NOR-CAL EMS	3109	EMS Provider Safety
Nor-Cal EMS Policy & Procedure Manual		Treatment Guidelines
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Policy:

To ensure the safety of EMS personnel and support informed, consistent decision making when encountering potentially hazardous environments where law enforcement or other safety resources are delayed, unavailable, or insufficient.

Definitions:

1) **Appropriate Agency/Authority Response-** Any public or private agency, department, or company capable of responding to and securing unsafe scenes alongside EMS personnel, including but not limited to:
   - **a)** Law Enforcement; including animal control and coroners (local, state, or federal)
   - **b)** Hazardous Materials Unit
   - **c)** Fire Department and Rescue Services
   - **d)** Public Works and Road Departments
   - **e)** Power and Electric Companies
   - **f)** Private Security or Safety Contractors
   - **g)** Specialized Response Team (Swift Water, Tactical, SWAT, Bomb Squad, etc.)
2) **Safe Scene-** A scene that does not pose a threat to EMS personnel safety.
3) **Staging Area/Location-** An area near an incident where resources can gather while awaiting further entry into an unsafe scene. Considerations for staging location:
   - a) **Safe:** Free of hazards
   - b) **Near:** Close to the incident, but outside the danger or “hot” zone
   - c) **Accessible:** Clear entry and exit paths
   - d) **Connected:** Reliable radio/contact with dispatch and other entities
   - e) **Known:** Familiar or easy to describe to other agencies
4) **Unsafe scene-**Any scene that possesses a threat to EMS personnel safety, including areas that may become unsafe after the arrival of EMS, including but not limited to:
   - a) Weapons or suspected at scene
   - b) Assault in progress
   - c) Suicidal subject or severely agitated and/or violent/combative patient
   - d) Domestic violence incident
   - e) Downed powerlines
   - f) Active “hot” zones in an incident
   - g) Presence of hazardous materials
   - h) Civil unrest
   - i) Structural instability
   - j) Threats made by person or patient at an incident

Procedure:

1) Scene Safety Considerations
    a) Any scene that poses a threat to EMS personnel safety, including scenes that may become unsafe after arrival.
    b) EMS personnel should not enter into any scene that is considered unsafe
    c) EMS personnel should stage in an area that is close to the incident, but at a safe distance with easy access to leave the area if necessary.
    d) EMS personnel should await clearance from the appropriate authority/resource to enter into a potentially unsafe scene.
2) Dispatch, Response, and On-Scene Procedure
    a) Dispatch declared unsafe scene; request law enforcement or other appropriate authority/resource if not already assigned.
    b) Stage a safe location away from the scene until cleared.
        i) Do not enter the scene until confirmed clear.
        ii) Do not engage in scene mitigation or approach suspects/patients.
        iii) Request specialty resources/ appropriate authority as needed. (e.g., Fire, HAZMAT, etc.)
        iv) If law enforcement or other appropriate authority/resource has not arrived or is not en route after 30 minutes, EMS may clear the scene.
            (1) EMS may be re-dispatched once the scene is declared safe.
            (2) In the event of incidents requiring prolonged EMS involvement, such as hazardous materials situations, bomb threats, etc., consider deploying additional EMS personnel to maintain coverage of the 911 system or to rotate into the incident scene as relief for the on-site staff.
            (3) If during staging at an unsafe scene, system coverage becomes compromised due to a lack of EMS response to other incidents, units are authorized to clear the staging location and resume 911 service.
3) Scene Initially Safe, but Becomes Unsafe
    a) Maintain a safe distance and attempt verbal de-escalation if possible.
        i) EMS personnel may retreat to their vehicle and relocate to a safe area as needed.
        ii) If safe, maintain visual contact with the patient.
        iii) Immediately request law enforcement or other appropriate authority/resource and notify dispatch of the situation.
            (1) Notify the EMS supervisor/Management if applicable with pertinent incident information
            (2) Notify the Nor-Cal EMS Duty Officer/ MHAOC as needed to help with mitigation
4) Documentation Requirements for Departing an Unsafe Scene:
    a) For any instance where EMS personnel make patient contact, but must leave due to safety concerns, the following must be documented in the Electronic Patient Care Report (ePCR):
        i) Time law enforcement or appropriate authority/response was requested
        ii) Time EMS personnel supervisor/manager was notified (if applicable)

iii) If EMS are staging, they are considered ‘arrived at scene’ and shall follow Nor-Cal EMS Documentation policy. The following information shall be utilized and documented in the ePCR for an unsafe scene:
   (1) Clearly document in narrative, “EMS personnel returned to service due to an unsafe scene’ or other precise wording that clearly states that the scene became unsafe and that the unit returned to service due to a specific need or prolonged ETA of the appropriate authority/resource.
   (2) Cause of the unsafe scene.
   (3) Detailed explanation of any discussion with supervisor, dispatch, or other involved entities.
   (4) Any discussion with a Base Hospital regarding the incident shall be documented, if applicable.
   (5) ‘Patient Access’ should be selected under ‘Transport Delay’ drop down box.
   (6) ‘Back in Service, No Care/Support Services Required’ should be selected under the ‘Crew Disposition’ drop down box when the ultimate disposition results in non-transport. AMA/RAS should be utilized when needed using Nor-Cal EMS Policy 1200.