

# SAN JUAN COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

## Plan of Operations

### 1. Mission Statement

San Juan County Emergency Medical Services (SJCEMS) is committed to providing high-quality, compassionate, clinically excellent, and fiscally responsible emergency medical care to the residents and visitors of San Juan County. Through professional training, strong community partnerships, and effective resource management, SJCEMS strives to ensure timely access to emergency medical services across one of the largest and most geographically challenging service areas in Utah.

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## 2. Service Area Description

SJCEMS provides emergency medical response, ambulance transport, interfacility transport, and related EMS services throughout approximately 5,000 square miles of southeastern Utah.

The service area includes:

- The communities of Monticello, Blanding, Bluff, and La Sal.
- Canyonlands National Park.
- National monuments, state parks, and public lands.
- Extensive backcountry recreation areas.
- Rural highways and remote transportation corridors.

The county experiences significant seasonal tourism resulting from outdoor recreation activities including:

- Mountain biking
- OHV and Jeep recreation
- Hiking and backpacking
- Rock climbing
- Canyoneering
- Motocross events
- Rodeos

These activities often create complex rescue situations requiring extended patient contact times, prolonged extrications, and long transport distances.

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## **3. Scope of Services**

SJCEMS provides:

### **Emergency Response Services**

- 24-hour emergency ambulance response.
- Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT) level service at all times.
- Paramedic level service when available.
- Mutual aid response as requested.

### **Interfacility Transport Services**

SJCEMS serves as the primary interfacility transport provider for:

- San Juan Hospital, Monticello
- Blue Mountain Hospital, Blanding

Interfacility transports may include transfers to healthcare facilities throughout Utah and neighboring states.

### **Specialized Rural EMS Operations**

SJCEMS routinely provides:

- Backcountry medical response
  - Search and rescue medical support
  - Technical rescue medical support
  - Air medical coordination
  - Mass casualty incident response
  - Special event medical standby
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## **4. Organizational Structure and Chain of Command**

SJCEMS operates under the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS).

## **Administrative Structure**

County Commission

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EMS Director

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Full-Time Supervisory Staff

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Crew Leaders

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Field Personnel

## **EMS Director Responsibilities**

The EMS Director shall:

- Manage daily operations.
- Oversee personnel and training.
- Ensure regulatory compliance.
- Manage budgets and purchasing.
- Coordinate with hospitals and partner agencies.
- Report directly to the San Juan County Commission.

## **Incident Command**

For emergency incidents, personnel shall function within the Incident Command System.

Unified Command may be established with:

- Law Enforcement
- Fire Departments
- Search and Rescue
- National Park Service
- State and Federal Agencies

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# 5. Staffing Plan

## Staffing Model

SJCEMS operates primarily as a paid-call EMS system.

Ambulance staffing requirements:

- Minimum crew of two certified EMS providers.
- At least one crew member must be licensed as an AEMT or higher.

Current Staffing Levels:

<b>Certification Level</b>	<b>Number</b>
Paramedic	3
Advanced EMT	20
EMT	20
Total Personnel	43

## Duty Requirements

Personnel assigned to ambulance coverage shall:

- Remain within 3–5 minutes of their assigned station.
- Respond immediately upon dispatch notification.
- Maintain required licensure and certifications.

## Future Staffing Objectives

SJCEMS will continue developing a sustainable paramedic program with the goal of:

- Providing paramedic coverage on every daytime shift.
  - Increasing recruitment and retention of paramedics.
  - Expanding advanced-level clinical capabilities.
  - Additional full time staff members.
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# 6. Ambulance Deployment Plan

## Primary Stations

- Monticello Station
- Blanding Station

## Satellite Deployment Locations

- Bluff
- La Sal

## Fleet Deployment

SJCEMS maintains seven ambulances strategically positioned throughout the county.

Deployment objectives include:

- Rapid response to population centers.
  - Coverage of remote transportation corridors.
  - Availability for simultaneous incidents.
  - Support for interfacility transport operations.
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# 7. Clinical Service Level

## Advanced EMT Service

At minimum, SJCEMS shall provide Advanced EMT level care 24 hours per day.

## Paramedic Service

When available, paramedic personnel may upgrade ambulance capability utilizing a secured Paramedic Response Kit.

Paramedic kits shall:

- Remain secured in locked storage.
- Be controlled through tamper-evident lock tags.
- Contain medications and equipment required for paramedic practice.
- Be inspected regularly for readiness.

When no paramedic is available:

- The service will function at the Advanced EMT level.
  - Patients will be transported to the nearest appropriate facility.
  - Air medical resources may be requested as indicated.
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## **8. Training and Continuing Education**

### **Continuing Medical Education**

Department training shall occur:

- Twice monthly for continuing education.
- Quarterly for advanced skills training and competency evaluation.

