



## El Dorado County Emergency Services Authority

Policy Subject Matter:       **Notification of Sentinel Events**  
Review Date:  
Revision Date:  
Creation Date:               **02.01.99**

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### **I. Policy:**

- A. A sentinel event may be identified by any/all participants within the EMS community or by a member of the general public.
  - 1. Upon becoming aware of a sentinel event, an incident/occurrence report shall be completed following the respective employer's policy/procedure.
  - 2. The JPA shall be notified as soon as possible by the Fire District that a sentinel event has occurred.
  
- B. All written documentation related to a sentinel event shall be retained by the Fire District according to its internal policy. Such written documentation shall be available for review by the JPA Executive Director upon request and shall include at a minimum:
  - 1. Description of the event
  - 2. Date/time/location of the event
  - 3. Identification of individuals involved including personnel, patients, bystanders, etc.
  - 4. Results of investigations and name of investigator
  - 5. Actions taken to mitigate the event
  
- C. Nothing in this policy shall be construed as overriding procedural steps or policies required by a Fire District to protect the District or the personnel rights of its employees.
  
- D. The JPA shall make every effort to work cooperatively with the Fire District by providing all available information relative to a specific event and working with agencies toward appropriate mitigation.

### **II. Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a standard mechanism to ensure that sentinel events are identified and investigated and that appropriate and timely mitigation is accomplished in order to manage and/or reduce risk and improve system performance.

### **III. Definitions:**

Sentinel Event – a situation or circumstance which has a significant potential to negatively impact the care of a patient or the patient's outcome and/or may place field personnel, the employing agency or the JPA at risk. Examples of a sentinel event include, but are not limited to, a mechanical problem or vehicle accident while transporting a patient, a medication error, excessive response or transport time, a patient fall/drop, an on-scene defibrillator failure, etc.

Investigation – actions taken to determine root causes of a sentinel event.

Mitigation – actions taken to prevent a reoccurrence of a sentinel event.