

Chapter: COUNTY Of SAN DIEGO EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
Key Words: Policy/Procedure/Protocol

SUBJECT: Guidelines for Verification of
Organ Donor Status

POLICY NO: S-014
PAGE: 1 of 2
DATE: July 1, 2017

AUTHORITY: Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Section 1797.220 and Division 7, Section 7150.55.

I. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines Emergency Medical Services (EMS) field personnel to search for verification of organ donor status on adult patients for whom death appears imminent.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Definitions

Imminent Death:

A condition wherein illness or injuries are of such severity that, in the opinion of EMS personnel, death is likely to occur before the patient arrives at the receiving hospital. For purposes of this policy, this definition does not include any conscious patient regardless of the severity of illness or injury.

Reasonable Search:

A brief attempt by EMS field personnel to locate an organ donor document of gift or other information that may identify a patient as a potential organ donor or one who has refused to make an anatomical gift.

III. POLICY

- A.** When EMS field personnel encounter an unconscious adult patient for whom it appears death is imminent, they shall attempt a “reasonable search” of the patient’s belongings to determine if the individual carries an organ donor document of gift or other information indicating the patient’s status as an organ donor.

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- B.** Treatment and transport of the patient remains the highest priority for field personnel. This search shall not interfere with patient care or transport.
- C.** Field personnel shall notify the receiving hospital personnel if organ donor document of gift or other information is discovered. Advanced Life Support (ALS) units shall notify the Base Hospital in addition to the receiving hospital personnel.
- D.** Any organ donor document of gift or other information that is discovered shall be transported to the receiving hospital with the patient, unless an investigating law enforcement officer requests it. In the event that no transport is made, any organ document of gift or other information shall remain with the patient.
- E.** Field personnel shall briefly note the results of the search on the EMS Prehospital Patient Record.
- F.** No search is to be made by EMS personnel after the patient has expired.
- G.** If a member of the patient's immediate family objects to the search for an organ donor document of gift or other information at the scene, their response to a question about the patient's organ donation wishes shall satisfy the requirement.