


CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

Date: October 24, 2025

To: Honorable City Council
c/o City Clerk, Room 395
Attention: Honorable Heather Hutt, Chair, Transportation Committee

From: Laura Rubio-Cornejo, General Manager 
Department of Transportation

Subject: **PRIVATE AMBULANCE RATE ADJUSTMENT SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT**

SUMMARY

As directed by the Los Angeles City Council in Council File (CF) 25-0583, this report provides an update from Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) regarding private ambulance rates charged and regulated by the five largest cities and counties in California.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Los Angeles City Council RECEIVE and FILE this report.

BACKGROUND

On June 13, 2024, staff appeared before the Board of Transportation Commissioners (Board) to discuss and support a rate adjustment for the non-emergency private ambulance industry. After the meeting, based on Board discussion and public comment, staff met with various stakeholders including the ambulance and hospital industries and determined to move forward with the rate adjustment as planned.

A second meeting before the Board occurred on February 13, 2025, wherein the Board gave a final approval of the 2024-2025 Private Ambulance Service Rate Adjustment and the Adoption of a New Methodology for Future Adjustments.

On August 27, 2025, the Transportation Committee heard this item and requested that staff review and report on ambulance rates in five of the largest counties and five of the largest cities in California. This report provides an update of those findings.

DISCUSSION

LADOT reviewed the ambulance regulations of the top ten cities and counties in California, by population, to conduct an analysis of rates charged by different agencies. The information collected is summarized in the tables below. Los Angeles, both as a City and a County, is significantly the largest in population.

The City of Los Angeles sets rates for many different ambulance related services, but for the purposes of comparison this report identifies those that are most consistently provided and charged for across all cities and counties: Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Basic Life Support (BLS). While the other services are important, they are not as routine, such as the cost for use of a Critical Care Nurse, or a Respiratory Therapist and vary across different cities and counties. Also, not every city or county has rates for the same services, such as the cost of a helicopter airlift, which some jurisdictions have rates for and others don't. However, all cities have rates for ALS and BLS services making it easier for comparison.

There are three California cities that directly regulate non-emergency ambulance rates: Los Angeles, San Diego, and Fresno. The City of Los Angeles sets rates that are applicable to the entire industry, whereas San Diego and Fresno both set their rates contractually for a limited number of providers. As outlined in the below chart, most jurisdictions, including the City of Los Angeles, set emergency ambulance rates. It should be noted that an increase in emergency ambulance rates for the City of Los Angeles was just approved by the Council on October 1, 2025 (See CF 25-0410).

There are different regulatory frameworks across cities that regulate non-emergency rates. In San Diego, San Jose, Fresno, and Bakersfield, ambulance providers are sometimes contractually awarded Exclusive Operating Areas (EOAs). EOA's are typically limited to emergency ambulance providers and are typically created upon the recommendation of a county which may restrict operations to one or more emergency ambulance services or providers. (See CA Health & Safety Code Section 1797.85.) In some locations the emergency ambulance operator with an EOA may also be the private non-emergency ambulance operator. Similarly, the City of Sacramento rather than setting its own rates, simply adopts the rates as set by the County of Sacramento which are effectively the emergency rates and applies those rates across the services. In other cities that do not regulate non-emergency rates, those cities (including Los Angeles) will set their own emergency rates.

City by population	Are Non-Emergency Rates Regulated?	ALS-1 Non-Emergency Base Rate	ALS-1 Emergency Base Rate	BLS Non-Emergency Base Rate	BLS Emergency Base Rate
City of Los Angeles	Yes	\$2,417.00	\$2,915.00	\$1,703.75	\$2,068.00
City of San Diego	Yes	\$2,827.66	\$3,017.68	\$1,243.38	\$2,546.10
City of San Jose	No	\$0.00	\$3,314.54	\$0.00	\$2,651.64
City of San Francisco	No	\$0.00	\$2,555.00	\$0.00	\$2,555.00
City of Fresno	Yes	\$1,481.00	\$2,344.00	\$1,234.00	\$1,974.00
City of Sacramento	No	\$0.00	\$2,069.65 to \$5,465.00	\$0.00	\$1,848.26 to \$5,540.00
City of Long Beach	No	\$0.00	\$1,675.00	\$0.00	\$1,198.00

