



# San Joaquin County

## Emergency Medical Services Agency



<http://www.sjgov.org/ems>

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DATE: June 5, 2006

TO: All San Joaquin County Paramedics and MICNs  
Emergency Ambulance Service Providers  
First Responder Agencies  
Hospital Liaisons

FROM: Richard N. Buys, M.D., Medical Director  
Dan Burch, EMS Administrator

SUBJ.: Determination of Death in the Field

On two different occasions in the past 40 days two different paramedics working in the San Joaquin County EMS system have inappropriately sought a base physician's order to not resuscitate a patient. In each instance the paramedic did not assess and treat their patient following EMS Agency Treatment Protocols. Additionally, in each instance other on scene advanced life support (ALS) and basic life support (BLS) personnel did not act as a patient advocate and take immediate action to ensure the patient received appropriate treatment.

In order to reduce and eliminate future occurrences the San Joaquin County EMS Agency is taking the following action:

- Effective Monday June 5, 2006, EMS Policy No. 5301 Determination of Death in the Field takes effect and replaces EMS Policies No. 510.11 and 530.13 (see attached.)
- All emergency ambulance service providers and ALS first response agencies are directed to initiate through their respective Quality Improvement (QI) Programs a 100% audit of all deaths in the field to determine compliance with EMS Agency policy.
- The County Base Hospital is directed to initiate through their Quality Improvement (QI) Program a 100% audit of all requests for a base hospital physician's order to determine death in the field.
- All emergency ambulance service providers, ALS first response agencies and the County Base Hospital shall within the next 30 days develop and implement a program for training all ALS, BLS and Mobile Intensive Care Nurse (MICN) personnel on the requirements of EMS Policy No. 5301 Determination of Death in the Field.

Questions or comments about this memo and EMS Policy No. 5301 may be directed to Anna Valdez, RN MSN, EMS Quality Improvement/Trauma Coordinator at (209) 468-6818 or by email at [avaldez@sjgov.org](mailto:avaldez@sjgov.org).

Attachment: EMS Policy No. 5301 Determination of Death in the Field