



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 1, 2026

**CENCAL FIRE AND EMS AUTHORITY LAUNCHES REGIONAL
AMBULANCE SERVICE IN SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY**

San Joaquin County, Calif. – At 8:00 a.m. on May 1, 2026, the CENCAL Fire and EMS Authority (CENCAL) officially began providing ambulance services across San Joaquin County, marking a major milestone in regional emergency medical care.

Formed through a Joint Powers Authority, CENCAL represents a partnership between the City of Stockton, City of Lodi, and the South San Joaquin County Fire Authority. The system will serve approximately 660,000 residents across more than 1,100 square miles.

Ambulance services will be delivered through a public-private partnership with American Medical Response (AMR), with coordinated dispatch services provided through a centralized system.



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“This is a significant step forward for emergency medical services in our region,” said Fire Chief Randall Bradley of the South San Joaquin County Fire Authority (Tracy Fire). “CENCAL brings together the strengths of multiple fire agencies into a unified system focused on improving response times, expanding service capacity, and delivering high-quality patient care.”

“This effort reflects years of collaboration and a shared commitment to better serve our communities,” said Fire Chief Johnson of the City of Lodi. “By working together, we are creating a more coordinated and reliable emergency medical system for the people who depend on us every day.”

“Today’s launch represents a major advancement in how emergency services are delivered across San Joaquin County,” said Fire Chief Carr of the City of Stockton. “By managing and dispatching both fire and ambulance resources through a single system – with shared communications and technology – we are creating a seamless, coordinated response that improves efficiency and ultimately benefits the patient.”



The development of this regional model was made possible through the leadership and vision of the San Joaquin County Emergency Medical Services Agency, which established a framework that encouraged innovation, collaboration, and improved system performance across the county.

The success of this initiative also reflects the strong support and leadership of elected officials from the partner agencies and the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors, whose commitment to enhancing emergency medical services helped make this regional approach possible.

The new system introduces a coordinated regional model designed to enhance efficiency, accountability, and service levels. Key features include:

- Integrated dispatch of fire and ambulance resources through a centralized system
- Shared communications and technology platforms to support coordinated response
- Expanded ambulance availability to meet growing demand
- System-wide performance monitoring and accountability

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May 1, 2026

Page 2 of 3

CENCAL's formation reflects a long-term commitment to strengthening emergency medical services through collaboration and innovation. By aligning fire agencies and private ambulance resources under a single governance structure, CENCAL is positioned to deliver more consistent and reliable service throughout the county.

The official launch occurred at 8:00 a.m. on May 1, 2026, when the first CENCAL-dispatched ambulance is placed into service.

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