

**SAGINAW VALLEY
MEDICAL CONTROL AUTHORITY
PRACTICE PARAMETER**

**MANAGING PATIENTS FOUND DEAD ON SCENE
CODE 12**

FIRST RESPONDER/BASIC LIFE SUPPORT/ADVANCED LIFE SUPPORT

I. Management

- A. Determine unconsciousness, absence of breathing and pulse.

- B. IPS
 - 1. Police should be present for both natural/unsuspicious and unnatural/suspicious causes so that disposition can be determined of possible crime scene.¹

- C. Emergency resuscitation, including CPR on all pulseless, apneic patients, shall be initiated EXCEPT when the licensed health professional² directly observes the following:
 - 1. GROSS DISMEMBERMENT of the body.
 - 2. DECAPITATION of the patient.
 - 3. Very definite RIGORMORTIS
 - 4. 100% FULL THICKNESS, TOTAL BODY BURN with no hope of salvageability, (i.e. loss of limbs, complete charring of the body).
 - 5. PUTRIFIED, DECAyed OR FROZEN bodies and/or SKELETAL REMAINS.
 - 6. OPEN HEAD/OR TORSO WOUNDS, WITH GROSS OUTPOURING OF CRANIAL OR VISCERAL CONTENTS.
 - 7. AT LEAST ONE HOUR (1) OF SUBMERSION DOCUMENTED BY THE LICENSED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL ON THE SCENE.
 - 8. BLUNT TRAUMATIC ARREST FOUND PULSELESS AND APNEIC (NO AGONAL RESPIRATIONS). SPECIAL ATTENTION SHOULD BE TAKEN SO MECHANISM OF INJURY IS CONSISTENT WITH CONDITION OF PATIENT.
 - 9. IF a “DO NOT RESUSCITATE” bracelet or order are present.
 - 10. If Patient is on HOSPICE.
 - a. If hospice patient:
 - 1. Contact Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) to come to scene for pronouncement of death and authorize removal to funeral home or morgue.

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- 2. May clear scene upon arrival of VNA Nurse. **If VNA Nurse unavailable to come to scene, contact Medical Control for approval to clear, may clear scene once relieved by Deputy Medical Examiner, MESC, MESI, Representative to Medical Examiner’s Office or Law Enforcement.¹**

- D. Police contact DEPUTY MEDICAL EXAMINER³ (if applicable), MEDICAL EXAMINER SYSTEM COORDINATOR (MESC)⁶ OR MEDICAL EXAMINER SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR (MESI)⁴

- E. Deputy Medical Examiner, MESC or MESI comes to scene, pronounces death and authorizes removal to emergency department, funeral home or morgue.⁵

- F. If Deputy Medical Examiner, MESC or MESI is unavailable, Representative to the Medical Examiner⁶ may release patient to licensed health professional or funeral home personnel for transport

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Medical Director

EMS Manager

¹ **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

Section I

While a public safety agency is managing the scene, licensed health professionals(Any on-duty licensed Paramedic, Specialist, Basic EMT or Medical First Responder authorized to function within the SVMCA and bearing identification in that capacity), not to exceed two (2), shall be forthwith allowed to examine each victim.

If in the opinion of a licensed health professional a patient requires treatment, the licensed health professional² may authorize entry into the scene of any other licensed health professional required for the delivery of prompt emergency medical care.

Licensed health professionals will attempt to cooperate and comply with any reasonable request of any public safety representative to preserve the scene, provided that the request does not interfere with the delivery of prompt emergency medical care.

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If a victim is to be removed from the scene, as determined by the licensed health professional, the route of entry and removal shall be determined by the public safety representative. When the integrity of the scene must be preserved, the route selected shall not delay or obstruct the prompt delivery of emergency medical care measures or cause undue risk of injury to the patient or any licensed health professional.

Section II

In making the following determinations, the public safety representative shall defer to the licensed health professional when the licensed health professional arrives on the scene.

If examination of the scene reveals a multiple casualty incident, the licensed health professional is directed to follow the Multiple Casualty Plan Policy# 4.8. There may be instances in which a terminally injured patient would be given a lower priority than those considered salvageable.

Under no circumstances may a licensed health professional effect removal of a patient meeting the above criteria unless authorized to do so by Deputy Medical Examiner, MESC, MESI, Representative to the Medical Examiner's Office or Law Enforcement at the scene pursuant to the current joint policy of the Medical Examiner System and the SVMCA.

In the case that a delayed removal of the patient from the scene is anticipated, a licensed health professional may "clear" from the scene only when relieved by a Deputy Medical Examiner, MESC, MESI, Representative to the Medical Examiner's Office or Law Enforcement, and only after the licensed health professional has complied with the other requirements of this policy.

The licensed health professional shall file a Saginaw Valley Medical Control Authority patient care record documenting conditions of the scene and patient, listing pertinent times, identification of the Medical Investigator, M.E. Representative(s), and police officers present at the scene and other such information as may be required by the Medical Director. The Patient Care Report shall be submitted to the SVMCA.

****NOTE****

WHEN RESUSCITATION IS BEGUN BY ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE LICENSED HEALTH PROFESSIONAL, RESUSCITATION ACTIVITY WILL BE CONTINUED AND APPROPRIATE RADIO CONTACT WILL BE ESTABLISHED WITH MEDICAL CONTROL.

² **LICENSE HEALTH PROFESSIONAL-** Any on-duty licensed Paramedic, Specialist, Basic EMT or Medical First Responder authorized to function within the SVMCA and bearing identification in that capacity.

³ **DEPUTY MEDICAL EXAMINER** – Any physician authorized as such by the Chief Medical Examiner of Saginaw or Tuscola County and bearing identification in that capacity, if applicable.

⁴ **MEDICAL EXAMINER SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR-** Will serve as the on-scene representative of the Chief Medical Examiner. The Medical Investigator is not necessarily a detective nor is he/she necessarily a forensic expert. However, he/she should be considered as a member of the investigation team and a resource for the Medical Examiner information.

⁵ Transport to the Emergency Department may be considered in the case of the traumatic or unexpected death after assessment by MESI, if no criminal investigation is indicated. If the patient will be released to the funeral home personnel for transport, EMS may clear the scene, as long as patient remains in custody of MESI on scene.

⁶ **MEDICAL EXAMINER SYSTEM COORDINATOR/REPRESENTATIVE TO THE MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE-** Any non-physician designate authorized to function in that capacity by the Chief Medical Examiner of Saginaw or Tuscola County and bearing identification in that capacity.

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