



*Serving Marin County*

This memorandum is in regards to a request for clarification of situations involving law enforcement personnel requesting EMS personnel to remove Taser electrodes from individuals in police custody and give medical clearance for transport to a detention center.

The medical directors of the Marin County EMS Provider Agencies have met to discuss the use of EMS personnel for this purpose. We have come to the following conclusions:

1. When EMS personnel are requested to evaluate individuals who have received an electrical shock from a Taser, or similar electroshock device, they will perform an initial field evaluation and will transport to the closest appropriate medical facility for additional evaluation. Depending upon the individual's condition, he may be a BLS or ALS patient, or may even be a trauma patient if the trauma tool applies. Note that the Taser injury itself may be less significant than either the agitated condition or altered mental status which existed prior to application of the Taser, or the fall and associated blunt trauma secondary to the sudden onset of weakness secondary to Taser application.
2. EMS personnel are authorized to remove the barbed electrodes from individuals, or from individuals clothing, at their discretion, if the presence of the electrodes presents a sharps risk to personnel. The barbs will be removed and placed in a Sharps container. Alternatively, if the EMS personnel feel that they cannot remove the barbs due to a patient's agitation or other safety hazard, or due to the barb being impaled in such tissues as the orbit, lip, glans or other areas that make removal problematic, then EMS personnel may provide for their own safety by covering the barb with a gauze dressing or other appropriate bandage of their judgment, and defer removal to emergency department personnel.
3. EMS personnel are not authorized to provide medical clearance for transport to detention centers. All individuals who have been shocked by a Taser will be transported - in custody and in the company of a law enforcement officer. These individuals may neither sign out AMA nor be released at scene.

Please advise your staff that EMS personnel, in the Marin EMS Agency region, will not respond solely to remove barbed electrodes and will not provide "medical clearance" for transport to detention centers.

We feel these patients are complex and often have underlying conditions requiring full medical evaluation.