



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Office of Emergency Medical Services
99 Chauncy Street, Boston, MA 02111

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EMERGENCY WAIVER

TO: All Licensed Ambulance Services
FROM: Mark J. Miller, Director
RE: Weather-Related Temporary Waiver for Transport to Emergency Shelters
DATE: March 13, 2017

Due to the winter storm that is anticipated to affect the Commonwealth, and under the authority of the Commissioner of the Department of Public Health, under M.G.L. c. 111C, §22, certain provisions of the Emergency Medical Services System Regulations, 105 CMR 170.000, have been temporarily suspended through this waiver.

The purpose of this waiver is to facilitate transportation of individuals who have contacted the 911 system only to access transportation to an alternate destination, such as an American Red Cross (or similar) shelter, in response to the current weather conditions and any potential for power outages.

Term of the Suspension:

This order shall be effective:

From: 4 AM, Tuesday, March 14, 2017
To: 8 AM, Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Effective section: 105 CMR 170.020 Definitions

“Appropriate Health Care Facility” shall mean:

An emergency department, either physically located within an acute care hospital license by the Department pursuant to 105 CMR 130.000 to provide emergency services, or in a satellite emergency facility approved by the Department pursuant to 130.821, or a shelter, using the attached criteria, that is closest geographically or conforms to a Department- approved point of entry plan.

Conditions:

- The suspension of the appropriate destination requirements will only apply to Massachusetts ambulance services, licensed at any level, BLS or ALS, that are affected by the severe weather conditions.
- The suspension **does not preclude ambulance services affected by the weather conditions from transporting patients to the most appropriate setting of care, including acute care hospitals when necessary.**

- The suspension will also be relevant to any ambulance service that are called upon to assist in transportation in the affected areas.

Guidelines for Transporting Individuals to Alternative Destinations:

- Individuals must not have an acute chief complaint that could require emergency medical care.
- Individuals must have normal mental status (or baseline per knowledgeable observer).
- Normal (or baseline) vital signs.
- A trip report must be completed for each individual transported to an alternate destination.
- Transportation in an ambulance to a shelter will be permitted when no other means of transportation, such as “chair vans” are available.
- Crews must ensure that patients bring any needed medications or equipment with them.

Contact information

In the event that you may need further information or an update on this waiver, you may contact the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Duty Officer at 617-339-8351. You may also contact Mark Miller at Mark.J.Miller@state.ma.us .

Thank you.