



SARATOGA COUNTY

EMS

MUTUAL AID PLAN

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Under NYS Law, EMS MAPs are administered by the County EMS Coordinator:

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INTRODUCTION

Preplanning Mutual Aid benefits each Corps in Saratoga County. The Saratoga County EMS Council developed this plan at the request of County EMS Coordinator Mike McEvoy who is charged under NYS County Law 223(b) to administer EMS Mutual Aid. It was originally drafted during summer of 1992 and took three years to complete. Revisions were compiled and republished in 2003, 2004 and significantly updated in 2020. The EMS Council is charged by County and State governments with coordinating Emergency Medical Services in Saratoga County. Each ambulance service provider in the County holds membership in the EMS Council. By this virtue, each Corps is a voluntary participant in the Mutual Aid Plan outlined herein.

It must be emphasized that this document will never replace the ability of EMS providers to make other choices based on unique needs of an actual incident.

The purposes of this document/plan are as follows:

1. Provide coverage of a Corps response area when it is unable to respond to emergency calls.
2. Establish a 5-minute maximum time in Saratoga County from receipt of a call until an ambulance is enroute.
3. Automatically enact mutual aid preplans when an ambulance crew is not confirmed at 3 minutes or when an ambulance is not enroute in 5 minutes.
4. Upon request, automatically provide up to 7 ambulances using a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) algorithm pulling from nearest available appropriate Saratoga County ambulance services.
5. Upon request, automatically provide 8 or more ambulances using a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) algorithm pulling from nearest available appropriate Saratoga County and out-of-county ambulance services.
6. Automatically notify and respond a County EMS Coordinator or EMS Agency Leader to assist on scene Incident Commanders when resources or needs exceed preplans.
7. Automatically place a helicopter on standby for critical patient conditions at locations that exceed 30 minutes ground transport time to the nearest trauma center.
8. Prevent depletion of Saratoga County resources when fulfilling out of county mutual aid requests.

Corps that are not dispatched by Saratoga County can accomplish these objectives by requesting their local dispatch follow this plan.

EMS DISPATCH AUTOMATIC MUTUAL AID PROCEDURE

If an ambulance has not confirmed a crew within 3 minutes of initial activation, EMS Dispatch will mutual aid the call using a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) algorithm pulling from the nearest available appropriate ambulance service, unless otherwise requested by a member of the Corps of jurisdiction. Crew confirmation means radio contact with EMS Dispatch by a member of the EMS service activated indicating that a crew is available.

If a crew was confirmed and the Corps of jurisdiction has not started enroute to the scene within 5 minutes from the time of initial activation, EMS Dispatch reactivate the Corps to request a first responder and mutual aid the call using a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) algorithm pulling from the nearest available appropriate ambulance service. EMS Dispatch may not accept requests to tone for additional manpower after 5 minutes from initial activation.

Mutual Aid can be cancelled **only** when one of the following occurs:

1. A request to cancel the ambulance is received from an EMS provider at the scene.
2. Any Saratoga County ambulance signs enroute to the scene.
3. It is determined that a patient is no longer at the scene.

If a Corps fails to respond an ambulance to any call (excepting ALS intercept requests), EMS Dispatch will place the Corps on Automatic Mutual Aid (AMA) status for all additional calls. The Corps will remain on AMA status until such time as a member requests return to regular service or the Corps answers a subsequent call within 5 minutes of initial activation. For these purposes, any call voluntarily Turned Over To (TOT) another agency will be considered as not answered and AMA status will be activated.

To assure that Corps members know that AMA status has been enacted, any crew that signs back in service (from another call, standby, etc.) will be advised by EMS Dispatch that their Corps is on AMA. A list of Corps on AMA will also be included with the regular EMS Radio announcements.

When a call has been mutual aided, there is no restriction on the agency of jurisdiction from responding if they are able to raise a crew before another agency arrives at the scene. The objective of this plan is for the closest ambulance to get to the patient in the shortest time. Crews who sign enroute before a mutual aid Corps should request cancellation of the mutual aid Corps, unless the other Corps will be needed for the call (i.e.: ALS, multiple patients, etc.).

To avoid depleting the resources of any single agency, the CAD algorithm will skip Corps based on resources already committed to other calls. When 7 or more ambulances are needed, the CAD algorithm will begin to pull from out-of-county ambulance services.

Out of county mutual aid requests for more than one ambulance will be held by EMS Dispatch until an EMS Coordinator designates which agencies can be dispatched. No more than 5 Saratoga County ambulances will be sent to any out of county request, regardless of circumstances.

COUNTY EMS COORDINATORS/AGENCY LEADERS

To assist EMS providers, an EMS Coordinator and several Deputy EMS Coordinators have been appointed by the Office of Emergency Services. Their role under New York State Law as EMS Coordinators includes a duty, "to administer mutual aid in cases of emergency where EMS might be involved."

