



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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EMERGENCY MEDICAL
SERVICES PROGRAM

Policy No. 1200

Revised 01/07

Emergency Medical Services Program

Approved

Medical Director

Subject: ORGAN DONOR INFORMATION

To establish guidelines for EMS field personnel to meet requirements that they search for organ donor information on adult patients for whom death appears imminent, as required by Health & Safety Code, Section 7152.5(b)(3).

I. Definitions:

A. Reasonable Search

A brief attempt by EMS field personnel to locate documentation that may identify a patient as a potential organ donor, or one who has refused to make an anatomical gift. This search shall be limited to a wallet or purse that is on or near the individual to locate a driver's license or other identification card with this information. This requirement may be met by asking a family member, if one is present, about the presence of an organ donor card. A reasonable search shall not take precedence over patient care/treatment.

B. Imminent Death

A condition wherein illness or injuries are of such severity that, in the opinion of EMS field 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.

II. Policy/Procedure:

A. When EMS field personnel encounter a patient that appears to fit the criteria for field determination of death or field pronouncement (see Policy #1140), they shall attempt a "reasonable search" of the patient's belongings to determine if the individual carries information indicating the patient's status as an organ donor. This search must be done in the presence of a witness, preferably a public safety officer.

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 information is discovered.

- D. Any organ donor document that is discovered should be transported to the receiving hospital with the patient unless it is requested by the investigating law enforcement officer. In the event that no transport is made, any document should remain with the patient.
- E. Field personnel should briefly note the results of the search, notification of hospital, and witness name(s), on the EMS Prehospital Care Record (PCR).
- F. If a member of the patient's immediately family objects to the search for an organ donor document at the scene, their response to a question about the patient's organ donation wishes may be considered to satisfy the requirement.