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Anne Kronenberg
Executive Director

Date: January 6, 2012
To: All EMS System Participants
From: Rob Dudgeon
Re: San Francisco Exclusive Operating Area

Recently the San Francisco EMS Agency asked the California EMS Authority to review and reconsider their 2008 decision which rescinded the Exclusive Operating Area (EOA) that San Francisco operated under since 1981 pursuant to Section 1797.224.

Yesterday we received the attached letter from the Authority stating that, upon further review and consideration, they agreed with our assertion that there had not been substantive changes in manner or scope with regards to 911 responses in San Francisco. Therefore, the Exclusive Operating Area in San Francisco is reestablished for the purposes of 911 responses.

What this means to the San Francisco EMS System:

- The authorized providers of 911 generated EMS services are the San Francisco Fire Department, King-American Ambulance Service and American Medical Response.
- Other private firms may apply for and receive (after a thorough review process) an Advanced Life Support operating permit. They may respond to and transport any call, including emergencies, generated from a non-911 source (i.e. special event standby, skilled nursing facility calling a private seven digit phone number, etc).
- Response time standards apply. If a provider cannot be on scene within the required time frame for a code 3 response it must be turned over to another ALS provider or Division of Emergency Communications (DEC) for assignment to a 911 ambulance.
- Paramedics working for non-911 providers are fully licensed and accredited in San Francisco and operate in the same manner as those paramedics working for 911 providers. There are no restrictions or differences in terms of required knowledge, skills or accountability.
- If a non-911 ALS ambulance happens upon ("on views") an incident they will advise the DEC, request resources as needed, treat and transport the patient in accordance with protocols.

- Any 911 ambulances responding should be cancelled unless required to assist the ambulance on scene. In the event that a 911 ambulance and non-911 ambulance arrive simultaneously, the 911 ambulance will handle the call.
- It should be noted that on views are relatively rare occurrences and will be treated as an Exception Report pursuant to EMS Policy 6020. It is not permissible for non-911 ambulances to monitor the radio and attempt to intercept or “jump” 911 calls in an attempt to create an “on view” situation. Trends will be monitored and disciplinary action initiated if it is determined that this is occurring.
- Non-911 ALS ambulances may be dispatched to 911 calls only when mutual aid is warranted, requested and approved by the EMS Agency.

In the weeks to come we will be making necessary policy and procedures changes in order to fully implement this change. The vast majority of adjustments will be administrative in nature and have little or no impact on field operations. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the EMS Agency.