

Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL	
Section: G. Emergency Medical Services	Effective Date: May 30, 2010
Topic: 4. Operations Directives	Replaces: Sept. 14, 2009
Subject: 24. Care and Treatment of VSA Patients	
Policy No. G.4.24.	Page 1 of 3

PURPOSE

All patients shall be treated as living persons unless they are legally pronounced dead or are obviously dead as defined by Ministry of Health Long Term Care Policy.

APPLICATION

Paramedics, EMAs, EMS Management

PROCEDURE

- 1) In a circumstance of sudden and/or unexplained absence of a patient's vital signs, Paramedics/EMAs are obliged to assume life. No person except a qualified medical practitioner has the authority to pronounce a person dead. Where a local procedure on declaring death has been established field pronouncement may be requested by staff.
- 2) Paramedics/EMAs shall initiate aggressive life support measures (i.e. cardiopulmonary resuscitation according to Ontario Heart and Stroke Foundation, Basic Rescuer standards) and transport the patient(s) to a medical facility.
- 3) Documentation
 - a) No patient documentation is to be left at any scene. Document the detailed findings of the history taking, patient assessment and any patient care efforts including the results of such efforts on the Ambulance Call Report (ACR). Report the information to the receiving facility medical personnel.
 - b) In addition to the patient documentation required on the ACR, Paramedics/EMAs shall complete an incident report as per this manual
- 4) Presuming Death
 - a) Legal Death exists only when a physician has pronounced death. Termination of Resuscitation IS NOT a pronouncement of legal death.
 - b) Obvious Death – No Physician Present. Upon completion of a thorough physical and history assessment, Paramedics/EMAs may “presume” death has occurred if gross signs of death are obvious as per the Patients with Vital Signs Absent (Transportation) Standard (Basic Life Support Patient Care Standards).

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- c) The decision to presume death is to be based on knowledge, skill and training in emergency patient care. If there is any doubt that death has occurred, treatment shall be provided according to the procedure for VSA patients in this policy.
- 5) When it has been determined that legal or obvious death has occurred, (for patients with Do Not Resuscitate Orders, see Operations Directive G.4.46) Paramedics/EMAs shall:
- a) Treat the deceased with respect and dignity; be compassionate and try to respect the wishes and needs of family members.
 - b) Notify CACC of the death, requesting CACC notify the police. Police shall advise the coroner.
 - c) Collect and document all available information regarding the patient and circumstances surrounding the death.
 - d) Remain at the scene (unless directed otherwise by CACC) until other appropriate personnel (i.e. coroner, police) accept responsibility for the deceased.
 - e) “Legally or Obviously Dead” persons must not be transported by ambulance except from a public place where no body removal service is readily available. In these circumstances, a coroner may authorize transportation of deceased persons to the nearest morgue when an alternate ambulance is readily available to respond to emergency calls as determined by CACC. Public place in this context does not include the premises of a hospital, nursing home or similar institution, nor a private residence or,
 - f) Dead persons must not be transported at the same time as a living patient, except where death is pronounced while enroute to a hospital.
 - g) Complete an Incident Report as per this manual.
- 6) **SUSPECTED FOUL PLAY:** See Police Notification Standard; Suspected Foul Play, Hanging Standards (Basic Life Support Patient Care Standards).
- a) In cases of suspected foul play, every effort should be made to leave the scene undisturbed and to preserve as much evidence as possible for the police. This obligation is second only to ensuring the appropriate assessment, treatment, and transport of the patient occurs. In cases of suspected foul play, every effort should be made to leave the scene undisturbed and to preserve as much evidence as possible for the police. This obligation is second only to ensuring the appropriate assessment, treatment, and transport of the patient occurs.
 - b) Complete an Incident Report as per this manual.
 - c) If access to the patient is denied the Paramedics/EMA shall contact the

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Duty Officer and document the reasons for the denial of access on the Ambulance Call Report and request the police officer to sign the Ambulance Call Report.

REFERENCE

- Basic Life Support Patient Care Standards January 2007, ver. 2.0
- Policy Directive G.3.2 Incident Reports
- Policy Directive G.4.46 Do Not Resuscitate (DNR)