



**Fire Department**  
HEADQUARTERS  
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John M. Scherrei  
Fire Chief

**Grand Jury Report Recommendations  
Fire Department Response  
May 29, 2002**

Finding 1: Santa Barbara County Public Safety Dispatch Center is not staffed by trained Emergency Medical Dispatchers:

Fire Department agrees this is a factual finding.

**Recommendation 1. The Grand Jury recommends the Sheriff expedite the training of all Emergency Dispatcher to be Emergency Medical Dispatchers. The proper training would improve the safety of the ambulance crews and the general public by authorizing trips not requiring lights and sirens or the response of the Fire Department.**

**Fire Department Reply to Recommendation 1:**

The Fire Department agrees that the training and implementation of the Emergency Medical Dispatch needs to be a high priority. Working with the Sheriff's Department, EMSA, and AMR, we have supported moving to this level of service. The department believes that the tiered level of response is the most logical for the safety of the first responders as well as for the public we serve. The Fire Department believes the closest medical resource should be dispatched using the appropriate code to all emergency medical calls. In any case the Fire Department is committed to responding the closest appropriate resource to all calls for assistance within the County.

Finding 2: Santa Barbara County Public Safety Dispatch Center does not have a written policy or proper protocol established for dispatchers regarding interrogation, prioritized dispatch and pre-arrival instruction. Without such a policy and protocol, the County is open to liability should a Dispatcher erroneously offer "Good Samaritan" medical advice:

Fire Department is aware of this need and supports the adoption of these medical protocols:

**Recommendation 2. Adopt the medical protocols offered by the County Medical Director of Emergency Medical Services. These protocols are presently being used by Ventura County.**

**Fire Department Reply to Recommendation 2:**

The Fire Department working with the County Sheriff's Department, AMR, Emergency Medical Services Agency, have advocated the adoption of the medical protocols used by Ventura County, and Santa Barbara City for the past few years. Adoption of these protocols will provide a uniform standard of emergency medical dispatch and response within the two Counties.

Jim Harrison  
Division Chief, Operations

6-13-02  
JH:rp