

**ALS, LEVEL 1:**

Transportation by ground ambulance vehicle and the provision of medically necessary supplies and services including the provision of at least one ALS intervention by ALS personnel trained to the level of the EMT-Intermediate or paramedic.

***ALS Intervention:** An ALS intervention must be medically necessary to qualify as an intervention for payment for an ALS level of service. An ALS intervention applies only to ground transports*

**ALS, LEVEL 1 EMERGENCY:**

When medically necessary, the provision of ALS1 services (ALS assessment or ALS intervention per state guidelines), are performed in the context of an emergency response and responds immediately. ALS personnel trained to the level of the EMT-Intermediate or paramedic.

***ALS Assessment:** An ALS assessment is an assessment performed by an ALS crew as part of an emergency response that was necessary because the patient's reported condition at the time of dispatch was such that only an ALS crew was qualified to perform the assessment.*

***ALS Intervention:** An ALS intervention must be medically necessary to qualify as an intervention for payment for an ALS level of service. An ALS intervention applies only to ground transports*

**ALS, LEVEL 2:**

Transportation by ground ambulance vehicle staffed with ALS personnel and the provision of medically necessary supplies and services including:

1. At least three separate administrations of one or more medications by intravenous push/bolus or by continuous infusion (excluding crystalloid fluids), OR
2. Ground ambulance transport, medically necessary supplies and services, and the provision of at least one of the following ALS2 procedures:
  - a. Manual defibrillation/cardioversion;
  - b. Endotracheal intubation;
  - c. Central venous line;
  - d. Cardiac pacing;
  - e. Chest decompression;
  - f. Surgical airway; or
  - g. Intraosseous line.

***Application:** Crystalloid fluids include fluids such as 5 percent Dextrose in water, Saline and Lactated Ringer's. Medications that are administered by other means (e.g., intramuscular/subcutaneous injection, oral, sublingually, or nebulized) do not qualify to determine whether the ALS2 level rate is payable. The criterion of multiple administrations of the same drug requires a suitable quantity and amount of time between administrations that is in accordance with standard medical practice guidelines.*

## CMS Service Level Definitions (42 CFR Ch.IV § 414.601 Subpart H)

### **BLS:**

Transportation by ground ambulance vehicle as defined by the state. The ambulance must be staffed by an individual who is qualified as an EMT-Basic per state guidelines

### **BLS, EMERGENCY:**

When the ambulance provider or supplier is called, it responds immediately. The ambulance must be staffed by an individual who is qualified as an EMT-Basic per state guidelines.

### **Fixed Wing (Airplane):**

Furnished when the beneficiary's medical condition is such that transport by ground ambulance, in whole or in part, is not appropriate. Generally, transport by fixed wing air ambulance may be necessary because the beneficiary's condition requires rapid transport to a treatment facility, and either great distances or other obstacles (e.g., heavy traffic precludes rapid delivery to the nearest appropriate facility). Transport by fixed wing air ambulance may also be necessary because the beneficiary is inaccessible by a ground or water ambulance vehicle.

### **Paramedic Intercept:**

ALS emergency services, provided by an entity that does not provide the ambulance transport to a BLS level of service, is dispatched to transport a patient. Paramedic intercept services furnished on or after March 1, 1999, may be payable separate from the ambulance transport, subject to the requirements specified below.

The intercept service(s) is:

- Furnished in a rural area;
- Furnished under a contract with one or more volunteer ambulance services; and, Medically necessary based on the condition of the beneficiary receiving the ambulance service.

In addition, the volunteer ambulance service involved must:

- Furnish services only at the BLS level at the time of the intercept; and,
- Be prohibited by State law from billing anyone for any service.

Finally, the entity furnishing the ALS paramedic intercept service must:

- Bill all recipients who receive ALS paramedic intercept services from the entity, regardless of whether or not those recipients are Medicare beneficiaries.

For purposes of the paramedic intercept benefit, a rural area is an area that is designated as rural by a State law or regulation or any area outside of a Metropolitan Statistical Area or in New England, outside a New England County Metropolitan Area as defined by the Office of Management and Budget. The current list of these areas is periodically published in the Federal Register.

### **CMS Service Level Definitions**

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**Specialty Care Transport:**

The interfacility transportation of a critically injured or ill beneficiary by a ground ambulance vehicle at a level of service beyond the scope of the EMT-Paramedic. This transport is necessary when a beneficiary's condition requires ongoing care that must be furnished by one or more health professionals in an appropriate specialty area (e.g., emergency or critical care nursing, emergency medicine, respiratory care, cardiovascular care, or a paramedic with additional training).

***Additional training:** the specific additional training that a state requires a paramedic to complete in order to qualify to furnish specialty care to a critically ill or injured patient during a specialty care transport.*

**Rotor Wing (Helicopter):**

Furnished when the beneficiary's medical condition is such that transport by ground ambulance, in whole or in part, is not appropriate. Generally, transport by rotary wing air ambulance may be necessary because the beneficiary's condition requires rapid transport to a treatment facility, and either great distances or other obstacles (e.g., heavy traffic precludes such rapid delivery to the nearest appropriate facility). Transport by rotary wing air ambulance may also be necessary because the beneficiary is inaccessible by a ground or water ambulance vehicle.