Patient Prioritization and Use of Lights and Siren

This protocol is designed to provide a safe and orderly response to all requests for emergency medical care in the State of Michigan.

A. **Michigan Motor Vehicle Code** *(§257.603 and 257.653)*
The Michigan Motor Vehicle Code governs the driving of emergency vehicles. All licensed life support vehicles will abide by the Michigan Motor Vehicle Code.

1. This protocol does not supersede the Michigan Motor Vehicle Code.

B. **Authority to Require Lights and Siren Use**
Neither the patient's sending nor receiving physician has the authority to require the use of lights and siren during transport; this policy shall be followed at all times. Only the EMS transport crew can determine transport mode, based on patient priority.

C. **Use of Emergency Medical Dispatch**
Where Emergency Medical Dispatchers (EMD) and/or a tiered EMS response are/is available, the EMS Agency is encouraged to develop procedures that reduce unnecessary use of lights and sirens. The procedures may include, but are not limited to, the use of established EMD call screening protocols and evaluation of the scene/patient by first responder personnel.

D. **Prudent Use of Lights and Siren During Transport**
Lights and sirens may be used to clear traffic and then shut down, if prudent, where no obstruction or delay is present, provided both lights and siren are activated at least 500 feet before any intersection or obstruction to be cleared. When lights and siren are not in use, the vehicle must be operated as a typical non-emergency vehicle, per the Motor Vehicle Code.

E. **Returning from the transport, returning to a service area**

1. EMS units may ONLY utilize lights and sirens to return to their area IF THEY ARE RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY CALL.
2. Lights and sirens will **NOT** be used to return to an area when the unit is not responding to another emergency call.

F. **Education**
Life Support Agencies shall ensure MCA approved annual training surrounding the Michigan Motor Vehicle Code, safe use of lights and siren, this protocol and related agency polices.

G. **Agency and Medical Control Authority Specific Policies**
This protocol does not preclude MCAs from developing protocols and/or individual agencies from developing internal policies on this subject, as long as it includes the contents of this protocol as a minimum.

H. When in doubt, contact medical control to determine if there is an urgent need to transport with lights and siren.

I. **Response and Transport**

Response to the scene and transport to the hospital is determined by patient priority.

1. If the on-scene patient priority is different from the dispatch priority, follow the on-scene patient priority for transport.
2. If the patient priority changes during transport follow the appropriate use of lights and sirens for the new patient priority.

1. Unstable Patients

Priority	Description	Example(s) include, but not limited to

Unstable	**Unstable** patients with a critical and immediate life-threatening illness or injury, or require time sensitive interventions	A patient that has an acutely life-threatening illness or injury and is unstable.
		• Unstable or deteriorating vital signs
		• Compromised airway that cannot be secured by EMS.
		• Severe respiratory distress/failure
		• Cardiac arrest or post cardiac arrest
		• STEMI
		• Tonic Clonic seizures unresponsive to treatment
		• Significant blunt or penetrating trauma including but not limited to:
		  ○ Airway compromised
		  ○ Respiratory distress
		  ○ Signs of inadequate perfusion

Response to the scene and transport to the hospital:

MCA Selection Response to Unstable Patient Incidents and Transports

☐ Life support vehicles, in compliance with Michigan Motor Vehicle Code, use lights and sirens while responding to the scene and/or transporting to the hospital

☐ Response ☐ Transport

☑ Life support vehicles, in compliance with Michigan Motor Vehicle Code, use lights and siren only when necessary to circumvent significant traffic delays and obstructions responding to the scene and/or transporting to the hospital (per MCA selection).

☑ Response ☑ Transport

2. Potentially Unstable Patients:

Priority	Description	Example(s) include, but not limited to
Potentially Unstable	**Potentially unstable** patients that are ill or injured *without immediate* life-threatening condition and do not require time sensitive interventions	A patient that is currently stable but is felt to have a condition that may become unstable or life-threatening if not evaluated and treated rapidly. • Hemodynamically stable chest pain without signs of STEMI • Altered mental status – not acutely deteriorating • Seizure - Post-ictal not actively seizing • Hemodynamically stable abdominal pain • Hemodynamically stable >65 y/o fall with confirmed or suspicion of head injury and currently taking blood thinner medications

a. Response to the scene.

MCA Selection for Response to Potentially Unstable Patients and Transports

☐ Life support vehicles, in compliance with Michigan Motor Vehicle Code, use lights and sirens while responding to the scene, transports without lights and siren.

☑ Emergency Vehicles, in compliance with Michigan Vehicle Code, respond with no lights and sirens to the scene or during transport.

☐ Only the first responding life support vehicle, in compliance with Michigan Motor Vehicle Code, responds lights and sirens to the scene. All other life support vehicles respond with no lights and sirens to the scene unless upgraded.

b. Do not transport using lights and sirens unless the patient's condition deteriorates.

3. Stable Patients:

Priority	Description	Example(s) include, but not limited to
Stable	**Stable** patients are Ill or injured patients not fitting the above two categories who require medical attention but do not have a life-threatening condition.	A patient that does need to receive medical evaluation but does NOT have a potentially life-threatening illness or injury at the time of assessment or transport by EMS.

a. Respond and transport using normal traffic patterns to the incident and to the hospital

4. Dead Patients:

Priority	Description	Example(s) include, but not limited to
Dead	**Dead** patients are absent of all vital signs and do not require further medical attention, per protocol.	**See Patient Death, Termination of Resuscitation and Pronouncement Protocol**

a. Do not transport using lights and sirens.