

Medical Priority Dispatch System

The Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) is a way of categorizing and prioritizing EMS incidents. The MPDS assigns a number-letter-number format code to each type of incident. The first number (one of the numbers 1 through 32) indicates the category of the incident (e.g., breathing problem). The letter (one of the letters A through E) indicates the priority of the incident. Letter "A" indicates the lowest priority incident and "E" indicates the highest priority incident, however not all letters are used within each category. The second number indicates the subcategory of the incident. The MPDS codes are also commonly referred to as "Clawson Codes" because the MPDS categorization system was originally designed by Dr. Jeff J. Clawson.

MPDS Codes

- 1 - Abdominal Pain
- 2 - Allergic Reaction
- 3 - Animal Bites
- 4 - Assault
- 5 - Back Pain
- 6 - Breathing Difficulty
- 7 - Burn Subject
- 8 - Hazardous Exposure
- 9 - Cardiac Arrest
- 10 - Chest Pain
- 11 - Choking
- 12 - Seizures
- 13 - Diabetic Problems
- 14 - Drowning
- 15 - Electrocutation
- 16 - Eye Problem
- 17 - Falls
- 18 - Headache

- 19 - Heart Problem
- 20 - Environmental Exposure
- 21 - Hemorrhage
- 22 - Industrial Accidents
- 23 - Overdose
- 24 - Pregnancy
- 25 - Psychiatric Problem
- 26 - Sick Call
- 27 - Stab/Gunshot/Penetrating Trauma (S, G, or P)
- 28 - Stroke
- 29 - Traffic Collision
- 30 - Traumatic Injuries (specific)
- 31 - Subject Unconscious
- 32 - Medical Nature Unknown
- 33 - Transfer

MPDS Codes

Priority System

Alpha Response=Code 1--Low Priority

Bravo Response=Code 2--Mid Priority (calls that may involve First Responders)

Charlie Response=Code 3--Possibly Life Threatening

Delta Response=Code 3--Life Threatening

Echo Response=Code 3--Full Arrest or Imminent Death

Omega Response=Code 1--Lowest Priority

1 - Abdominal Pain

Code	Sub Category
-------------	---------------------

1D1	Not alert
1C1	Fainting or near fainting >50 y/o
1C2	Females fainting or near fainting 12-50 y/o
1C3	Males w/ pain above navel >45 y/o
1C4	Females w/ pain above navel >45 y/o
1A1	Abdominal pain

2 - Allergic Reaction

Code	Sub Category
2E1	Ineffective breathing
2D1	Severe respiratory distress
2D2	Not alert
2D3	Condition worsening
2D4	Swarm attack (bees)
2D5	Snakebite
2C1	Difficulty breathing or swallowing
2C2	Special medications or injections used
2B1	Unknown status (3rd party caller)
2A1	No difficulty breathing or swallowing
2A2	Spider bite

3 - Animal Bites

Code	Sub Category
3D1	Unconscious or arrest
3D2	Not alert
3D3	Dangerous body area
3D4	Large animal

3D5	Exotic animal
3D6	Attack or multiple attack
3B1	Possibly dangerous body part
3B2	Serious hemorrhage
3B3	Unknown status (3rd party caller)
3A1	Not dangerous body area
3A2	Non-recent injuries >6 hours
3A3	Superficial bites

4 - Assault (A=Assault / S=Sexual Assault)

Code	Sub Category
4D1	Unconscious or arrest
4D2	Not alert
4D3	Abnormal breathing
4D4	Dangerous body area
4D5	Multiple victims
4B1	Possibly dangerous body area
4B2	Serious hemorrhage
4B3	Unknown status (3rd party caller)
4A1	Not dangerous body area
4A2	Non-recent injuries >6 hours

5 - Back Pain

Code	Sub Category
5D1	Not alert
5C1	Fainting or near fainting >50 y/o
5A1	Non-traumatic

5A2 Non-recent injuries >6 hours

6 - Breathing Difficulty (A=Asthma)

Code	Sub Category
6E1	Ineffective breathing
6D1	Severe respiratory distress
6D2	Not alert
6D3	Clammy
6C1	Abnormal breathing
6C2	Cardiac history

7 - Burn Subject

Code	Sub Category
7D1	Unconscious or arrest
7D2	Severe respiratory distress
7D3	Not alert
7D4	Explosion
7D5	Multiple victims
7C1	Building fire w/ persons inside
7C2	Difficulty breathing
7C3	Burns >18% BSA
7B1	Unknown status (3rd party caller)
7A1	Burns 35 y/o
7A2	Fire alarm unknown situation
7A3	Sunburn or minor burn

