

## I/Request and Inter-Facility Transport Frequently Asked Questions

### Why does AHS use I/Request?

EMS dispatch receives over 125 000 Inter-facility transfer requests each year in Alberta. Using both ground and air ambulances, many of these transfers cover long distances, and take a lot of time to complete. In addition to moving patients between care centers, we also need to be able to respond to emergency events in communities across Alberta. This means EMS responds to over half a million events each year.

Just like the rest of the health care system, EMS has limited resources. The EMS system needs to ensure that our resources are deployed responsibly and efficiently. We need to ensure that the correct ambulance is matched to your patient needs. **By using I/Request, you can help** the system to plan ahead for patient transfers so that we can better service communities for emergencies.

### How does EMS assign an ambulance to a patient?

There is a very comprehensive patient triage system in place that drives the decision making process. EMS has a selection of Advanced, Basic, and non-ambulance transport options that are assigned based on the clinical information you provide. This is why it is so important to be very complete when filling out a request. **The information you input needs to accurately reflect the patients' care needs anticipated DURING the transport.** For example, if your patient has an IV, and is on IV antibiotic therapy, but will not need the medication running during the transport, and the IV can be locked for transport, do NOT indicate that the patient requires IV medications. The clinical information drives the level of service you will get from EMS. If you overstate the clinical needs, you will have less options for ambulance availability and may take a valuable Advanced Care ambulance out of service when a Basic Care ambulance would have been appropriate.

Alternatively, you do not want to understate your patients' clinical needs during transport. If your patient requires IV medications to be delivered during transport, only an Advanced Care ambulance can be assigned for this task.

You do not need to worry about what level of service is sent to you, as long as you are accurate and complete when entering the clinical requirements during transport into I/Request. The EMS patient triage coding system will take care of the rest!

## Emergency Medical Services

### **What if I can't book the day before but my patient needs to go today!**

Our system is dynamic and will reorganize as needed to accommodate urgent transports. In addition to the type of Ambulance sent, our patient triage coding system also prioritizes which patients need to go first, based on the clinical acuity and the type of transfer. We also have a partnership with RAAPID, and any transfers that are complex and urgent in nature can be arranged quickly by calling RAAPID North at 1-800-282-9911 or RAAPID South at 1-800-661-1700.

### **Why do I need to try and book before 23:59 the day before the transfer?**

Whenever possible, EMS asks that you book transport by **23:59 the day before**. This is so important for EMS to allow us to plan ahead and add predictability into a very complex system. The *EMS Smart Appointment Time* system will match your patient's appointment time to EMS availability to ensure patients arrive to their appointments **on time**. If you don't book the EMS transport until the same day as the appointment, you may have to move the appointment time to better align with EMS availability.

To avoid having to change appointment times, it is highly recommended that the appointment and the online I/request form are booked simultaneously.

EMS transports can be booked days, or even weeks in advance.

### **They system won't let me book an appointment for the time I want. Why not?**

There may be a few reasons for this. The EMS Smart Appointment Time system takes into account many factors such as:

- **Distance/Time a patient must travel.** For example, if the patient has to travel for 3 hours to get to an appointment, you will not be able to book an 8:00am appointment. It may be better for the patient to have an 11am appointment so they do not need to be woken up in the middle of the night.
- **EMS shift start and end times.** EMS can reduce crew fatigue and improve crew safety by better aligning the scheduled work to occur during the planned shift hours.
- **Opening and Closing Hours.** If there are restrictions at the facility, you will not be able to book an arrival outside these hours
- **System Capacity.** If the EMS system does not have the ability to complete the transfer due to volume, you may not get the time you are requesting.



## Emergency Medical Services

### **What if I book ahead but the patient's condition changes and I need to cancel or expedite the transfer?**

We understand that things change, and we don't mind if a transfer is cancelled or changed. EMS would rather cancel a planned transfer than manage requests without enough time to prepare. If your patient condition changes and you need to expedite, cancel, or update clinical care requirements, you may do this by calling 1-877-661-6710.

### **How do I know the status of transfers in and out of my area?**

We recommend that you refer to the I/Request **Kiosk** which provides real time updates to your patient's inter-facility transport. This is located on I/request as a second tab and is a great way to stay informed. The Kiosk shows you what is coming in or scheduled to leave from your unit, gives you up to date information on Ambulance arrival times, and also warns you if there are any unexpected delays. The Kiosk does not show private patient information and will not time out. You may leave the Kiosk open on your unit all the time if you wish.

### **My patient has low level clinical requirements, so why did an advanced level ambulance arrive for my patient?**

Our system may choose to send a higher level of care than what is required for operational reasons, such as, to plan for a second patient requiring advanced care after your patient is transported. EMS Dispatch has a complex planning system that is built to achieve system efficiency.

### **I filled out an I/Request form and an ambulance arrived, but they will not take my patient. What happened?**

Within the EMS system, there are different levels of care, ranging from Non-Ambulance Transport (NAT) through to Advanced Life Support (ALS). In order to ensure your patient gets the right EMS unit assigned, it is imperative that when booking transport, that the clinical information is up to date, accurate, and as complete as possible. If the clinical information is not complete, there is a risk that the wrong ambulance may be sent and they cannot safely transport the patient. If you book ahead and the expected clinical requirements during transport have changed since the booking, you must call 1-877-661-6710 to update EMS dispatch with accurate information.