City of Oakland	No	\$0.00	\$4,529.89	\$0.00	\$4,529.89
City of Bakersfield	No	\$0.00	\$1791.49 to \$5507.32	\$0.00	\$1646.49 to \$4641.88
City of Anaheim	No	\$0.00	\$2,923.74	\$0.00	\$2,413.51

Among the highest population counties, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Fresno County all set non-emergency ambulance rates, while the rest of the counties only set emergency rates. As with cities that regulate these rates, differences in the regulatory frameworks exist across counties. For example, in San Bernardino County, there are only three providers who have EOAs and whose rates are regulated contractually. Alameda County has one private provider and four fire departments providing this service. Sacramento County has 12 providers (including City fire and County EMS departments) with each provider having a contractually set rate. In the columns below where there are multiple rates or a range of rates, that is reflective of the fact that numerous providers have separate approved rates for that City or County.

County by population	Are Non-Emergency Rates Regulated?	ALS-1 Non-Emergency Base Rate	ALS-1 Emergency Base Rate	BLS Non-Emergency Base Rate	BLS Emergency Base Rate
Los Angeles County	Yes	\$3,184.00	\$3,408.00	\$2,121.00	\$2,276.00
San Diego County	No	\$0.00	\$3,743.00	\$0.00	\$3,743.00
Orange County	No	\$0.00	\$2,923.74	\$0.00	\$2,413.51
Riverside County	No	\$2,778.08 to \$6,573.10	\$1,450.00 to \$3,446.16	\$0.00	\$1,850.00 to \$3,446.16
San Bernardino County	Yes (by EOA)	\$2,472.32 or \$2,719.55	\$2,472.32 or \$2,719.55	\$1,781.00 or \$1,959.12	\$1,781.00 or \$1,959.12
Santa Clara County	No	\$0.00	\$3,314.54	\$0.00	\$2,651.64
Alameda County	No	\$0.00	\$4,529.89	\$0.00	\$4,529.89
Sacramento County	No	\$0.00	\$2,069.65 to \$5,465.00	\$0.00	\$1,848.26 to \$5,540.00
Contra Costa County	No	\$0.00	\$3134.00 to \$3668.00	\$0.00	\$3134.00 to \$3668.00
Fresno County	Yes	\$1410.00 to \$2400.00	\$1410.00 to \$2400.00	\$1234.00 to \$1995.00	\$1300.00 to \$1995.00

While only three cities (Los Angeles, San Diego and Fresno) directly regulate non-emergency ambulance service, it is worth noting that these cities are all within the top five in the state as it pertains to population size which ostensibly leads to a likely higher number of services in those areas. Further, both Los Angeles and Fresno have County EMS agencies that also set non-emergency rates.

The City of Los Angeles is an outlier in that it does not set EOAs, nor does it allow ambulance companies to set their own rates for approval by the City. Most cities and counties set EOAs while some only allow a few operators. Some jurisdictions do both, but Los Angeles does neither. The City of Los Angeles has not considered doing this primarily due to its size both geographically and demographically and its interest in ensuring that service reaches every part of the City. The City of Los Angeles is also an outlier in that for its non-emergency ambulance service, it does not set a ceiling, but rather it sets rates to be charged without deviation.

Finally, it is important to note that in most of these locations, including when looking at the emergency rates for the City of Los Angeles, it is clear that the costs for providing these services have increased. Sacramento increased its 2025 ambulance rates by a little over 50%, and San Diego increased its rates by 32% since 2021 with another expected increase of 18% over the next three years.

In 2025, the City of Los Angeles increased its emergency ambulance service rates by 11%. Reimbursement for rendering emergency ambulance service is covered under Section 22.210.2 of the Los Angeles Charter and Administrative Code. This allows the Fire Chief to charge and receive reimbursement for City expenses incurred in rendering emergency ambulance service. This is because emergency ambulance service is managed by the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) and sometimes contracted to private ambulance operators through the LAFD. This increase occurred because the direct and indirect costs related to salaries, supplies, and expenses related to these operations have increased.

Non-Emergency Ambulance rate setting looks at similar costs, including salaries, insurance, and other operational costs including vehicle, fuel and other increased administrative costs. These metrics are factored in along with a review of rates from other counties and the Consumer Price Index. The proposal by the LADOT seeks to create a new baseline and scale down future reviews by following rate percentage changes that will be established by the County. Unlike the Emergency rate setting, the increase in revenue does not return to the City, but rather allows the regulated private ambulance industry to recoup its costs and continue operating quality service for the City of Los Angeles.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no impact to the City's General Fund

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