8 - Hazardous Exposure

Code	Sub Category
8D1	Unconscious or arrest
8D2	Severe respiratory distress
8D3	HAZMAT
8D4	Not alert
8D5	Multiple victims
8D6	Unknown status (3rd party caller)
8C1	Alert w/ difficulty breathing
8B1	Alert w/o difficulty breathing
8A1	CO alarm--EMS requested

9 - Cardiac Arrest

Code	Sub Category
9E1	Not breathing at all
9E2	Breathing uncertain
9E3	Hanging
9E4	Strangulation
9E5	Suffocation
9E6	Underwater
9D1	Ineffective breathing
9B1	Obvious Death

10 - Chest Pain

Code	Sub Category
10D1	Severe respiratory distress
10D2	Not alert
10D3	Clammy

10C1	Abnormal breathing
10C2	Cardiac history
10C3	Cocaine
10C4	Breathing normally >35 y/o
10A1	Breathing normally <35 y/o

11 - Choking

Code	Sub Category
11E1	Choking verified/ineffective breathing
11D1	Not alert
11D2	Abnormal breathing
11A1	Not choking now

12 - Seizures

Code	Sub Category
12D1	Not breathing
12D2	Continuous or multiple seizures
12D3	Irregular breathing
12D4	Breathing regularly not verified >35 y/o
12C1	Pregnancy
12C2	Diabetic
12C3	Cardiac history
12B1	Breathing regularly not verified 6 feet
12A1	Not seizing now & breathing verified

13 - Diabetic Problems

Code	Sub Category
------	--------------

13D1	Unconscious
13C1	Not alert
13C2	Abnormal behavior
13C3	Abnormal breathing
13A1	Alert

14 - Drowning

Code	Sub Category
14D1	Unconscious
14D2	Not alert
14D3	Diving or neck injury
14D4	SCUBA accident
14C1	Alert w/ abnormal breathing
14B1	Alert & breathing normally w/ injuries
14B2	Unknown status(3rd party caller)
14A1	Alert & breathing normally w/o injuries

15 - Electrocution (E=Electrocution / L=Lightning)

Code	Sub Category
15E1	Not breathing/ineffective breathing
15D1	Unconscious
15D2	Not disconnected from power
15D3	Power not off
15D4	Long fall >6 feet
15D5	Not alert
15D6	Abnormal breathing
15D7	Unknown status (3rd party caller)

15C1 Alert & breathing normally

16 - Eye Problem

Code	Sub Category
-------------	---------------------

16D1	Not alert
------	-----------

16B1	Severe eye injuries
------	---------------------

16A1	Moderate eye injuries
------	-----------------------

16A2	Minor eye injuries
------	--------------------

16A3	Medical eye problems
------	----------------------

17 - Falls

Code	Sub Category
-------------	---------------------

17D1	Dangerous body area
------	---------------------

17D2	Long fall >6 feet
------	-------------------

17D3	Not alert
------	-----------

17D4	Abnormal breathing
------	--------------------

17B1	Possibly dangerous body area
------	------------------------------

17B2	Serious hemorrhage
------	--------------------

17B3	Unknown status (3rd party caller)
------	-----------------------------------

17A1	Not dangerous body area
------	-------------------------

17A2	Non-recent injuries >6 hours
------	------------------------------

18 - Headache

Code	Sub Category
-------------	---------------------

18C1	Not alert
------	-----------

18C2	Abnormal breathing
------	--------------------

18C3	Speech problems
------	-----------------

18C4	Sudden onset of severe pain
18C5	Numbness or paralysis
18C6	Change in behavior
18B1	Unknown status (3rd party caller)
18A1	Breathing normally

19 - Heart Problem

Code	Sub Category
19D1	Severe respiratory distress
19D2	Not alert
19D3	Clammy
19C1	Firing of AICD
19C2	Abnormal breathing
19C3	Chest pain >35 y/o
19C4	Cardiac history
19C5	Cocaine
19C6	Heart rate 130
19B1	Unknown status (3rd party caller)
19A1	Heart rate >50 or 5 months
19A2	Chest pain <35 y/o w/o symptoms

20 - Environmental Exposure

Code	Sub Category
20D1	Not alert
20C1	Cardiac history
20B1	Change in skin color
20B2	Unknown status (3rd party caller)

