

# COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



**STEVEN BELLONE**  
SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

**GREGSON H. PIGOTT, MD, MPH**  
Commissioner

TO: All EMS Providers and Firefighters in Suffolk County  
All Ambulance Services and Fire Departments in Suffolk County

FROM: Nathaniel Bialek, BS, EMT-P, CIC, CCHP *NB*  
Director, EMS & Public Health  
Emergency Preparedness

DATE: April 3, 2020

**RE: SUFFOLK COUNTY DISPATCH, CREW CONFIRMATION AND MUTUAL AIDE  
PROTOCOL – TEMPORARY CHANGE IN RESPONSE TO COVID PANDEMIC**

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As we continue to respond to this world-wide pandemic and continue to optimize our EMS system to perform as efficiently as possible to maximize pre-hospital care and patient outcomes, the following modifications have been made to the Suffolk County Emergency Medical Services Dispatch, Crew Confirmation and Mutual Aid Protocol.

Effective immediately:

- For all **Alpha** calls:
  1. Crews shall notify dispatch that they are in, or enroute, to quarters within two (2) minutes.
  2. If a complete crew cannot be identified at **20 minutes** from time of initial dispatch, a request for **Mutual Aid (signal 24)** shall be initiated by the dispatch agency. All agencies should establish procedures identifying means for continual alarm notification after mutual aid has been requested. The primary agency shall continue to attempt to muster a crew as per agency procedures until dispatch notifies the agency that the ambulance has arrived on-scene.
- For all **Bravo, Charlie, Delta or Echo** calls:
  1. Crew shall notify dispatch that they are in, or enroute, to quarters within two (2) minutes.
  2. If a complete crew cannot be identified within two (2) minutes from initial dispatch, a call for additional personnel (signal 3) shall be initiated. An additional signal 3 will be initiated at four (4) minutes following initial dispatch, until a complete crew is confirmed.
  3. If a crew cannot be identified at **six (6) minutes**, a request for Mutual Aid (signal 24) shall be initiated. All agencies should establish procedures identifying means for continual alarm notification after mutual aid has been requested. The primary agency shall continue to attempt to muster a crew as per agency procedures until dispatch notifies the agency that the ambulance has arrived on scene.

Continued.



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- The first arriving Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) on-scene may extend or shorten the time to request mutual aid as medically appropriate or as scene conditions dictate.
- Utilizing Medical Priority Dispatch System Determinants to govern EMS response priorities:
  1. If multiple EMS alarms are received by an agency prior to an ambulance initiating a response (simultaneous alarms or during crew response to quarters), EMS crews may respond to such alarms in order of EMD determinant priority, regardless of the order in which the calls were received.
  2. If while enroute to a call, a call with a higher EMD determinant is dispatched, the **EMT in charge may divert the responding unit to the higher priority call**. Decisions to divert to a higher priority call may only occur if the responding unit is *not within site or sound of the original call*. This decision to divert must be communicated to the appropriate dispatcher, who will initiate attempts to obtain a crew for the lower priority alarm.

Please don't hesitate to call (631) 852-5080 or email [nathaniel.bialek@suffolkcountyny.gov](mailto:nathaniel.bialek@suffolkcountyny.gov) if you have any questions. We will continue to keep you informed as this situation evolves.



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