



## **Chapter 524** Transportation

### **APPENDIX 524A** Ground Ambulance Medical Necessity

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**Ground Ambulance Transportation: Medical Necessity**

Note: The listed symptoms and transport suggestions are guidelines only and are not intended to be all-inclusive or guarantee medical necessity and payment. The medical necessity and appropriate method of transport must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

On-Scene Condition (General)	On-Scene Condition (Specific)	Comments and Examples (Not All Inclusive)	Level of Service
Abdominal pain	With other signs or symptoms	Nausea, vomiting, fainting, pulsatile mass, distention, rigid, tenderness on exam, guarding.	Advanced Life Support (ALS)
Abdominal pain	Without other signs or symptoms		Basic Life Support (BLS) Non-Emergency
Abnormal cardiac rhythm/ Cardiac dysrhythmia	Potentially life-threatening	Bradycardia, junctional and ventricular blocks, non-sinus tachycardias, PVC's >6/min., bi and trigeminy, v-tach, v-fib, atrial flutter, PEA, asystole.	ALS
Abnormal skin signs		Diaphoresis, cyanosis, delayed cap refill, poor turgor, mottled, other ALS emergency conditions.	ALS
Abnormal vital signs (includes abnormal pulse oximetry)	With symptoms	Other ALS emergency conditions.	ALS
Alcohol intoxication, drug overdose (suspected)	Unable to care for self; unable to ambulate; airway at risk, pharmacological intervention, cardiac monitoring		ALS
Alcohol intoxication, drug overdose (suspected)	Unable to care for self; unable to ambulate; no risk to airway; no other symptoms		BLS Non-Emergency
Allergic reaction	Potentially life-threatening	Other ALS emergency conditions, rapid progression of symptoms, prior history of anaphylaxis, wheezing, difficulty swallowing.	ALS
Allergic reaction	No life-threatening signs or symptoms	Hives, itching, rash, slow onset, local swelling, redness, erythema	BLS – Emergency

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On-Scene Condition (General)	On-Scene Condition (Specific)	Comments and Examples (Not All Inclusive)	Level of Service
ALS monitoring required	Cardiac/hemodynamic monitoring required en route	Expectation monitoring is needed before and after transport	ALS
ALS monitoring required	IV meds required en route	Does not apply to self-administered IV medications	ALS
Animal bites, sting, envenomation	Potentially life or limb-threatening	Symptoms of specific envenomation, significant face, neck, trunk, and extremity involvement; other ALS emergency conditions.	ALS
Animal bites, sting, envenomation	Not potentially life or limb-threatening	Local pain and swelling, special handling considerations and patient monitoring required	BLS – Emergency
Bed confined (at the time of transport)	Unable to get up from bed without assistance; and unable to ambulate; and unable to sit in a chair or wheelchair;  <b>or</b> The member can only be transported by stretcher.	Patient is being transported to medical facility for treatment, medical procedure, testing, or evaluation that is medically necessary and reimbursable by Medicaid.  Also included are admissions to and discharges from hospitals, nursing homes or other medical facilities.  Medical necessity is based upon the member's condition at the time of transport ex: patients with morbid obesity resulting in limited mobility.	BLS – Non-Emergency
Blood glucose	Abnormal - <80 or >250, with symptoms.	Altered mental status, vomiting, signs of dehydration, etc.	ALS
Burns	Major – per ABA	Partial thickness burns >10% TBSA; involvement of face, hands, feet, genitalia, perineum, or major joints; third degree burns; electrical, chemical; inhalation burns with preexisting medical disorders; burns and trauma	ALS
Burns	Minor – per ABA	Burns other than those listed in ALS	BLS – Emergency

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On-Scene Condition (General)	On-Scene Condition (Specific)	Comments and Examples (Not All Inclusive)	Level of Service
Cardiac Arrest – resuscitation in progress			ALS
Cardiac symptoms other than chest pain	Atypical pain or other symptoms	Persistent nausea and vomiting, weakness, hiccups, pleuritic pain, feeling of impending doom and other ALS emergency conditions	ALS
Choking episode		Partial or complete airway obstruction	ALS
Cold exposure	Potentially life or limb threatening	Body temperature <95°F, deep frost bite, other emergency conditions.	ALS
Cold exposure	With symptoms	Shivering, superficial frost bite, and other emergency conditions	BLS – Emergency
Convulsions/Seizures	Seizing, immediate post-seizure, or at risk of seizure and requires medical monitoring/observation.		ALS
Difficulty breathing	With signs and symptoms	Other ALS emergency conditions.	ALS
Eye injuries	Acute vision loss or blurring, severe pain or chemical exposure, penetrating, severe lid lacerations		BLS – Emergency
Heat exposure	Potentially life-threatening	Hot and dry skin, Temp >105°F, neurologic distress, signs of heat stroke or heat exhaustion, orthostatic vitals, other ALS emergency conditions	ALS
Heat exposure	With symptoms	Muscle cramps, profuse sweating, fatigue	BLS – Emergency
Hemorrhage	Severe (quantity)	Active, uncontrolled bleeding with significant signs of shock, active vaginal, rectal, or post- surgical bleeding, hematemesis, hemoptysis, epistaxis, other emergency conditions.	ALS

