



Trust Headquarters
Nexus House
Gatwick Road
Crawley
West Sussex
RH10 9BG

Tel: 0300 123 0999
www.secamb.nhs.uk

12th September 2022

Email:

Dear,

I am writing in response to your enquiry under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) reference FOI 220827.

You requested the following information, please also see our response below:

Please can you also answer the following questions?

- 1) Please can you provide me with your current policy for response (blue light) emergency driving?**

Please see the attached policy, However please note that this is currently under review.

- 2) Does the driver of the 999 ambulance make the decision to put the blue lights on since it is them claiming the exemption or does the Trust tell a driver when to respond ? E.g. you must put your blue lights on for all Category 1, 2, 3, 4 and HCP 1, 2 and 4 hour calls.**

Please see below.

- 3) Your calls are currently graded as the following: as per the National (England) ambulance standards performance:**

Cat 1 (Life Threatening) – 7 minute response

Cat 2 (Emergency) – 18 minutes response

Cat 3 (Urgent) – 120 minutes response

Cat 4 (Less urgent) – 180 minutes response

HCP 1, 2 and 4 hour HCP calls - 60/120/240 minutes response

Cat 3, Cat 4 and HCP calls are currently classed as urgent/less urgent calls. If a call is an urgent (Cat 3, Cat 4 and all HCP calls) would you expect your staff to respond to these on blue lights or is it their decision to make as the driver based on the information they receive ?

The following ambulance categories are in the Ambulance Response Programme (ARP) :-

Category	Definition	Mean of response	90th Percentile Response time	Type
----------	------------	------------------	-------------------------------	------

Category 1 A time critical life-threatening event requiring immediate intervention or resuscitation.

7 minutes / 15 Minutes

Immediate using blue lights and sirens and exemptions as needed

Category 2 Potentially serious conditions that may require rapid assessment and urgent on-scene intervention and/or urgent transport.

18 minutes / 40 minutes

Immediate using blue lights and sirens and exemptions as needed

Category 3 An urgent problem (not immediately life threatening) that needs treatment to relieve suffering and transport or assessment and management at the scene with referral where needed within a clinically appropriate timeframe

60 minutes / up to 120 minutes

Immediate. Use blue lights and sirens and exemptions with discretion, depending on the patient's condition. Vehicles other than DCAs can only rely on exemptions if the situation is an emergency.

Category 4 Problems that are less urgent but require assessment and possibly transport within a clinically appropriate timeframe.

No mean / up to 180 minutes Routine, but without delay.

No blue lights and sirens or exemptions apart from parking or if an emergency develops

I hope you find this information of some assistance.

If for any reason you are dissatisfied with our response, kindly in the first instance contact Caroline Smart, Head of Information Governance via the following email address:

FOI@secamb.nhs.uk

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Coordinator
South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust