



# Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems eMEDS® Veterinary Care Documentation

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

## Overview

In February of 2022, the attached memo was sent to EMSOPs Highest Jurisdictional Officials and EMS Medical Directors regarding the authorization to care for police canines and other animals. This memo was to ensure that EMS clinicians were authorized to render emergency care to police canines, and other working canines, and other animals that may be present at an incident scene. The emergency care provided should be commensurate with the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the EMS clinician.

## Documentation Guidance:

- Type of Call (Dispatch > CAD)
  - To properly document veterinary care, the selection of, “Public Assistance/Other Not Listed” should be selected.
- Veterinary Care? (Dispatch > CAD) – **To be implemented by Monday, April 24, 2023**
  - Once the above type of call is selected, a new question will appear below asking, “Veterinary Care?” This question is defaulted to the answer of, “No”. Other available options to select are the following:
    - Yes, Dog
    - Yes, Cat
    - Yes, Horse
    - Yes, Other (Document in Narrative)
  - If another selection other than No is selected, and the Type of Call does not equal “Public Assistance/Other Not Listed”, the field will become validated until changed back to, “No”, and then will be hidden again.
- Patient Name (Patient > Patient Info)
  - The first name of the animal should be listed as the patient’s first name, and the owner/handler’s last name should be entered as the patient’s last name.
- Validation Score & Narrative
  - The report, in general, may never be able to obtain a validation score of 100. This is intentionally done as this is not a human medical record. Complete the report to the best of your ability, using the appropriate fields. Any information that doesn’t seem appropriate in a provided field should be documented in the narrative of the report.
- Incident Number & Report Times
  - Ensure to document the incident number obtained from your CAD, and all relevant times to the best of your ability. This will assist with finding reports in the future.

The screenshot shows the CAD interface with the following elements:

- Dispatch** menu on the left with options: CAD, Response, Crew, Incident Location, Patient, Provider Access, Transport.
- CAD** main screen with fields for Incident Number and Station Run Number.
- Type of Call:** A dropdown menu currently showing "Public Assistance/Other Not Listed".
- Veterinary Care?:** A question with five buttons: "Yes, Dog" (highlighted in blue), "Yes, Cat", "Yes, Horse", "Yes, Other (Document in Narrative)", and "No".
- Dispatch Reason:** A dropdown menu below the question.



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To: Highest Jurisdictional Officials  
EMS Medical Directors

From: Theodore R. Delbridge, MD, MPH  
Executive Director

Timothy P. Chizmar, MD  
State EMS Medical Director

Date: February 17, 2022

Re: Authorization to care for police canines and other animals

We want to ensure you are aware that EMS clinicians, including emergency medical responders, emergency medical technicians, cardiac rescue technicians, and paramedics, are authorized to render emergency care to police canines, other working canines, and other animals that may be present at an incident scene. Emergency care should be commensurate with the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the EMS clinician.

*MD. Courts and Judicial Proceedings Code Ann. § 5-614 – Emergency Veterinary Assistance* provides, in part, that a member of any State, county, municipal, or volunteer fire department, ambulance and rescue squad, or law enforcement agency, or a corporate fire department...Is not civilly liable for any act or omission in giving any veterinary aid, care, or assistance...The aid, care, or assistance must be provided without fee or compensation from the owner or custodian of the animal, and be provided at the scene of an emergency, in transit to a veterinary facility, or through communications with licensed veterinary personnel.

We fully anticipate that EMS clinicians will call on their personal expertise and available resources to care for an acutely ill or injured animal at the scene of an emergency, unless such aid would interfere with care for an ill or injured person. In fact, we are aware that several EMS departments have procured or accepted donations of canine oxygen masks, expecting their EMS clinicians to use them if the need presented itself. We are fully supportive.

Recently, we received indications of a sense of ambiguity among EMS clinicians regarding their personal discretion in caring for acutely ill or injured animals, particularly law enforcement canines, at the scene of an emergency incident. With this communique' we affirm the authority of EMS clinicians to exercise their knowledge, skills, and abilities in the best interest of the animal.

We understand that the interface of the EMS system and law enforcement is nuanced in each jurisdiction, and that needs, priorities, and resources differ. Thus, we encourage you to assess the needs or appropriateness of policies, specific to your jurisdiction, related to caring for police canines and other working dogs. Collaboration with your law enforcement colleagues is optimal. We are happy to be of assistance, as needed.

PC: Senator Mary Beth Carozza