

MEMORANDUM OF LAW

DATE: August 31, 1990

TO: George K. George, Assistant Fire Chief
FROM: City Attorney
SUBJECT: Proposed Revisions to Delivery of Paramedic
Services
and Compliance with Proposition "G" 1982
Ballot

This memorandum is in response to your request via Maureen A. Stapleton, Deputy City Manager, to render an opinion as to whether the proposed Fire Department-based paramedic service delivery model complies with Proposition G, passed in 1982. (A copy of Proposition G is attached to this memorandum as Enclosure (1).)

In 1982, the San Diego Paramedics Committee for an Adequate Response in Emergencies filed an initiative petition in support of a Paramedic Transport System whereby paramedics would respond to medical emergencies in ambulances. The proposal was in contrast to a non-transport system where fire engines alone would respond to emergencies and ultimately have to wait for an ambulance to arrive to transport patients to medical centers. The initiative petition stated that a non-transport system would be less effective and more costly than the transport system as outlined in Proposition G.

As described in the summary of the proposed system and the glossary of terms attached to your request for written opinion, the proposed system does appear to meet the requirements of Proposition G. In particular, there are three basic requirements set forth in Section I, Subpart A, of Proposition G, which must be and appear to be met by the proposed system. The Proposition elements and a brief description of how the proposed model addresses each element are as follows:

1. Proposition G Element: All paramedics will be assigned to paramedic ambulances per state law.

Proposed Model: Individuals certified solely as paramedics will be assigned to paramedic ambulances as required by

Proposition G. Those individuals with dual certification as firefighter/paramedic will be assigned to first responder engines.

2. Proposition G Element: Paramedics will respond to all medical emergencies in paramedic ambulances.

Proposed Model: As set forth above, individuals certified solely as paramedics will respond to medical emergencies in paramedic ambulances which are dispatched simultaneously with first responder engines.

3. Proposition G Element: Paramedics will transport all patients requiring paramedic care to an emergency medical facility in a paramedic ambulance.

Proposed Model: At least one and sometimes two paramedics will accompany a patient in an ambulance to the emergency facility, depending on the patient's condition. When the patient's medical needs require attendance of only one paramedic, that single paramedic will attend to the patient in the ambulance while an emergency medical technician (EMT) drives. If the patient's condition warrants it, two paramedics will attend to the patient while an EMT drives the ambulance. In any event, a paramedic will always be in the ambulance with a patient being transported to an emergency facility.

As noted previously in a memorandum of law from this office, dated May 22, 1990, it is our view that Proposition G does not preclude firefighter/paramedics from being assigned to first responder engines; nor does it preclude a paramedic ambulance from being driven by an EMT.

Please feel free to contact our office should you have any further questions on this matter.

JOHN W. WITT, City Attorney

By

Peggy J. McCarberg

Deputy City Attorney

PJM:wk:js:502.6(x043.2)

Enclosure

cc Maureen Stapleton

ML-90-89