



Fire Department

“Serving the community since 1926”

HEADQUARTERS

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March 31, 2023

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 E Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Cc: Santa Barbara County Public Health Department
Dr. Mouhand Hammami, Director of Public Health
300 N San Antonio Rd
Santa Barbara, CA 93110

Submitted Electrically to Clerk of the Board

RE: Public Comment for D-8, Recommendations regarding the Ambulance Request-for-Proposal (Ambulance RFP) Update and Direction Request

Honorable Members of the Board,

As the Board considers options related to the Ambulance RFP, if the Board decides to cancel the RFP, and if the Board decides to enter into a “non-exclusive” ambulance agreement as articulated in option c) 3 of the Board Letter for this item, the County Fire Department recommends the following.

The Fire Department suggests that the County complete a comprehensive update of the Ambulance Ordinance (Chapter 5, Santa Barbara County Municipal Code) to allow for a permit-based EMS transport system. Creation of this “non-exclusive” service, would distribute emergency calls based on priority.

The Ambulance Ordinance update would allow the Board to issue needs-based permits for the County of Santa Barbara EMS Transport System. These permits would specify each permit holder’s functional responsibilities:

Permit 1

Priority 1 (Potentially Life-Threatening Emergency Response);

Priority 2 (Non-Life-Threatening Emergency Response) off-peak; and

Priority 3 (Urgent Response) off-peak

All Inter-Facility Transports

Permit 2

Priority 2 (Non-Life-Threatening Emergency Response) peak;
Priority 3 (Urgent Response) peak; and
All Critical Care Transports

Annual permit requirements should include the following:

1. Each permit holder will have a responsibility to reimburse Santa Barbara County a proportional percentage of cost recovery (based on transport volume) for the efforts listed below. The costs will be adjusted annually during the permit issuance process.
 - a. Operational costs of the LEMSA
 - b. EMS Clinical & Technical Enhancement Fund
 - c. Provision of Emergency Dispatch Services
 - d. First Responder Agency reimbursements
2. Permit holders to meet the following response time standards:
 - a. Priority 1 (Potentially Life-Threatening Emergency Response), within 7 minutes and 59 seconds on not less than 90% of all life-threatening emergency response requests;
 - b. Priority 2 (Non-Life-Threatening Emergency Response, 17 minutes and 59 seconds on at least 90% of all non-life-threatening emergency response requests; and
 - c. Priority 3 (Urgent Response), 14 minutes and 59 seconds on not less than 90% of all urgent response requests.
3. Permit holders shall meet the following standards set forth by the LEMSA:
 - a. Clinical Standards;
 - b. Operational Standards;
 - c. Administrative Standards;
 - d. Ambulance Response Time Performance Standards;
 - e. Liquidated Damages; and
 - f. Regulatory Compliance and Financial Standards.