On a routine basis, the role of the EMS Coordinator is advisory. They are notified automatically under the following circumstances:

- A. Initial dispatch of more than 1 ambulance to any scene, or any request for additional ambulances to a scene;
- B. Confirmation of more than 2 patients at any scene;
- C. Request for standby or dispatch of medivac to any scene;
- D. Any working structure fire;
- E. Evacuation of any public building or multiple dwelling structures;
- F. Any reported structure collapse;
- G. Crash involving an EMS response vehicle (includes ambulances, fly-cars, POVs, etc.);
- H. Reported injury to any EMS provider;
- I. Any request for out of county EMS mutual aid;
- J. Any request meeting current EID (Emerging Infectious Disease) or BERT (Biological Emergency Response Team) criteria;
- K. Any request for response of the County HazMat Team;
- L. Any request for technical rescue (fire service, specialized technical rescue team, etc.);
- M. Any missing person search involving a fire or EMS agency;
- N. Reported active shooter or barricaded subject requiring law enforcement response;
- O. When requested by any EMS, Fire, Law Enforcement, or Local Government unit.

Response depends on potential benefit to the EMS providers at a scene. In large incidents that require more than the 7 preplanned ambulances, an EMS Coordinator can help to obtain additional resources and assure EMS coverage for the entire County during the incident. Additionally, EMS Leaders from Saratoga County Ambulance Corps can elect to join the Coordinator notification system and respond in the capacity of an EMS Deputy Coordinator to render any assistance in any incident broadcast through the notification system.

MUTUAL AID PRINCIPLES

There were several principles upon which this Mutual Aid Plan was based:

- ◆ Routine use of the CAD Mutual Aid algorithm establishes a day-to-day back up plan that becomes the basis for a large-scale incident response.
- ◆ The design of the plan allows response to expand or contract as the nature or size of an incident changes.

- ◆ The CAD Mutual Aid Algorithm is made for the most strategic and tactical placement of field units. To avoid geographic depletion of resources, caution is used in requesting multiple units from any one neighboring agency at a time. This allows for multiple simultaneous incidents and coverage assignments for squads that have exhausted their own resources.
- ◆ This plan is designed to be used within the framework of the Incident Command System (ICS) and the Regional Emergency Medical Organization (REMO) MCI Management Model.
- ◆ Level of care (BLS vs. ALS) is secondary to the need for sufficient ambulances to treat and transport all patients.
- ◆ Each participant responding on a mutual aid call assumes full responsibility for their equipment, personnel, and actions in the same manner as day-to-day operations.
- ◆ This preplan addresses incidents within a foreseeable scale. Beyond this magnitude, County EMS Coordinators/Agency Leaders will be available to assist with obtaining necessary resources.

AIR MEDICAL MUTUAL AID

A medevac helicopter is an air ambulance that responds as mutual aid to the local ambulance corps. They are accountable to, and under the direction of the EMS Command (Branch Director). After years of requiring field providers to request air medical mutual aid in circumstances deemed necessary, Saratoga County implemented an automatic helicopter dispatch policy on April 1, 2001. There were several suppositions supporting these Automatic Helicopter Standby Criteria:

- ◆ Mechanism of Injury (MOI) has been a poor predictor of actual need for air medical transport in Saratoga County. Correlation of MOI with patient condition is necessary and *can be done* by the Emergency Medical Dispatcher (EMD).
- ◆ Automatic Helicopter Standby Criteria do not apply to Clifton Park-Halfmoon and Waterford Rescue jurisdictions. The only acceptable helicopter requests in those locations would be extrication exceeding 15 minutes, burns, CO poisoning, or other specific medical problem requiring direct transport to distant specialty hospitals. These should be determined once EMS providers have made patient contact, and should involve on-line medical direction.
- ◆ Communications will automatically place the helicopter on standby for all jurisdictions except Clifton Park-Halfmoon and Waterford when any of the Automatic Helicopter Standby Criteria are satisfied.

- ◆ EMS Command has the option of canceling a helicopter standby or requesting a flight *once they arrive and assess the patient.*
- ◆ Helicopter requests will continue to be accepted outside of the situations listed in the Automatic Helicopter Standby Criteria. Any EMS, Fire, or Law Enforcement responder may request a helicopter by contacting the Saratoga County Sheriff's Department Communications Center. Requests should only be made after patient contact and assessment.
- ◆ After a helicopter standby or response has been requested, cancellation will only be accepted from EMS Command at the incident scene. All additional requests and inquiries for the helicopter must go through EMS Command at the scene or a County EMS Coordinator.

LANDING ZONE PROCEDURES

Helicopters require secure landing zones for the safety. Moving the LZ is a complex endeavor that requires coordination of multiple agencies operating in emergency mode and is inherently dangerous.