Training programs will include:

- Utah BEMS recertification requirements.
- Clinical protocol updates.
- Airway management.
- Trauma care.
- Pediatric emergencies.
- Cardiac emergencies.
- Rescue operations.
- Incident command.
- Vehicle operations.

### **Competency Maintenance**

All personnel shall maintain:

- State licensure
  - CPR certification
  - Required continuing education
  - Annual skills verification
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## **9. Fleet Management**

SJCEMS maintains a fleet of seven ambulances.

### **Fleet Objectives**

- Safe operation
- Reliable response capability
- Compliance with state regulations
- Long-term sustainability

### **Vehicle Maintenance**

Monthly inspections shall include:

- Mechanical systems
- Safety equipment
- Emergency warning systems
- Medical equipment
- Communications equipment

Fleet replacement shall follow San Juan County Fleet Policies.

### **Driver Qualifications**

All operators shall maintain:

- Emergency Vehicle Operations (EVO) certification
- Valid driver's license
- County driver authorization

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## **10. Medical Direction and Clinical Governance**

SJCEMS operates under the medical direction of:

Dr. Chessy Nicholes  
Medical Director

### **Medical Director Responsibilities**

- Clinical oversight
- Protocol approval

- Quality improvement participation
- Provider education support
- Clinical performance review

## **Treatment Protocols**

All personnel shall carry electronic access to approved protocols covering:

- Standing orders
  - Patient assessment
  - Treatment guidelines
  - Destination determination
  - Trauma triage
  - Air medical activation
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# **11. Equipment and Medication Management**

All ambulances shall comply with Utah Administrative Rule R426-15.

## **Inventory Management**

Weekly inspections shall include:

- Medical equipment
- Medications
- Controlled substances
- Oxygen systems
- Specialty rescue equipment

## **Controlled Substance Security**

Controlled medications shall:

- Remain secured under lock.
- Be tracked using inventory logs.
- Require dual verification for administration.
- Be documented immediately after use.

Medication discrepancies shall be reported immediately to:

- EMS Director
  - Medical Director
  - Law Enforcement (if applicable)
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## 12. Communications Plan

### Dispatch Services

SJCEMS is dispatched through:

Price Department of Public Safety Dispatch Center

Notification systems include:

- Voice pagers
- eDispatch smartphone applications
- County radio network

### Communications Resources

SJCEMS utilizes:

- Mobile radios
- Portable radios
- Statewide interoperability channels
- Regional mutual aid channels

### Backup Communications

- Cellular phones
  - Satellite phones
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## 13. Mutual Aid and Regional Partnerships

SJCEMS maintains mutual aid agreements with:

- Grand County EMS
- Utah Navajo Health System Ambulance

Additional partnerships include:

- San Juan County Search and Rescue
- National Park Service Search and Rescue
- Local Fire Departments
- State Parks
- Air Medical Providers

These partnerships ensure continuity of service during:

- High call volume periods
  - Major incidents
  - Technical rescues
  - Mass casualty incidents
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## 14. Air Medical Utilization

Air medical transport shall be considered when:

- Patient condition warrants rapid transport.
- Ground transport times are excessive.
- Remote locations delay definitive care.
- Specialty services are unavailable locally.

Activation procedures shall follow departmental Standard Operating Guidelines.

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## 15. Quality Improvement Program

SJCEMS shall maintain an ongoing Quality Improvement (QI) program focused on:

### **Clinical Performance**

- Protocol compliance
- Documentation quality
- Clinical outcomes

### **Operational Performance**

- Response times
- Unit availability
- Staffing effectiveness

### **Training Performance**

- Continuing education completion
- Skills competency
- Certification compliance

Quality improvement findings shall be reviewed regularly by administration and the Medical Director.

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## **16. Financial Management**

SJCEMS operates primarily through:

- Ambulance service billing revenue
- Interfacility transport revenue
- County appropriations
- Grants and supplemental funding sources

The County Commission maintains oversight of financial operations and budgeting.

Financial objectives include:

- Fiscal sustainability
- Responsible resource allocation
- Fleet replacement planning
- Workforce development
- Continued advancement of paramedic services

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## **17. Strategic Goals (2026–2030)**

1. Establish daily paramedic coverage throughout the county.
2. Improve recruitment and retention of EMS personnel.
3. Expand community paramedicine and public education initiatives.
4. Maintain compliance with all state and federal regulations.

5. Enhance backcountry rescue medical capabilities.
6. Improve response reliability in remote service areas.
7. Maintain financial sustainability through diversified funding sources.
8. Strengthen regional partnerships and mutual aid relationships.
9. Continue investment in training and workforce development.
10. Deliver safe, high-quality patient care to all residents and visitors of San Juan County.