

Madison County Department of Emergency Medical Services

Standard Operating Guideline



Title	Deceased patients
Number	024
Adoption Date	1/1/07
Revision Date	
Approved by	Lewis Jenkins, EMS Director



Purpose:

To provide guidance in handling patients found dead or declared dead. The following are directives to be followed in most situations. In cases of question, consult the Duty Officer for direction.

Policy:

1. Dead on Arrival Patients (DOA)
 - A. If you determine the patient has expired, you shall:
 - I. Immediately run a 30-second EKG strip in at least two or more leads to confirm your findings. (In a cold environment, or if the patient is abnormally cold to the touch, run a 1+ minute strip; extreme cold can mimic rigor).
****Instances where this strip is not necessary include injuries that are incompatible with life (i.e., decapitation, hemicorporectomy – body cut in half, etc., obvious body decomposition, and/or significant rigor with dependent lividity.****
 - II. Contact law enforcement for assistance on all deaths.
 - III. Document the time of non-resuscitation on your PPCR.
 - IV. Cover the patient with a sheet (unless a crime scene) to provide dignity of the body.
 - V. **Law enforcement** will call the Medical examiner if needed or the patients PCP to sign the death certificate.
 - VI. **Law enforcement** upon arrival will gather information from EMS and relieve the EMS staff as soon as possible to return to service.
2. Crime Scenes with DOA's
 - A. Protect Yourself
 - I. Be as sure as possible that the scene is secure and that law enforcement is on the scene
 - II. Wear gloves, etc. as appropriate
 - B. Protect the Scene
 - I. Patient care is paramount. However, if the patient has expired and no amount of ALS will revive the patient then do not disturb items in the area as they may impede or destroy vital evidence necessary in pursuing the perpetrator.
 - II. Remove yourselves to a location specified by law enforcement and, if requested, leave the scene.

Note - On rare occasion or when special circumstances are involved (ex. Patient located in a roadway) you may be asked by Law Enforcement to transport a deceased

patient to Preddy Funeral Home until a decision can be made as to the final destination for the patient. If this occurs you must notify dispatch and the EMS Duty Officer on duty.