

# SIERRA-SACRAMENTO VALLEY EMS AGENCY

## ALS PROGRAM POLICY

REFERENCE NO. 849

SUBJECT: PATIENT INITIATED RELEASE AT SCENE

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### PURPOSE:

To provide directions and guidelines when a patient declines transport by ambulance to an acute care hospital, while respecting the rights of a competent person to make prudent healthcare decisions. Patients requesting ambulance transport shall not be denied transport under this policy.

### AUTHORITY:

California Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Sections 1797.204, 1797.220, and 1798 et seq.,  
California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 9, Chapter 4, Sections 100147, 100169 and 100170.  
Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 5008.

### DEFINITIONS:

**Person** – Any competent person encountered by EMS personnel that upon questioning; denies illness or injury and does not exhibit any overt evidence of illness or injury.

**Patient** – Any person encountered by EMS personnel that upon questioning; requests assessment, treatment or transport or appears to exhibit overt evidence of illness or injury.

**Competent Person** – is a person with a capacity to understand the nature of his/her medical condition, and not impaired by; alcohol, drugs or medications, mental illness, traumatic injury, grave disability or mental abilities diminished because of age.

**Gravely Disabled** - A condition in which a person, as a result of a mental disorder or impairment by intoxication or, is unable to provide for his/her basic personal needs for food, clothing and shelter (Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 5008). Persons who are 21 years of age or older who have organic brain syndrome; dementia, Alzheimer type conditions or other brain trauma may qualify for involuntary hospitalization if they are a danger to self/others or gravely disabled.

### POLICY:

- A. Patients who are released at the scene by a paramedic must be a competent adult or, a minor in compliance with the criteria of policy # 851, and meet **ALL** of the following:

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Date last Reviewed / Revised: 01/05

Next Review Date: 01/09

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Approved:

William J. Koenig, M.D.  
S-SV EMS Medical Director

Leonard R. Inch  
S-SV EMS Regional Executive Director

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1. The patient must have a clearly articulated plan for medical assessment and/or follow-up that relies on previously established medical providers or the use of recognized acute care/urgent care providers and facilities.
  2. This plan must have a reasonable and prudent transportation plan to reach follow-up medical care in a timely manner.
  3. After complete assessment the paramedic must concur with the appropriateness of scene release and the medical appropriateness of the follow-up plan.
  4. The Incident Commander (IC) should be consulted and concur with the non-medical aspects of the follow-up plan.
  5. The patient should sign an appropriate release form developed by the provider stating that emergency assessment has been offered and/or rendered, transportation offered, and that the patient chooses an alternative plan. If the patient refuses to sign, document the refusal.
  6. The Provider will audit 100% of scene releases under this policy, based on available data, for medical appropriateness, compliance with department/company policy, and compliance with S-SV policies.
- B. A paramedic under this policy shall make base/modified base contact prior to releasing the following classes of patients at scene:
1. Patients (the provider has knowledge of) that have been released at scene within the last 24 hours.
  2. Children under 3 years of age.
- C. A paramedic will **NOT** release at scene under this policy the following classes of patients. These patients may be released under S-SV EMS Agency policy # 850.
1. Patients that meet Trauma Triage Criteria.
  2. Patients with **ANY** new onset medical complaints such as seizures, headache, hypoglycemia, respiratory distress, cardiac symptoms, regardless of the duration of the complaint.
  3. Patients who are difficult to assess **OR** whose baseline mental status is chronically altered due to a pre-existing condition such as Alzheimer's disease, dementia, previous CVA.

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**CROSS REFERENCES:**

Policy and Procedure Manual

Cancellation or Reduction of ALS Ground Response, Reference No. 848

Patient Initiated Refusal of Service, Against Medical Advice (AMA), Reference No. 850

Treatment / Transport of Minors, Reference No. 851