



CONFIRE Administrative Policy

IFT/CCT Mutual Aid Partners

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a formal process for identifying and approving private ambulance providers for interfacility transport (IFT) and critical care transport (CCT) support.

This policy will support system resiliency – providing an avenue for CONFIRE to request support from approved mutual aid partners when appropriate, and approved partners may request support from CONFIRE when appropriate. The intent is a true mutual aid relationship, not a one-way transport referral arrangement.

Policy Statement

CONFIRE establishes an IFT/CCT Mutual Aid Partner Program for private ambulance providers that meet CONFIRE's qualifications and are approved to enter into a formal mutual aid agreement.

Use of any mutual aid partner remains an operational decision made by CONFIRE based on system need, provider availability, patient care needs, hospital throughput, contract compliance, and the best interest of the EMS system.

No provider shall be recognized as an approved mutual aid partner unless the provider responds to CONFIRE's annual Request for Qualifications ("RFQ"), as set forth below, meets the minimum qualifications/requirements set forth in the RFQ, and enters into a mutual aid agreement approved by the Administrative Committee.

Scope

This policy applies only to private ambulance providers seeking to be considered for IFT and CCT mutual aid partner status with CONFIRE.

This policy does not apply to:

1. CONFIRE's primary ambulance subcontractor;
2. Public agencies providing ambulance services under their own legal authority;
3. Public or private ambulance providers currently operating as 911 EOA providers under separate ICEMA, County, EOA, or local EMS authority;



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4. Public agency mutual aid, automatic aid, disaster mutual aid, MHOAC requests, ICEMA requests, EMSA requests, or other emergency management mutual aid systems;
5. 911 mutual aid requests between CONFIRE and existing public or private 911 providers when those requests are made under separate legal, regulatory, contractual, ICEMA, EOA, or emergency management authority.

Nothing in this policy limits CONFIRE's ability to request or provide 911 mutual aid through existing ICEMA, EOA, public agency, regional, state, federal, MHOAC, or emergency management processes.

Nothing in this policy authorizes an IFT/CCT mutual aid partner to respond to 911 calls, operate as a 911 ambulance provider, serve as a CONFIRE subcontractor, or perform CONFIRE's primary emergency ambulance obligations.

Definitions

- **Mutual Aid Partner** means a private ambulance provider that has successfully completed the RFQ process and met the minimum qualifications/requirements.
- **IFT** means a non-911 interfacility transport between healthcare facilities or another authorized destination, consistent with applicable law, ICEMA authorization, and provider scope.
- **CCT** means a critical care transport requiring appropriate personnel, equipment, clinical oversight, and authorization consistent with applicable law, ICEMA requirements, and provider scope.
- **Activation** means CONFIRE's operational decision to request IFT or CCT support from an approved mutual aid partner.
- **Subcontractor** means a provider formally engaged by CONFIRE through a subcontract or other contractual mechanism to perform services under CONFIRE's ambulance service obligations. A mutual aid partner is not a subcontractor unless expressly approved through the appropriate legal, contractual, and Board-approved process.
- **911 EOA Provider** means a public or private ambulance provider authorized to provide 911 ambulance response within an exclusive operating area or assigned 911 service area under separate legal, regulatory, contractual, or local EMS authority.



Guiding Principles

CONFIRE's Mutual Aid Partner Program shall be guided by the following principles:

1. Patient care comes first.
2. The 911 system must be protected.
3. IFT and CCT mutual aid should support hospital throughput and system resiliency.
4. Mutual aid should be available in both directions when appropriate.
5. Approved partners are independent providers and are not CONFIRE subcontractors.
6. Approval does not create exclusivity, call volume, dispatch priority, or market share.
7. Mutual aid activation remains an operational decision of CONFIRE.
8. CONFIRE may deny, suspend, or remove a provider when necessary to protect patient care, hospital relationships, contract compliance, public trust, or system performance.

Annual RFQ

CONFIRE shall annually publicize a Request for Qualifications for IFT/CCT Mutual Aid Partner(s). The Executive Director, or designee, is authorized to develop the RFQ, documentation requirements, evaluation criteria, renewal requirements, and review procedures consistent with this policy.

The minimum qualifications identified in the RFQ shall include the requirements and guiding principles set forth in this Policy, which include but are not limited to:

1. A completed application;
2. Valid ICEMA transport agreement and all other legally required authorizations;
3. Ability to support IFT and CCT needs without creating operational, customer service, hospital, regulatory, or contract risk;
4. Possess staffing, equipment, vehicle and clinical readiness;
5. Compliance with applicable laws, regulations, ICEMA policies, and EMS standards;
6. Professional conduct and complaint response;



7. Billing compliance and financial responsibility;
8. Past performance, business reliability, and compliance history sufficient to protect CONFIRE's contract, reputation, hospital relationships, 911 system performance, and public trust; and

CONFIRE may deny or defer a RFQ submission if the provider does not meet minimum qualifications, lacks required authorization, fails to provide requested information, presents operational or reputational concerns, or is otherwise not a good fit for CONFIRE's EMS system.

