

PROTOCOL FOR: Deaths: Deaths Occurring in Emergency Department and Patients
Dead On Arrival

- POLICY:
1. All deaths occurring in the ED and all DOA's are reportable to the Medical Examiner's (ME) office.
 2. The patient is to be pronounced by the ED physician.
 3. ME must be notified before any blood samples (legal or otherwise) are drawn on DOA's.
 4. On off-shifts and weekends, Nursing Supervisor is notified by the charge nurse.
 5. The patient's next of kin is to be notified by the pronouncing physician or other responsible MD.
 6. All bodies and personal belongings are appropriately tagged for identification.
 7. When an attending physician feels that investigation should be pursued beyond that decided by the Assistant ME, he/she calls the Medical Examiner's office for further consultation.
 8. Post mortem care will only be done in cases turned down by the ME, i.e., removal of invasive instruments.
 9. Refer to HAM #07-016 regarding organ/tissue donation policy. All deaths must be reported to Life Choice.

DESIRED
OUTCOME:

1. Appropriate care of body per hospital policy will occur.
2. Patient's next of kin will be notified in a timely fashion.
3. Patient's belongings will be collected and released appropriately.

ASSOCIATED

STANDARDS: Hospital Administrative Manual:
07-010, "Death of a Patient"
07-011, "Medical Examiners Cases"
07-012, "Autopsy Services"
07-016, "Organ Tissue/Body Donation"

IMPLEMENTATION

- PROCESS:
1. All DOA's brought to the ED are placed in an appropriate room and an ED chart is initiated.

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2. The ME form, body release form and Death Certificate accompany patient to morgue.

- DOCUMENTATION:
1. Documentation on the ED chart is the responsibility of the pronouncing physician and should include:
 - a. time pronounced and by whom
 - b. when patient last seen by physician
 - c. known medical history
 2. An ME-3 form is completed and the ME notified by the ED pronouncing physician.
 - a. Notification of the ME's office to obtain the ME case number is done by the ED charge nurse. The ME case number is documented on the ME-3 form and the ED record.
 3. A clothing list is completed by the nursing staff and include mention of any valuables placed in the safe. No belongings or valuables are given to the family until permission to do so is granted by the ME.
 4. A body release form is signed by the family.
 5. A death certificate is completed by the pronouncing physician and accompany body to morgue only if the case is known to be turned down by the ME.
 6. If the ME turns down the case after the body has been placed in the morgue, a death certificate is then completed by the pronouncing physician and brought to the morgue.
 7. A Bereavement Brochure is given to all families.

REFERENCES: Emergency Department Advisory Committee
Emergency Department Unit Review
Nursing Standards Committee

EFFECTIVE DATE: 1/88

REVISION DATES: 2/94, 10/97, 10/99, 1/06, 9/08