20A1 Alert

21 - Hemorrhage

Code	Sub Category
-------------	---------------------

21D1	Dangerous hemorrhage
21D2	Not alert
21D3	Abnormal breathing
21C1	Hemorrhage through a tube
21B1	Possibly dangerous hemorrhage
21B2	Serious hemorrhage
21B3	Bleeding disorder or blood thinners
21A1	Non-dangerous hemorrhage
21A2	Minor hemorrhage

22 - Industrial Accidents

Code	Sub Category
-------------	---------------------

22D1	Life status questionable
22D2	Caught in machinery
22D3	Multiple victims
22B1	Unknown status (3rd party caller)

23 - Overdose (A=Accidental / I=Intentional / P=Poisoning)

Code	Sub Category
-------------	---------------------

23D1	Unconscious
23D2	Severe respiratory distress
23C1	Violent
23C2	Not alert

23C3	Abnormal breathing
23C4	Antidepressants
23C5	Cocaine
23C6	Narcotics
23C7	Acid or alkali
23C8	Unknown status (3rd party caller)
23C9	Poison Control request for response
23B1	Overdose w/o symptoms
23O1	Poisoning w/o priority symptoms

24 - Pregnancy

Code	Sub Category
24D1	Breech or cord
24D2	Head visible
24D3	Imminent delivery >5 months
24D4	3rd trimester bleeding
24D5	High risk complications
24D6	Baby born
24C1	2nd trimester hemorrhage or miscarriage
24C2	1st trimester serious hemorrhage
24B1	Labor >5 months
24B2	Unknown status (3rd party caller)
24A1	1st trimester hemorrhage or miscarriage

25 - Psychiatric Problem

Code	Sub Category
25D1	Not alert

25B1	Violent
25B2	Threatening suicide
25B3	Near hanging
25B4	Unknown status (3rd party caller)
25A1	Non-violent & non-suicidal

26 - Sick Call

Code	Sub Category
-------------	---------------------

26D1	Not alert
26C1	Cardiac History
26B1	Unknown status (3rd party caller)
26A1	Non priority symptoms
26A2	Boils
26A3	Bumps
26A4	Cannot sleep
26A5	Cannot urinate
26A6	Catheter problems
26A7	Constipation
26A8	Cramps/spasms
26A9	Cut-off ring request
26A10	Deafness
26A11	Defecation/diarrhea
26A12	Earache
26A13	Enema
26A14	Gout
26A15	Hemorrhoids/piles
26A16	Hepatitis

26A17	Hiccups
26A18	Hungry
26A19	Nervous
26A20	Object stuck
26A21	Object swallowed
26A22	Penis problems
26A23	Rash/skin disorder
26A24	STD
26A25	Sore throat
26A26	Toothache
26A27	Transport only
26A28	Wound infected

27 - Stab/Gunshot/Penetrating Trauma (S, G, or P)

Code	Sub Category
27D1	Unconscious or arrest
27D2	Not alert
27D3	Central wounds
27D4	Multiple wounds
27D5	Multiple victims
27B1	Non-recent injuries >6 hours / central wounds
27B2	Known single peripheral wound
27B3	Serious hemorrhage
27B4	Unknown status (3rd party caller)
27A1	Non-recent >6 hours / peripheral wounds

28 - Stroke

Code	Sub Category
28C1	Not alert
28C2	Abnormal breathing
28C3	Speech or movement problems
28C4	Numbness or tingling
28C5	Stoke history
28C6	Breathing normally >35 y/o
28B1	Unknown status (3rd party caller)
28A1	Breathing normally 6 hours

29 - Traffic Collision

Code	Sub Category
29D1A	Major incident (aircraft)
29D1B	Major incident (bus)
29D1D	Major incident (train)
29D1E	Major incident (watercraft)
29D2A	High mechanism (all-terrain)
29D2B	High mechanism (motorcycle)
29D2C	High mechanism (auto-pedestrian)
29D2D	High mechanism (ejection)
29D2E	High mechanism (personal watercraft)
29D2F	High mechanism (rollover)
29D2G	High mechanism (vehicle off bridge/height)
29D3	HAZMAT
29D4	Pinned
29D5	Not alert
29B1	Injuries

29B2	Multiple victims (one unit)
29B3	Multiple victims (additional units)
29B4	Serious hemorrhage
29B5	Unknown status (3rd party caller)
29A1	1st party caller w/ non-dangerous injury

30 - Traumatic Injuries (specific)

Code	Sub Category
30-D-1	Dangerous body area
30-D-2	Not alert
30-D-3	Abnormal breathing
30-B-1	Possibly Dangerous body area
30-B-2	Serious hemorrhage
30-A-1	Not Dangerous body area
30-A-2	Non-Recent injuries (\geq 6hrs)

