

**I. General Considerations**

- A. The appropriate destination for a patient with a potentially serious illness or injury is the nearest hospital capable of managing the patient's illness or injury.
  - B. The State of Vermont does not designate a hospital by specialty or care capability. A hospital's capability fluctuates based on factors such as operative capabilities, blood bank status, intensive care availability, personnel, etc. Medical direction may consider these factors in providing on-line medical direction to determine destination of any individual patient.
  - C. With few exceptions in Vermont, it is not necessary or appropriate to pass one hospital to transport a patient to another hospital.
  - D. Patients with life threatening conditions or symptoms (e.g., airway obstruction, cardiac arrest, anaphylaxis, etc.) should be transported directly to the nearest hospital.
  - E. Patient condition, personal physician, patient preference, transport time/distance, previous hospitalizations, road conditions and similar variables are all relevant factors for consideration in determining where to transport a patient.
  - F. When the difference in estimated transport times to more than one hospital is less than ten minutes, the hospitals may be presumed to be of equal transport distance.
  - G. Patients with suspected major trauma should generally be taken to the closest hospital that is equipped and staffed to manage the patient's problems. When two or more hospitals are approximately the same travel time away (within 10 minutes of each other), the ambulance should transport the patient to the hospital with the higher trauma care capability. Major trauma includes conditions described in the major multiple system trauma protocol and:
    - 1. Respiratory compromise
    - 2. Altered mental status
    - 3. Hypotension (systolic BP <90 mm Hg)
    - 4. Penetrating injury to the head, neck, chest or abdomen
    - 5. Amputation proximal to the ankle or wrist
  - H. In the absence of a specific inter-hospital written guidance or agreement, seek on-line medical direction from the nearest hospital when in doubt about where to transport.
- 

**II. Procedure**

- A. Obtain an appropriate history and perform a physical examination based on the patient's presenting problem.
- B. Determine the patient's preference, if any, for a transport destination.
- C. Initiate treatment according to the appropriate protocol(s).
- D. If the patient is requesting transport to a hospital other than the nearest one, or if in the judgment of the EMS personnel, the patient is a candidate for transport to a more distant hospital, *contact medical direction at nearest hospital for consultation and direction regarding the choice of a destination hospital.*