



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

CHARLES D. BAKER
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO
Lieutenant Governor

MARYLOU SUDDERS
Secretary

EILEEN M. SULLIVAN
Acting Commissioner
Tel: 617-753-7300
www.mass.gov/dph

EMERGENCY WAIVER

TO: All Licensed Ambulance Services
FROM: Michael Kass, OEMS Director
RE: Weather Related Waiver for Transport to Emergency Shelters
DATE: January 26, 2015

Due to the severe 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 suspended through this waiver.

The purpose of this waiver is to facilitate the 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: 1700 hours, Monday, January 26, 2015
To: 1700 hours, Thursday, January 29, 2015

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, in EMS Regions that are been 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.**



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- The suspension will also be relevant to any ambulance service from outside of the effected regions 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.
- On-line medical control, if available shall be contacted.
- Transportation in an ambulance to a shelter will be permitted when no other means of transportation, such as "chair vans" are available.
- The modification of the transport destination requirements is subject to the approval of the ambulance service's affiliate hospital.
- Crews must ensure that patients bring any needed medications with them.

Contact information

In the event that you may need further information or an update on this waiver, you may contact the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) at **(508) 820-2000** and ask to speak to one of the staff members at "**ESF 8**" desk in the Operations Room, or dial the ESF8 number directly at **508-820-1456**. You may also contact Michael Kass, at michael.kass@state.ma.us.

Thank you.