Authorized Use and 911 Limitations

Approved mutual aid partners remain independent ambulance providers and may only be used for IFT and CCT. Approval does not authorize a provider to respond to 911 calls, post 911 ambulance resources, operate as a CONFIRE 911 provider, serve as a CONFIRE subcontractor, or perform CONFIRE's primary emergency ambulance obligations.

This policy does not limit CONFIRE's ability to request or provide 911 mutual aid with existing public or private 911 providers through separate ICEMA, EOA, public agency, regional, state, federal, MHOAC, or emergency management processes. Those relationships remain outside the scope of this policy.

Any provider that represents approval under this policy as authorization to provide 911 ambulance response may be suspended or removed from the approved mutual aid partner list. This policy shall not be interpreted to create a second 911 ambulance provider pool, an alternate 911 response system, or a parallel ambulance subcontractor structure.

Activation and Requests for Assistance

The Executive Director, or designee, shall retain authority to determine when mutual aid support is needed and which approved partner, if any, is appropriate.

CONFIRE may consider patient care needs, hospital needs, transport category, provider availability, geography, estimated response time, ICEMA authorization, provider capability, prior performance, customer service history, hospital impact, system status, and CONFIRE's need to preserve 911 resources.

CONFIRE may use the partner that is operationally best suited for the specific need.

An approved partner is not required to accept every request for assistance if doing so would impair its own system responsibilities.



Performance Monitoring

CONFIRE may monitor the performance of approved mutual aid partners.

Monitoring may include transport reliability, hospital interactions, transfer-of-care practices, documentation, clinical concerns, complaints, professional conduct, regulatory compliance, customer service, and any issue that may affect CONFIRE's contract performance, hospital relationships, public trust, or EMS system reliability.

CONFIRE may require performance information, incident reports, corrective action plans, or other documentation necessary to evaluate continued eligibility.

Suspension, Removal, or Denial

CONFIRE may deny, suspend, or remove a provider from the approved mutual aid partner list if CONFIRE determines that the provider:

1. Fails to meet minimum qualifications;
2. Fails to maintain required licenses, permits, certifications, insurance, transport agreements, or ICEMA authorization;
3. Fails to comply with CONFIRE policies, procedures, agreement terms, or operational direction;
4. Provides false, misleading, or incomplete information;
5. Demonstrates poor performance or unresolved compliance concerns;
6. Creates negative patient, hospital, public safety, regulatory, reputational, political, or contract risk;
7. Represents itself as a CONFIRE subcontractor or 911 provider without authorization;
8. Uses the mutual aid process as a claim to market access, transport volume, or preferred status;
9. Acts inconsistently with the best interests of CONFIRE's EMS system.

The Executive Director, or designee, may immediately suspend a provider from eligibility or activation when continued use may present a risk to patient care, system reliability, contract compliance, hospital coordination, public trust, or CONFIRE's operational integrity.



Renewal and Continuing Eligibility

Approved partners may be required to renew eligibility periodically.

CONFIRE may require updated documentation, proof of continuing ICEMA authorization, updated insurance, updated staffing or vehicle information, updated compliance disclosures, and any other information necessary to verify continuing eligibility.

Failure to renew or provide requested documentation may result in suspension or removal from the approved partner list.

Public Records and Confidentiality

RFQ submissions and related materials may be subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act unless exempt from disclosure under applicable law.

Nondiscrimination & Neutrality

The mutual aid partner process shall be administered in a manner that supports fairness, transparency, operational integrity, and public trust.

All qualified, eligible private ambulance providers may apply; all applicants will be evaluated under the same standards, any resulting agreement must be approved through CONFIRE's governance process, and no provider will be granted exclusive or preferred status through informal advocacy or political pressure.

Authority

The Board authorizes the Executive Director, or designee, to implement this policy, develop application materials, establish review procedures, evaluate providers, approve or deny applications, develop mutual aid agreements, present proposed agreements to the Administrative Committee, activate approved partners, suspend or remove providers, and take actions necessary to protect CONFIRE's ambulance system, contract obligations, hospital relationships, operational integrity, and public trust.

The Executive Director may consult with legal counsel, risk management, operations, EMS leadership, ICEMA, hospitals, or other stakeholders as necessary to administer this policy.

Effective Date

This policy shall become effective upon adoption by the CONFIRE Board of Directors.