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***Death in an Ambulance and Transport of a Body***

The intent of this policy is to establish standards for Determination of Death, when patients with Do-Not-Resuscitate (DNR) orders die in an ambulance, or care is terminated for a patient while in the ambulance.

- I. Death in an Ambulance – termination of care
  - a. Patients with valid DNR orders being transported for any reason, whether due to an emergency condition or during an interfacility transfer, who experience cardiac or respiratory arrest shall have the DNR honored unless, before arresting, the patient expressly withdraws their DNR.
  - b. Patients for whom transport was initiated but who, during transport, meet the criteria for either Dead on Scene or Termination of Resuscitation protocols, and for whom On-line Medical Control (OLMC) has approved a termination of resuscitation (as required by those protocols respectively), may have care terminated while still en route to the hospital.
- II. Death in an Ambulance – transportation of patient's body
  - a. In the event of a patient death in an ambulance, the body shall be transported to the original destination hospital if the call was originally from a scene to a hospital or from a facility to a hospital (transfer).
    - i. The patient's body shall be brought to the Emergency Department
    - ii. The patient will be registered to accommodate both the transfer of custody and for preservation of evidence, if indicated
  - b. If a patient is being transferred to a nursing home or to their home, immediately following discharge from a hospital, and death is determined, the body should be brought back to the hospital from which they were discharged, unless the patient is a hospice patient.
    - i. If the patient is a hospice patient and hospice will be meeting you at the destination, or the destination is a hospice facility, you may continue on to the destination and relinquish the body to hospice personnel. However, if the death was unexpected, the Medical Control must be notified.
    - ii. If the patient is a hospice patient and hospice personnel will not be meeting you at the destination, continue on toward the destination, contact a supervisor from your agency and evaluate the situation. Where you ultimately go is dependent on how far you are from the destination, if family was intending to meet you at the destination, if the death was unexpected and any confounding factors. The body may not be left without there being a custodial transfer from EMS to an appropriate healthcare provider.
      1. Consider contacting the hospice care provider
      2. Consider consultation with online medical control
  - c. If a patient is being transferred from a facility to an appointment, or vice versa, where neither the starting or ending destination was a hospital:
    1. If no DNR exists, treat and transport the patient to a hospital
    2. If a DNR exists but the patient is not a hospice patient, determine death, honor the DNR, and transport the body to a hospital
    3. If a DNR exists and the patient is a hospice patient, determine death; honor the DNR, refer to II.b above