



NEWS



News Headlines 12/02/2020

- San Bernardino County Fire limits ambulance dispatches due to coronavirus surge
- San Bernardino County to Bring Out Paramedics, Fire Trucks to Non-Life Threatening 911 Calls To Make Room More Ambulances
- Big Bear Fire RFP on hold

San Bernardino County Fire limits ambulance dispatches due to coronavirus surge

Dani Romero, kesq.com

Posted: December 2, 2020 at 11:07 AM



In some area communities a call to 9-1-1 doesn't mean an ambulance is coming. As coronavirus cases surge, **San Bernardino County Fire** will send paramedics to emergency calls but are making a big change.

News Channel 3's Dani Romero has more on how they are now tackling calls.

Crew members of San Bernardino County Fire are ready to ride out into dangerous situations but the details of the call have never been more important.

"There's all kinds of additional stressors on the job," said Chief Bob Evans.

The reason why San Bernardino County added a new policy on Sunday in an effort to prioritize ambulance services for the most serious calls.

"We're withholding our advanced life support ambulances from going to a low acuity calls so something like a tooth ache for example." said Chief Evans. "Even though the patient deems it to be an emergency, it truly is not life threatening. Then, we're going to hold back ambulance until needed."

With busy emergency rooms have meant paramedics are waiting up to 8 hours at a hospital before they could release a patient and then respond to their next call.

"We were reacting to higher surge in call volume and we had that. Now our call volume is on par with this time last year so that's not that problem but now we have an uptick in workforce health where that wasn't a problem earlier," said Evans.

Chief Evans calls the new policy a moving target.

"It's up for review right now we're probably looking at a few tweaks here and there."

When a call comes in it takes 60 to 90 seconds for crews to respond but with safety measures in place it adds an additional 20 seconds.

We checked in with Riverside County Emergency Management Department to see if they were headed in the same direction.

"It's really going to depend on what we're seeing on a day by day hour by hour type basis," said Shane Reichardt, Senior Public Information Specialist for County of Riverside Emergency Management Department. "Right now we're definitely seeing that more and more people are becoming ill with COVID. But right now

we're able to keep the staffing levels on our EMS providers. Our call volume is not reflecting the increase in COVID cases.”

<https://kesq.com/news/2020/12/02/san-bernardino-county-fire-limits-ambulance-dispatches-due-to-coronavirus-surge/>

San Bernardino County to Bring Out Paramedics, Fire Trucks To Non-Life Threatening 911 Calls To Make Room More Ambulances

Staff Writer, KCAL 9 News

Posted: December 2, 2020



SAN BERNARDINO (CBSLA) — As emergency rooms across San Bernardino County fill up with coronavirus patients, ambulances are being forced to line up in front of ERs and wait sometimes hours with stable patients inside.

To help address concerns, the county plans to send fewer ambulances out to calls, reserving them only for life-threatening emergencies, such as trouble breathing due to coronavirus and other ailments.

“We want to do our best to decompress those facilities, allow them to care for the sick patients and to catch up so that the system itself can keep up with the influx of COVID and flu season,” said Eric Sherwin of **San Bernardino County Fire**.

Instead, paramedics and a firetruck will respond to non-life-threatening calls countywide.

“I think all of us in healthcare can think of various times where emergency departments in the healthcare department have been strained. I’m not aware of any time the system has been strained for such an extended period of time,” Sherwin said. “For every hour that ambulances are waiting, that ambulance is not available for other 911 calls in the system.”

San Bernardino County has fewer hospitals than L.A. County and Orange County, so some officials aren’t surprised they’ve had to come to this decision to address the influx of patients.

“The amount of calls have actually increased but our ability to transport patients to the hospital and leave them at the hospital has been impacted. The wait time at all of our area hospitals has become impacted,” said Bill Watson, the director of Care Ambulance. “We are blessed in L.A. and O.C. with more hospitals so we aren’t seeing it here but I think every EMS agency is doing their best to cope with this pandemic.”

Officials want to stress to the community that this change does not prevent their access to medical care — it only changes it, prioritizing life-threatening cases over stable patients.

<https://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2020/12/02/san-bernardino-county-fire-department-ambulance-emergency/>

Big Bear Fire RFP on hold

Staff Writer, Big Bear Grizzly News

Posted: December 2, 2020 at 6:02AM



The Big Bear Fire Authority board voted 7-3 to hit the pause button regarding issuing a request for proposal for fire and emergency medical services. Following the failure of Measure I last March, the board agreed to look at all options for fire service to cut expenses and continue to provide quality service. That included the possibility of looking outside and contracting with another agency such as **San Bernardino County Fire** or CalFire. Details were prepared and presented to the board for consideration at its Dec. 1 meeting.

<https://bigbeargrizzly.net/news/4674/big-bear-fire-rfp-on-hold/>