- ◆ There are several **controlled** LZ locations in Saratoga County: Wilton Fire Department, Saratoga Hospital, Saratoga County Airport (Ballston Spa) and the Malta Med Emergent Care (Northway, Exit 12). For safety, **use of a controlled LZ is preferred** whenever possible.
- ◆ Select an LZ only when personally certain that the patient ETA and helicopter ETA closely coincide. Flight requests stating, "LZ not yet determined" provide time to ascertain the most ideal LZ location and are appropriate while awaiting information about ETA.
- ◆ For personnel and scene safety, the County Communications Center will automatically dispatch the jurisdictional fire department to any **uncontrolled LZ**. By agreement with local ambulance corps, the fire department may also assume duties of LZ coordination with the helicopter when the ambulance corps is unable to do so.
- ◆ Communications will not automatically dispatch the fire department of jurisdiction to a controlled LZ except for the Wilton Fire Department LZ. If needed for LZ coordination or patient movement, fire response to controlled LZs at Saratoga Hospital, Saratoga County Airport or Malta Med Emergent Care can be obtained by special request of the EMS agency utilizing the LZ at the time.
- ◆ Responsibilities and duties of Incident Commander for air medical requests:
 1. Choose a safe LZ (preferably at a controlled site), depending on helicopter ETA.
 2. Assign LZ Coordinator (if uncontrolled site selected) and determine operational radio frequency (preferably 155.7150, no PL/CTCSS).
 3. Assure relay of preliminary patient information to County Communications Center.

- ◆ Responsibilities and duties of Landing Zone Coordinator at uncontrolled sites:
 1. Proceed immediately to designated LZ and determine if safe/adequate.
 2. Secure LZ perimeter.
 3. Mark LZ.
 4. Establish communications with EMS Branch Director or Incident Command and:
 - a) Advise LZ established.
 - b) Verify operational radio frequency and determine helicopter ETA.
 - c) Obtain brief patient report, if available.
 - d) Determine ETA of patient to LZ.

- ◆ Malta Med Emergent Care (MMEC) Responsibilities:
 1. MMEC will directly arrange flights for patients originating at MMEC.
 2. On receipt of a field request to use the MMEC LZ, Air Methods Dispatch will notify the MMEC charge nurse phone (518-886-5431) or desk (518-886-5450), including ETA.
 3. MMEC will send a representative to the LZ the area is secure and necessary lighting activated (Malta Fire will not be dispatched).
 4. Ambulances can access the LZ directly (gate is not locked).

- ◆ Once established, the LZ should not be moved unless critical for safety. If, on arrival at the LZ, the helicopter is not there, determine its ETA from the LZ Coordinator or County Communications Center. If the ETA is unreasonable, initiate transport per REMO protocol. Establish a new LZ only if critical for patient care.

BIOLOGICAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (BERT)

Requests for EMS response to certain high-risk biological conditions such as Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) may be outside the resources and ability of individual Saratoga County EMS agencies to safely respond to. To protect the health and safety of EMS responders and to provide appropriate care and transport of persons under investigation (PUI), suspected or diagnosed with any high risk biological condition or disease, a county-wide, collaborative, EMS mutual aid plan addendum was developed.

BERT is a collaborative mutual aid effort consisting of EMS providers recruited from active membership of Saratoga County ambulance corps who voluntarily offer to join the team and designated ambulances from Saratoga County agencies outfitted for BERT response. Members receive training in BERT policies and procedures; response plans; use of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); patient care and transport procedures; decontamination of scenes, vehicles and equipment; proper removal of biohazard wastes; return to service; and follow-up medical monitoring. Coordination of BERT will be through the Office of Emergency Services (OES).

For additional information, refer to the Saratoga County EMS Mutual Aid Plan Addendum for High Risk Biological Response Biological Emergency Response Team (BERT).

MUTUAL AID AGREEMENTS

Each Corps in the County previously completed one or more Mutual Aid Choice designation forms under the earlier versions of this plan. With the 2020 revision, each Corps will complete a participation agreement in order to fulfill requirements of regional, state, and accrediting bodies and organizations. Such agreements will remain in force until revoked by the participating Corps.

Revisions or changes to this MAP can be made by the County EMS Coordinator, ordinarily in consultation with the Saratoga County EMS Council. State law allows the EMS Coordinator to adjust MAPs as necessary to address any ordinary or extraordinary circumstances that might arise.



Saratoga County
Office of Emergency Services
6010 County Farm Rd • Ballston Spa, NY 12020

EMS Mutual Aid Agreement

Agency Name: _____

“The Saratoga County EMS Mutual Aid Plan has been discussed and agreed upon by the members of the above named ambulance organization.”

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chief Administrative Officer

This agreement will remain in effect until such time as revoked in writing by the above named ambulance organization. It is not necessary to submit a new agreement when changes/revisions are made to the Mutual Aid Plan.