



WALL TIME TOOLKIT

JANUARY 2022 // AMERICAN AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION

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Extended 'Wall Times' at hospitals are exacerbating the EMS workforce shortage. Services are continually trying to meet the demand with fewer resources; when their units are kept out of service for extended periods of time because they are unable to transfer patient care at the hospital, wait times for both 911 and inter-facility callers increases.

THE SOLUTION

EMS agencies experiencing an issue with increased Wall Times because hospitals are engaging in the practice of 'parking' patients to delay the transfer of care can follow these three steps to help improve wall times.

STEP 1

Identify the hospital(s) where the issue is occurring. Connect with hospital leadership to explain the problem and why these extended wait times cause a significant problem for the EMS system. Consider sharing examples of average wait times, and how much they have increased over time, and if there are specific days, or times of day, that have increased wait times.

- Remind them of [this EMTALA letter](#), and that the practice of 'parking' patients is prohibited.

STEP 2

If hospitals are unresponsive to the initial conversation, consider escalating the issue to the state surveyor's office. We have created a draft letter for use in communicating with the state surveyor, but be sure to update the draft letter to include specific examples and data that illustrate the particular issues your service is facing.

STEP 3

If, after contacting the hospital(s) **and** the state surveyor's office there is still no action or you receive a negative response, please complete this form. Collecting this information will allow the American Ambulance Association to approach CMS and ask them to help resolve the problem. In order to do this, we will need several data points that are included in the form.

- Number of hospitals where the violations are occurring
 - Which of these have been contacted and shown the EMTALA letter by the EMS service
- Wait times as a result of these violations
- Has the issue been escalated to the state surveyor's office?
 - If so, what was the response?
- The opportunity cost of the wait times