

**DEMCA
PROCEDURES
DEAD ON SCENE**

Initial Date: 5/30/2016
Revised Date: 2/1/2020

Section 7-6

Dead on Scene

Aliases: DOA, DOS

I. Dead on Scene inclusion criteria:

Initiate or continue CPR for patient found to be in cardiac arrest UNLESS one or more of the following conditions exists:

- A. Decomposition
- B. Rigor mortis (Caution: do not confuse with stiffness due to cold environment)
- C. Dependent lividity
- D. Decapitation
- E. Incinerated or frozen body
- F. Submersion greater than 1 hour documented by the licensed health care professional after arrival on scene.
- G. Gross dismemberment or obvious mortal wounds/conditions (injuries inconsistent with life – i.e., crushing injuries of the head and/or chest)
- H. Unwitnessed arrest of traumatic origin, without organized electrical activity (must be asystolic).
- I. Traumatic cardiac arrest >15 minutes prior to EMS arrival
- J. Patient has a valid “Do Not Resuscitate” identification bracelet or order.
- K. In cases of mass casualty incidents, where the number of patients exceeds the providers and resources to care for them, any patient who is pulseless and apneic may be triaged as deceased.

II. Specific Exceptions

- A. Patients who are struck by lightning, are acutely hypothermic or victims of cold water drowning (unless submersion time is over 1 hour) do not qualify for use of this policy.
- B. EMS personnel may initiate resuscitation efforts based upon professional judgement of viability, or if there is any concern over the validity of DNR orders, when present.

III. Procedure

- A. If none of the inclusion criteria are present, continue CPR and proceed to the appropriate treatment protocol
- B. If any of the above inclusion criteria, and none of the exclusion criteria, are met, cease CPR (if performed), document the criteria in the Patient Care Record
- C. A body shall not be moved from the location of death **unless requested by the police authority.**

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- A. Alternately, the body of a person who has unexpectedly died in a public location may be moved only after approval from the police authority. Such approval shall not be requested if there is any indication of violence, criminal activity or if the physical environment may contain evidence related to a cause of death or an injury pattern.
- B. Bodies must remain in the physical custody of EMS until custody is to the police authority.
- C. If there is evidence of suspicious, violent or unusual cause of death, caution should be taken to avoid contamination of the scene. Police may choose to photograph or document the placement of medical devices, medical equipment, etc. in suspicious situations, prior to their movement or removal.
- D. No personal items should be removed from the body with the exception of identification.
- E. Bodies may be covered with a burn sheet or other sheet which does not shed fibers.
- F. If a body is moved, as permitted in the prior criteria, the location should be to a private, secure and nearby location.
- G. Bodies must be handled with care and respect for the deceased, the family and the public.