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On-Scene Condition (General)	On-Scene Condition (Specific)	Comments and Examples (Not All Inclusive)	Level of Service
Infectious diseases requiring isolation procedures/public health risk			BLS – Non-Emergency
Medical device failure	Life or limb threatening malfunction, failure, or complication	Malfunction of ventilator, internal pacemaker, internal defibrillator, implanted drug delivery device	ALS
Medical conditions that may contraindicate transport by other means	Patient safety: Danger to self or others. Seclusion (Flight risk)	Behavioral or cognitive risk such that patient requires attendant to assure patient does not try to exit the ambulance prematurely.	BLS – Non-Emergency
Medical conditions that may contraindicate transport by other means	Patient safety. Danger to self and others. In restraints.		BLS – Emergency
Medical conditions that may contraindicate transport by other means	Special handling en route; Orthopedic device	Backboard, halo traction, use of pins and traction etc.	BLS – Non-Emergency
Medical Device Failure	Health maintenance device failures	O <sub>2</sub> supply malfunction	BLS – Emergency
Near Drowning			ALS
Neurological distress	Facial drooping; loss of vision; aphasia; difficulty swallowing; numbness, tingling extremity; stupor, delirium, confusion, hallucinations, paralysis, paresis (focal weakness; abnormal movements; vertigo; unsteady gait or balance; slurred speech, unable to speak		ALS
Pain, severe not otherwise specified in this list	Acute onset, unable to ambulate or sit	Patient receiving out-of-hospital pharmacologic intervention	ALS
Pain, severe, not otherwise specified in this list	Acute onset, unable to ambulate or sit	Pain is the reason for the transport	BLS – Emergency

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On-Scene Condition (General)	On-Scene Condition (Specific)	Comments and Examples (Not All Inclusive)	Level of Service
Poisons ingested, injected, inhaled, absorbed	Adverse drug reaction, poison exposure by inhalation, injection, or absorption		ALS
Post-operative procedure complications	Major wound dehiscence, evisceration, or requires special handling for transport	Orthopedic appliance; prolapse	BLS – Emergency
Pregnancy complication/ abnormal delivery		High risk delivery, newborn distress, other ALS emergency conditions	ALS
Pregnancy/labor/normal delivery			BLS – Emergency
Psychiatric/Behavioral	Abnormal mental status; drug withdrawal	Suicidal, homicidal, hallucinations, violent, disoriented, DT's, withdrawal symptoms, transport required by state law/court order	BLS – Emergency
Psychiatric/Behavioral	Threat to self or others, severe anxiety, acute episode or exacerbation of paranoia, or disruptive behavior		BLS – Non-Emergency
Respiratory arrest		Apnea, hypoventilation requiring ventilatory assistance and airway management.	ALS

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On-Scene Condition (General)	On-Scene Condition (Specific)	Comments and Examples (Not All Inclusive)	Level of Service
Trauma, major	As defined by ACS field triage decision scheme	Trauma with two or more of the following conditions: Glasgow <12; systolic BP <90; RR <10 or >29; all penetrating injuries to head, neck, torso, extremities proximal to elbow or knee; flail chest; pelvic fracture; 2 or more long bone fractures; paralysis; severe mechanism of injury including ejection, death of another passenger in same compartment as patient, falls >20 feet, 20" deformity of passenger compartment, auto vs. pedestrian/bike, motorcycle accident at speeds >20 mph and rider separated from vehicle	ALS
Trauma	Need to monitor or maintain airway	Decreased LOC, bleeding into airway; trauma to head, face, or neck	ALS
Trauma	Major bleeding	Uncontrolled or significant bleeding with significant hemodynamic changes	ALS
Trauma	Amputation (other than digits)		ALS
Trauma	Suspected internal, head, chest, or abdominal injuries	Signs of closed head injury, open head injury, pneumothorax, hemothorax, abdominal bruising, positive abdomen signs on exam, internal bleeding criteria, evisceration	ALS
Trauma	Severe pain requiring pharmacologic pain control		ALS
Trauma	Suspected fracture or dislocation requiring splinting or immobilization for transport	Spinal, long bones, and joints, including shoulder elbow, wrist, hip, knee, and ankle deformity of bone or joint	BLS – Emergency
Trauma	Amputation – digits		BLS – Emergency



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On-Scene Condition (General)	On-Scene Condition (Specific)	Comments and Examples (Not All Inclusive)	Level of Service
Trauma	Penetrating extremity injuries	Isolated with bleeding stopped and good circulation, sensation, and motion/movement (CSM)	BLS – Emergency
Unconscious, Fainting, Syncope	Transient unconscious episode or found unconscious	With other ALS emergency conditions	ALS

**DISCLAIMER:** This chapter does not address all the complexities of Medicaid policies and procedures and must be supplemented with all State and Federal Laws and Regulations. Contact BMS Fiscal Agent for coverage, prior authorization requirements, service limitations, and other practitioner information.