



County of Bucks

EMERGENCY HEALTH SERVICES



911 Freedom Way, Ivyland, PA 18974
(215) -340-8735 Fax (215) 957-0765

County Commissioners

Diane M. Ellis-Marseglia, LCSW, *Chair*
Robert J. Harvie Jr., *Vice Chair*
Gene DiGirolamo

Gerald Wydro, MD
Regional Medical Director

Diversion FAQs

What is hospital diversion? Status requested by a hospital when they are experiencing higher than normal volume/acuity or maintaining admitted hold patients in ED beds. EMS may experience extended transfer of care / off-load times in these situations.

What is the purpose of hospital diversion? Provide situational awareness to EMS providers and patients so they are informed of the potential of high volume situations in hospital emergency departments that may lead to extended off-load and wait times.

How long may a hospital be on divert? There is no time limit on how long a hospital may go on divert, however hospitals will typically request diversion in 2 to 4 hour increments.

Is closure different than diversion? A hospital will request closure when experiencing an “in-house” emergency or infrastructure failure leading to a situation in which they **cannot** handle any incoming patients.

If EMS has an unstable patient, should they bypass a hospital on divert? Hospital diversion is a courtesy and does not mean that the emergency department is closed or not able to receive patients. Critical patients should be transported to the closest appropriate facility regardless of diversion status.

Are there different types of hospital diversion? In addition to hospital diversion secondary to excess volume or holds, hospitals may request specific types of cases be diverted such as Trauma, Crisis, or if a resource is unavailable (CT scan, Cath lab).

Can a hospital refuse an EMS unit if on diversion? No, an emergency department may advise an incoming EMS unit of diversion status and increased off-load / wait times; but cannot refuse an incoming ambulance based only on divert status. Reference **Protocol #170 Patient Destination – Ground Transport** for specific guidance around hospital destination decisions.

What should we tell patients if their preferred hospital is on divert? EMS providers should offer as much information about the potential of increased wait times to better align patient expectations so they can make an informed decision about their hospital destination.

How will EMS agencies be notified about hospital diversion status? The Bucks County Communications Center will announce hospital status changes over the Dispatch and respective EMS zone and send a message to station printers. EMS providers may also type SCD in the command line of the MDT for hospital status.