

Marquette County EMS Medical Control Authority

Dead on Scene Policy

Part 1, Section 4
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Purpose: The procedure to follow when a patient appears to be dead on scene.

Note: It is unlawful to remove a body from the place where death occurred without first notifying the office of the Medical Examiner, per Michigan Law MCL 52.203 and 52.204.

Marquette County EMS Medical Control Authority adopted the State of Michigan Do-Not-Resuscitate Policy (See PA 192 and 193 of 1996) on 3/31/97.

- I. **CPR IS TO BE INITIATED ON ALL PATIENTS WITHOUT VITAL SIGNS (no blood pressure, pulse, respirations or pupillary reflex) UNLESS one or more of the following conditions exists:**
 - A. Decapitation; or
 - B. 100% full thickness, total body burn, complete charring of the body including face; or
 - C. Obvious mortal wounds/conditions (injuries inconsistent with life - i.e., crushing injuries of the head and/or chest); or
 - D. Putrefied, decayed, or frozen bodies and/or lividity with rigor mortis; or
 - E. Severe blunt trauma. NOTE: Penetrating trauma such as gun shot or stab wounds do not qualify.
 - F. Patient has a valid "Do Not Resuscitate" order (per Public Acts 192 and 193 of August 1996), and the order is presented to the EMS provider.
 1. A valid Do Not Resuscitate order must be presented to the EMS provider, and signed and dated by all required parties.
 2. Any patient with a Do Not Resuscitate order who has vital signs shall not be denied any treatments or care otherwise specified in local protocols.
 3. In the event that resuscitation is initiated, and a valid DNR order is presented subsequently, resuscitation will be discontinued.
 4. Current practice in Marquette County does not recognize DNR identification bracelets, however the presence of a DNR bracelet must be made known to the medical control physician, allowing him/her to make the decision to discontinue resuscitation efforts.
- II. **Specific Exceptions**
 - A. Patients who are struck by lightning, are hypothermic or victims of cold water drowning (unless submersion time is greater than one hour) do not qualify for use of this policy.
 - B. Should special circumstances exist in which the EMS providers feel that resuscitative efforts are not indicated, Medical Control should then be contacted with other pertinent information, which may lead to a decision to continue or cease resuscitation.
- III. **Procedure**
 - A. Contact Medical Control to confirm resuscitation is not indicated.

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1. Document physician, time of contact, and hospital. (*NOTE: Order must be received from a licensed physician; physician designees such as nursing staff are not acceptable.*)
 - B. Record, if possible, cardiac evidence of asystole.
 - C. Provide the history of current event (ie, auto accident, penetration injury, cardiac, drug overdose, etc.)
 - D. Give verbal report of negative vital signs (ie, blood pressure 0/0, pulse absent, respirations absent, pupils fixed/dilated).
 - E. Be aware of drug overdose, hypoglycemia, hypothermia, and poisonings where patient may appear clinically dead, but may be resuscitated.
 - F. If appropriate, describe body temperature and evidence of rigor mortis.
 - G. **The physician to provide the decision of death.**

IV. After Physician Has Provided a Pronouncement of Death

- A. Assure proper notification of Law Enforcement and Medical Examiner.
- B. Preserve the scene. Do not remove clothing, valuables, or any objects in, on or around the deceased.
- C. The Medical Examiner's Office is to decide if the body may be removed and its destination, and clearance must be received before transport.
- D. Clear the scene as appropriate, transporting to approved destination (County Medical Examiner at MGHS Morgue or appropriate and approved alternative, i.e. Bell Memorial ED or Morgue, MGHS ED, licensed funeral home, etc.)
- E. Record time of pronouncement of death, name of physician and hospital. Complete a thorough EMS Run Report to reflect all findings and documentation of all communications with the online physician, law enforcement, and the medical examiner's office.

AUTHENTICATION AND APPROVAL

Marquette County EMS Medical Director
Original Approval: 10/19/89; Revision Date: 09/10/02

Date