



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Office of Emergency Medical Services
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EMERGENCY WAIVER

TO: All Licensed Ambulance Services
FROM: Mark J. Miller, MS, NRP, Director
RE: Weather-Related Waiver for Transport to Emergency Shelters or Warming Centers
DATE: March 12, 2018

Due to the third significant Nor'easter of March 2018, Winter Storm Skylar, anticipated to begin affecting multiple regions and citizens of the Commonwealth with periods of blizzard-like conditions, some heavy snow and high winds, under the authority of the Commissioner of the Department of Public Health, under M.G.L. c. 111C, §22, a provision of the Emergency Medical Services System Regulations, 105 CMR 170.000, has been suspended through this waiver.

The purpose of this waiver is to facilitate transportation of individuals who have contacted the 911 system in order to access transportation to an alternate destination, such as an American Red Cross (or similar) shelter or warming center, in response to the continued weather conditions and reported power outages.

Term of the Suspension:

This order shall be effective:

From: 8 PM, Monday, March 12, 2018
To: 8 AM, Thursday, March 15, 2018

Effective section: 105 CMR 170.020 Definitions

“Appropriate Health Care Facility” shall mean:

An emergency department, either physically located within an acute care hospital license by the Department pursuant to 105 CMR 130.000 to provide emergency services, or in a satellite emergency facility approved by the Department pursuant to 130.821, or a shelter, using the below criteria, that is closest geographically or conforms to a Department-approved point of entry plan.

Conditions:

- The suspension of the appropriate destination requirements will only apply to Massachusetts ambulance services, licensed at any level, statewide, that are affected by the severe weather conditions.
- The suspension **does not preclude ambulance services affected by the weather conditions from transporting patients to the most appropriate setting of care, including acute care hospitals when necessary.**

- The suspension will also be relevant to any ambulance service from outside of the effected regions that are called upon to assist in transportation in the affected areas.

Guidelines for Transporting Individuals to Alternative Destinations:

- Individuals must not have an acute chief complaint that requires emergency medical care.
- Individuals must have normal mental status (or baseline per knowledgeable observer).
- Normal (or baseline) vital signs.
- A **patient care report must be completed** for each individual transported to an alternate destination.
- Crews must ensure that patients bring any needed medications or equipment with them.
- Transportation in an ambulance to a shelter will be permitted when no other means of transportation, such as “chair vans” are available.
- Substitute transportation such as wheelchair vans, buses and other community resource arrangements are acceptable and should be utilized according to the patient’s circumstances and transportation needs.

Contact information

In the event that you may need further information or an update on this waiver, you may contact the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Duty Officer at 617-339-8351. You may also contact Mark Miller at Mark.J.Miller@state.ma.us .

Thank you.