

REGIONAL TEXAS WRISTBAND PROJECT

BACKGROUND

Senate Bill 500 (SB500) from the 86th Texas Legislature, a 2019 supplemental appropriations bill, allocated funding to support trauma and emergency healthcare initiatives in Texas. Texas Wristbands were purchased from these funds in 2019 to provide a unique identifier to link records or patient data delivered from EMS throughout the continuum of care.

PURPOSE

The Texas EMS Wristband Project is an initiative designed to enhance patient tracking, identification, and continuity of care across the prehospital and hospital settings during emergencies and mass casualty events and is supported by the East Texas Gulf Coast Regional Trauma Advisory Council. This project establishes a standardized, statewide approach to patient identification, improving real-time patient tracking, resource allocation, and data sharing between EMS, hospitals, and emergency response agencies. The use of this wristband streamlines patient flow during disasters and enhanced data collection for quality improvement, reimbursement and patient reunification efforts.

This project aligns with the broader disaster preparedness efforts and supports the state's emergency medical response framework. Effective September 1, 2025, the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Trauma Rules refers to the Texas EMS Wristband, primarily in Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 157, Rule §157.126(d)(4).

While the expectation is to apply a wristband to all transported patients, it is not an expectation for the Regional Advisory Councils to fund this project. It is the responsibility of each agency / facility to purchase any additional bands needed. The Board of Directors may consider budgeting for the purchase of additional wristbands as grant funds permit.

PROCEDURE

Application of the wristband begins with first patient contact, typically by EMS providers. The steps below outline the process to apply a wristband.

1) Pre-Hospital / EMS Responsibilities

- a) Place a Texas EMS Wristband on **EVERY** patient, **EVERY** day, by air or ground, transport or transfer to a destination facility. It is preferred to place the wristband on the patients' left wrist to minimize interference with facility procedures.
- b) The use of Pulsara is encouraged. Upload the unique identifier via Pulsara and ensure communications to destination facility prior to arrival.
- c) In the event your service does not utilize Pulsara, scan the barcode or type the number into the pre-identified field in the EMS electronic medical record (EMR).

- d) Upload the wristband's unique identifier into a pre-identified, query-able National EMS Information System (NEMSIS) compliant field within the EMS agency electronic medical record.
- e) If EMS is requested to assist with an interfacility transfer and a wristband has not been applied, the EMS service providing transport must ensure a wristband is in place prior to departure and ensure the sending facility records the unique identifier in their EMR. In addition, the unique identifier must be added to the EMS provider EMR.

2) **Hospital Responsibilities**

- a) Patients arriving by EMS must have a wristband applied and is to remain on the patient throughout care and is only removed at discharge to home or final disposition.
- b) When a patient enters your facility with a wristband, enter the wristband's unique identifier in the facility EMR. This field must be able to be queried within the EMR.
- c) If a patient arrives by EMS without a wristband, apply a wristband and record the number in your EMR and Pulsara (if available at your facility).

3) **Patient Transfers (Outgoing patients):**

- a) If the patient does not have a wristband, apply the wristband on the patient and record the number in the EMR.

4) **Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) with patient arriving other than by EMS:**

- a) During a mass casualty incident, if the patient arrives by means other than EMS, hospital staff must apply a wristband and enter in the hospital EMR.

Alyson Nickum-Smith

10/7/2025

Alyson Nickum-Smith
Chair, Board of Director

Date