

# **Ambulance Billing and Coding Desktop Reference Guide**



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## **Emergency Procedure Codes – Ground Ambulance**

<b><u>Code</u></b>	<b><u>Definition</u></b>
A0429	Basic Life Support – Emergency Transport (BLS-E)
A0427	Advanced Life Support – Emergency Transport, Level 1 (ALS1-E)
A0433	Advanced Life Support – Level 2 (ALS2)
A0434	Specialty Care Transport* *Interfacility transports only and must meet other specific criteria; see “Special Situations” Cards 14-15 for more information
A0425	Ground Mileage

## **Practical Pointers – Emergencies**

*Emergency Response:* use of either the A0429 (BLS-Emergency) or A0427 (ALS Level 1 Emergency) codes under Medicare rules requires an “emergency response,” which means: “responding immediately at the BLS or ALS1 level of service to a 911 call or the equivalent in areas without a 911 call system. An immediate response is one in which the ambulance entity begins as quickly as possible to take the steps necessary to respond to the call.” Medicare also permits calls coming in directly to an ambulance service’s 7 or 10-digit number to qualify as an “emergency” if the condition reported at the time of dispatch is an emergency under accepted, standard dispatch protocols. If no dispatch protocol is used, or the dispatch is inconsistent with protocol, then the condition of the patient on scene determines the level of payment.

*ALS Assessments and ALS Interventions:* the A0427 – ALS Level 1 Emergency code requires an “emergency response” as defined above plus *either* a qualifying “ALS assessment” (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) or an ALS intervention (i.e., a procedure that is, in accordance with State and local laws, required to be furnished by ALS personnel). Assessments/interventions should be documented on the PCR.

*ALS2:* the A0433 – ALS – Level 2 code can be used either for an emergency or non-emergency transport, provided that one or more ALS-Level 2 interventions was performed or attempted (manual defibrillation/cardioversion, endotracheal intubation, central venous line, cardiac pacing, chest decompression, surgical airway, intraosseous line, or three or more separate administrations of medications by IV push/bolus or continuous infusion, excluding crystalloid fluids).