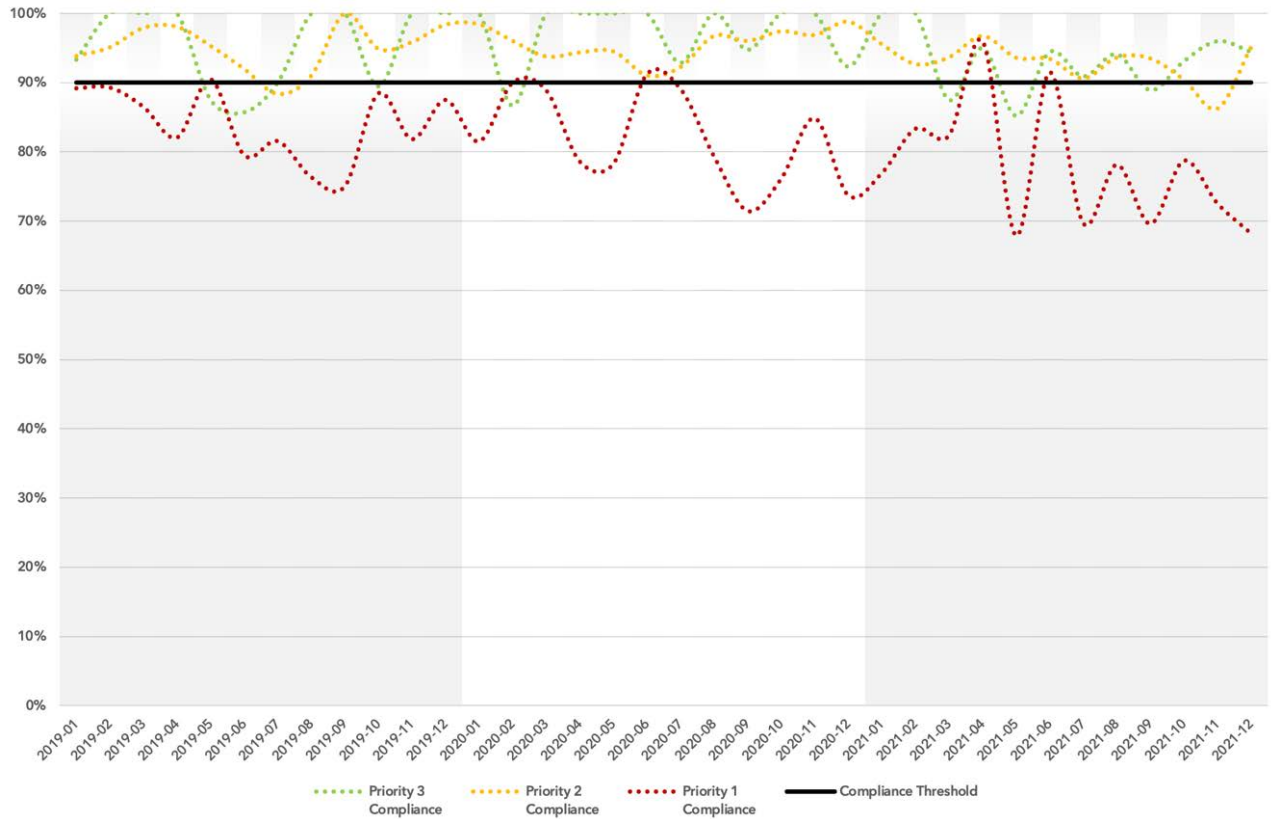
Operational Overview

In the illustration below, our consultants performed a review of historical call data and LEMSA requirements during that timeframe, the results of this analysis revealed a non-linear relationship between response time priorities, with Priorities 2 and 3 performing significantly better than Priority 1 with the same level of effort:

The Priority-Based Deployment System optimizes the response to life-threatening calls for help. Priority 1 response time would be measured independently to ensure the permit holders meet a response time of at least 90% to all life-threatening emergency response requests. In addition, the plan also ensures that the permit holders meet response times for Priority 2 and 3 emergencies.

