



McLean County Area EMS System

TITLE: CORONER NOTIFICATIONS

POLICY STATEMENT:

This procedure has been developed to provide guidelines for EMS crews to follow when they have encountered a death scene in the out-of-hospital setting.

GOAL/PURPOSE:

To assure out-of-hospital personnel are aware of and adhere to Coroner and EMS System Policies and Procedures involving death cases.

POLICY:

A. Recognition of Death

Refer to *"Reporting of Suspecting Crimes and Crime Scene Responsibilities"* and *"Cardiac Resuscitation vs. Cease Effort and Coroner Notification"* policies for additional information involving determination and death at scene responsibilities.

B. Notification Requirements and Procedures

Under 55 ILCS 5/3-320 of the Illinois Revised Statutes - Coroners, it is written that;

Every law enforcement official, funeral director, **AMBULANCE ATTENDANT**, hospital director or administrator or person having custody of the body of a deceased person, where the death is one subjected to investigation under Section 3-3013 of this Act, and any physician in attendance upon such a decedent at the time of his death, shall notify the coroner promptly. Any such person failing to so notify the coroner promptly shall be guilty of Class A misdemeanor, unless such person has reasonable cause to believe that the coroner had already been notified.

C. Those deaths that are subjected to an investigation, are classified in the following categories:

1. ACCIDENTAL DEATHS

- Anesthetic Accident (death on the operating table or prior to recovery from anesthesia)
- Blows or other forms of mechanical violence.
- Burns
- Crushed beneath falling objects
- Cutting or stabbing
- Drowning
- Electric shock
- Explosion
- Firearms



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- Fracture of bones. Such as cases to be reported even when fracture is not primarily responsible for death.
- Falls
- Carbon Monoxide poisoning
- Hanging
- Thermal Exposure
- Poisoning
- Strangulation
- Suffocation
- Vehicular Accidents

2. HOMICIDAL DEATHS

3. SUICIDAL DEATHS

4. ABORTIONS - Criminal or self induced maternal or fetal deaths.

5. SUDDEN DEATHS - When in apparent good health or in any suspicious or unusual manner including sudden death on the street, at home, in a public place, at ultimately is the subject of investigation.

D. In notifying the coroner, or his designee, give the following information:

- Your name
- Your provider
- Location
- Phone number and/or radio frequency from which you may be contacted.
- Brief explanation - i.e., possible suicide, car accident - two dead.
- During transport of an emergent patient and the patient goes into cardio-pulmonary arrest, run a monitor strip while noting the time and location and then contact medical control (obtain the ED physician name) while following appropriate medical protocols. Record this information on the run sheet.

EXCEPTION: During a non-emergent inter-facility transport (patient to a residence or long term care facility) **and** the patient has a valid advanced directive **and** the patient goes into cardio-pulmonary arrest: continue transport to the final destination (if this is a private residence or long term care facility) and wait for the coroner at that location. If at any time under this exception transport of the patient would mean either:

1. crossing a county line, or
2. have the final destination of this transport be a hospital

then the ambulance should be pulled over at the next closest safe location and request the coroner to meet at that location.

E. Once this information has been given, wait for the coroner or his designee to arrive, or for further instructions. If family and friends are present, the EMS providers' attention should be shifted to these individuals to care for any grief related matters.



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- F. Law enforcement personnel are responsible for death scenes once the determination of death is established with Medical Control and the coroner has been notified. EMS crews may be called upon to assist law enforcement personnel.
- G. Upon arrival at a suspected crime scene, note the following:
- Immediately notify the police or call your dispatcher to do so.
 - If the victim is obviously dead, then he or she should remain undisturbed. Even the position of the body can provide valuable clues.
 - Do not touch, move, or relocate any item at the scene unless absolutely necessary to provide treatment to an injured victim. You should mark the location of any item that must be moved so the police and/or coroner can determine its original position. (Also refer to "Interaction of Law Enforcement/Evidence" policy).
- H. When death is obvious at the scene:
- If you are the first to arrive on a scene where death is obvious, insure that the police and coroner are enroute to the scene.
 - If you are the first to arrive on a scene where death is obvious and police have yet to arrive, keep everyone away from the area including family and friends.
 - If police and/or coroner have yet to arrive and death is obvious at the scene which is inside a building, (i.e. house or apartment) leave the room and protect the scene from the outside.

(revised 9/09)