COMMUNICATION FAILURE

I. PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for the paramedic in the event that voice communication cannot be established or maintained and a delay in treatment may jeopardize the patient.

II. RELATED POLICIES

A. Hospital Contact for Medical Direction, #7001

B. Report to Receiving Hospital, #7003

C. Destination Guidelines, #8106

III. POLICY

A. The ability to make and maintain voice communication with a hospital is a vital component of the prehospital patient care system.

B. Hospital contact for the purpose of obtaining medical direction shall be made when desired by the paramedic or when required by a treatment guideline.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. If, following assessment, evaluation, and initiation of patient care as appropriate and set forth in Marin County guidelines, the paramedic is required to or wishes to contact a hospital and is unable to establish contact, the paramedic shall

1. Utilize the appropriate ALS treatment guideline except for those items requiring a physician order.
2. Accompany the patient to the hospital according to Marin County Destination Guidelines.
3. Make the appropriate verbal and written patient care reports on arrival at the receiving facility.
4. Following delivery of the patient to a hospital, and in no case longer than 24 hours, complete the following:

    a. ALS Communications Problem Report (see Appendix A) detailing information relating to the communications portion of the call.
    b. Quality Improvement Request Form (Appendix B) including the following (or similar) information under description of incident:

"Communications failure, ____ protocol utilized. Please audit call."

B. Followup actions

1. ALS Communications Problem Report is forwarded to the designated person within the provider agency for evaluation and appropriate action.

   a. If failure is determined to be the result of equipment malfunction or problem, report with provider comment is forwarded to Marin County Public Works Department, Communications Maintenence Division or other appropriate agency.
   b. That agency will take appropriate action and advise provider of same within a reasonable period of time.

2. Records of the call will be audited according to the provider's Quality Improvement Plan with note taken as to the effect lack of ability to communicate may have had on the appropriateness of patient care.