the HERT, and the identification of a Physician Team Leader, shall be in accordance with the approved HERT provider's internal policy on file with ICEMA.

2. The Physician Team Leader:
  - a. Is responsible for organizing, supervising, and accompanying members of the team to a scene where a physician field response has been requested.
  - b. Shall be familiar with base hospital operations and the ICEMA's policies, procedures, and protocols.
  - c. Is responsible for retrieving the life-saving equipment and determining if augmentation is required based upon the magnitude and nature of the incident.
  - d. Will determine the ultimate size and composition of the team based upon the magnitude and nature of the incident.
  - e. Will report to, and be under the authority of, the IC or their designee. Other members of the team will be directed by the Physician Team Leader.

B. Activation of a HERT

1. The anticipated duration of the incident should be considered in determining the need for a HERT. Before requesting a HERT, the IC should take into account that it may be a minimum of thirty (30) minutes before a team can be on scene.
2. The IC shall contact the appropriate communications center and request the HERT.
3. San Bernardino County Communication Center shall contact the approved HERT provider regarding the request. The Physician Team Leader will organize the team and equipment in accordance with the HERT provider's internal policy, and the magnitude and nature of the incident.
4. The IC will provide pertinent information regarding the incident through their communications center.
5. The Physician Team Leader shall inform the San Bernardino County Communication Center once the team has been assembled and indicate the number of team members.
6. San Bernardino County Communication Center will notify the IC of the estimated time of arrival and mode of transportation of the HERT.
7. Consider secondary air ambulance for patient transportation.

C. Transportation of a HERT

1. When either ground or air transportation is indicated, the San Bernardino County Communication Center will arrange emergency response vehicle transportation for the HERT.
2. Consider use of larger ground (CCT or bariatric) or air units for transport of patient and the HERT to a receiving hospital.
3. Upon the conclusion of the incident, the HERT will work with the IC to contact the San Bernardino County Communication Center to arrange transportation of the team back to the originating facility, if needed.

D. Responsibilities of a HERT On Scene

1. Upon arrival of the HERT, the Physician Team Leader will report directly to the IC. Access to the emergency medical scene will be at the discretion of the IC. The HERT members will have the recommended safety gear:
  - Safety goggles
  - Leather gloves
  - ANSI approved rescue helmet with HERT labeled on both sides (blue)
  - Nomex jumpsuit with HERT indicated on the back (blue)
  - DOT safety vests
  - ANSI/NFPA approved safety boot with steel toe and steel shank

Only personnel that meet the minimum safety gear requirements may be allowed into the area. All other responding personnel will be kept at a safe distance.

2. Documentation of care rendered will be completed on hospital approved trauma flow sheets (nursing notes) and physician progress notes.

E. Approval Process of a HERT

Trauma Centers interested in providing a HERT must develop internal policies to comply with all requirements and submit evidence of the ability to meet all requirements of this policy to ICEMA for review and approval as a HERT provider.