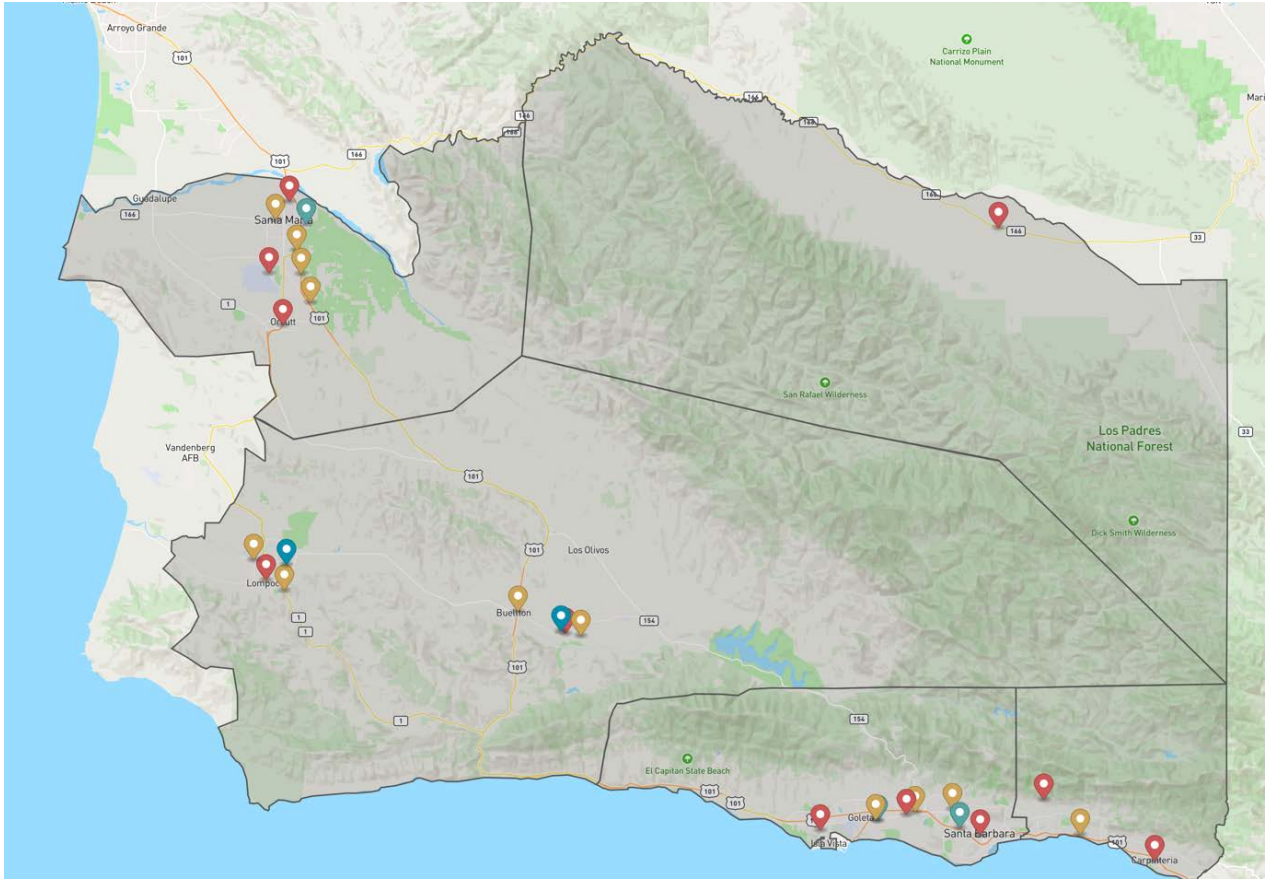
Illustration A

Historical Activity at Proposed Response Time Compliance Requirements
Zone 1



Permit holders shall meet LEMSA time standards AND minimum staffing levels for the Priority-Based Deployment System. Illustration B is an example of how functional responsibilities could be shared to achieve optimal priority-based deployment. The Priority Based deployment plan prioritizes life-threatening (Priority 1) calls for help and ensures that the permit holders meet response times for all Priority 2 and Priority 3 emergencies as well. Distribution of calls will be based on the priority of calls in accordance with specific permit responsibilities.

Illustration B



- 24-Hour Priority 1
- 10-Hour or 12-Hour Priority 2 and Priority 3 Only
- Inter-Facility Transports

System Compliance

Priority deployment will be monitored on a daily basis to ensure that permit holders are meeting the response time standards. System compliance will be based on each level of priority.

Financial Analysis

The Fire Department has invested several years in the analysis of various deployment plans and the associated financial analysis for both multiple providers and the Exclusive Operating Area (EOA) EMS Transport System for the County of Santa Barbara. Based on the analysis and review performed by three separate EMS System consultants and a forensic CPA, a two-permit-based model is financially viable, and reasonably equitable, for both permit holders. The issuance of more than two permits would not be financially sustainable for the permit holders.

Simply stated, a non-exclusive, two-provider, permit-based ambulance transport system in Santa Barbara County improves service countywide by adding more ambulances to

existing deployment and the improved service can be supported by the available system revenue without county subsidy.

Thank you for your consideration of the proposed County of Santa Barbara Permit-Based EMS Transport System. Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,
Mark A. Hartwig
Fire Chief/Fire Warden