



Policy 631: Hazard Assessment and Mitigation in Unsecured Environments

Revision 1/31/19
Effective 2/22/19

I. Philosophy:

- A. Santa Cruz County EMS responders are dedicated to providing care to anyone in need and, as a natural consequence, are often called upon to provide care in unsecured environments. These environments are wide ranging and can include traffic hazards, active crime scenes, fall risks, crowded areas, downed utilities, toxic or infectious exposures, and many others.
- B. Our ability to serve our patients is completely dependent on responder health and safety, and systematic hazard assessment is essential. While every response entails some unavoidable and unanticipated risk, including the act of driving to the scene for example, this hazard assessment is intended to identify dangerous or potentially dangerous conditions that present inordinate risk to the providers.
- C. Identifying and quantifying those hazards relies on training and experience and is beyond the scope of this policy. Responders are encouraged to refer to their agency specific policies, procedures, training materials and health and safety plans.

II. Procedure

A. Hazard Evaluation

- 1. Multiple pieces of information are usually necessary when performing a hazard assessment. This usually starts with dispatch information and always includes a scene size-up that considers all physical hazards.
- 2. Ambulance personnel are generally not equipped to perform extrication or rescue activities and occasionally full prehospital medical care is necessarily delayed until the patient can be brought to a secure location.

B. Hazard Mitigation

- 1. When, after evaluating all available information, the responding crew perceives a threat to themselves, such crews are authorized to avoid placing themselves at risk until additional resources are available that mitigate those hazards as is reasonably possible.
- 2. The list of necessary additional resources will vary on a case by case basis, but may include law enforcement, fire personnel and equipment, Coast Guard, lifeguards, public works and utility personnel.