31 - Subject Unconscious

Code	Sub Category
31E1	Ineffective breathing
31D1	Unconscious
31D2	Severe respiratory distress
31D3	Not alert
31C1	Alert w/ abnormal breathing
31C2	Cardiac history
31C3	Multiple fainting episodes
31C4	Single or near fainting episodes & alert
31C5	Female 12-50 y/o w/ abdominal pain

32 - Medical Nature Unknown

Code	Sub Category
32D1	Life status questionable
32B1	Standing, moving, sitting, or talking
32B2	Medical alert notification
32B3	Unknown status (3rd party caller)

33 - Transfer (T=Transfer / I=Interfacility)

Code	Sub Category
33D1	Suspected cardiac or respiratory arrest
33C1	Not alert (acute change)
33C2	Abnormal breathing
33C3	Significant hemorrhage or shock
33C4	Possible acute heart problems or MI
33C5	Acute severe pain
33C6	Emergency response requested
33A1	No priority symptoms

EMS Priority Dispatch Standard - Version 3 (March 2011)

Dispatch standards

Calls received for emergency medical assistance shall be prioritised using ProQA from AMPDS

The dispatch cross reference (DCR) table six level priority classification as approved by PHECC shall be utilised

The EMS response to each of the six priority levels shall be as outlined in the table below

The principles for dispatchers shall be applied when dispatching resources to an emergency medical incident

Clinical Status	Code	Description
1 Life threatening	Echo	Life threatening – Cardiac or respiratory arrest
	Delta	Life threatening other than cardiac or respiratory arrest
2 Serious not life threatening	Charlie	Serious not life threatening - immediate
	Bravo	Serious not life threatening – urgent
3 Non serious or life threatening	Alpha	Non serious or life threatening
	Omega	Minor illness or injury

Essential Response

Ambulance with minimum Paramedic (Omega : Ambulance with minimum EMT)

Response to scene

Lights and siren (Alpha and Omega : Normal traffic, no lights or siren)

Vehicle type

CEN B ambulance (Alpha and Omega : CEN A or B ambulance)

Recommended Response

Echo

- a) Advanced Paramedic.
- b) Responders (minimum CFR)
- c) Minimum 3 to 4 practitioners or responders on scene

Delta

- a) Advanced Paramedic.
- b) Responders (minimum EFR) if able to get to scene prior to ambulance.

Charlie

Advanced Paramedic for appropriate conditions

Additional extra response

Ambulance Officer according to operational requirements

Non EMS resources

Fire Service, Garda, Coast Guard, Utility services as required

Principles for dispatchers

- 1 The nearest available ambulance shall be tasked to the highest priority incident
- 2 The 'recommended response' other than an ambulance shall be dispatched if resources are available
- 3 Dispatchers shall have discretion to override ProQA to assign a higher priority to an incident
- 4 An ambulance tasked to lower priority incident may be diverted to higher priority incident when resources are limited
- 5 The Dispatcher may preserve the availability of ambulances by queuing Alpha and Omega priority incidents until sufficient resources are available
- 6 When response is delayed Dispatchers shall inform the caller of estimated time of arrival
- 7 The Dispatcher shall make contact with caller if ambulance response is delayed (> 20 minutes) to verify patient's condition and review priority of incident
- 8 Any recommended resource should only be deployed if it has a reasonable expectation of making patient contact.

Dispatch Codes

- 1 AMPDS identifies an appropriate Chief Complaint code following caller interrogation by the call taker

2 The dispatch cross reference (DCR) codes are fixed by AMPDS and cannot be changed as they are linked to software and field guides etc.

3 AMPDS has designated six response levels (Echo, Delta, Charlie, Bravo, Alpha & Omega) which are linked to the DCR codes.

4 The response level to each DCR code is agreed by MAG (MAG has agreed not to downgrade the AMPDS responses to any DCR code but reserves the right to upgrade the response to specific DCR codes to meet Irish clinical standards, 463 {26%} such upgrades have been made to date)

5 The Command, Control & Communications Centre, when activating a response to an incident, shall give the DCR code for the information about the incident to the Practitioners(de-emphasizing the letter in the code) and a MAG agreed response level of Echo, Delta, Charlie, Bravo, Alpha or Omega

6 Dispatchers and Practitioners must be made aware that DCR codes and dispatch response levels may differ due to MAG decisions

Document Owner: Brian Power