

MCEMS Diversion System User Policy

Updated and Approved by MCEMS: 26 March 2008

Hospital Diversion Status

Status definitions are 1 of 2 choices, either “Open” or “Divert”. The word “Open” means that the Emergency Department will accept all BLS and ALS ambulances. The word “Divert” means that the hospital will not receive any ambulances (BLS or ALS). Four, and only 4, exceptions to the diversion status are acceptable allowing ambulance transport to a hospital on “Divert”:

1. Specialty hospitals never close to their specialty (i.e. Burns, pediatrics, hyperbaric, trauma)
2. Hospitals never close to women in labor if that hospital is the closest most appropriate destination (i.e. Patient received prenatal care there)
3. A patient is a direct admit
4. A pre-arranged transport following EMTALA guidelines (ie: Patient recently discharged from that hospital or patient coming from an affiliated clinic site)

Status Selection Procedure

Each hospital must have internal policies and procedures in place to manage diversion status determination. If a hospital selects status “Divert,” they must also choose the appropriate “Divert” category. Selection of as many categories as are applicable is encouraged:

- Diagnostic services not available (explain; ie: CT scanner down)
- No ED Beds/ED at capacity
- No inpatient beds: Critical Care
- No inpatient beds: other (explain; ie: No psychiatric beds)
- No inpatient beds: telemetry/floor
- Other Reason: Reason not otherwise described (explain; ie: Bomb threat)
- Physical plant problem: contamination
- Physical plant problem: other (explain; ie: Power outage)
- Physical plant problem: structural damage

The closure categories describe the reason why the Emergency Department is unable to accept ambulances and assists in planning, reporting and improving hospital and EMS care.

Divert Status Override

The Milwaukee County EMS Medical Director has the authority to “Open” all “Divert” hospitals for 2 hours under the following 3 conditions:

1. 6 hospitals “Divert” within the system.
The 6th hospital that closes will remain on “Divert” for 1 hour prior to opening. The 5 other previously “Divert” hospitals will open immediately and remain “Open” for 2 hours.

2. All hospitals in a region are on “Divert”

East region

Columbia, Sinai, St. Mary’s Milwaukee

Southeast region

St. Francis, St. Luke’s Main Campus, St. Luke’s Southshore, Wheaton Franklin

Southwest region

St. Francis, St. Luke’s Main Campus, West Allis, Veterans Administration,
Wheaton Franklin

West region

Froedtert, St. Joseph’s, West Allis, Wisconsin Heart Hospital, Community
Memorial

When all of a region’s hospitals are on “Divert”, all hospitals in the County will “Open” for 2 hours: The last hospital to “Divert” in a region will not remain on “Divert” for 1 hour. There is no 1 hour reprieve for regional closures.

3. Any combination of hospital diversions that may unduly delay the transport of a critically ill or injured patient (i.e. regional disaster).

Frequently Asked Questions and Procedural Answers

The *WI Trac* internet posting is the hospital’s official status; all hospitals and EMS providers are linked to *WI Trac*.

Once the ambulance personnel have given their report to the receiving destination hospital, the ambulance cannot be diverted.

All policies have been reviewed and accepted by the Medical Society of Milwaukee EMS Committee and Milwaukee County Council on Emergency Medical Services. MCEMS system hospital diversion data are reviewed through the CQI process.

Several Milwaukee County paramedic receiving hospitals never “Divert” and therefore, are not listed in a hospital region. These hospitals include: Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin, St Mary’s Ozaukee, Elmbrook, and All Saints Healthcare (St Mary’s) Racine