

S.O.P. #: 600-19

SUBJECT: INCIDENTS INVOLVING LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

DIVISION: EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

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Objective: To provide guidance to Fire Department personnel concerning the types of calls on which law enforcement agency involvement is necessary and to provide guidance to Fire Department personnel concerning their actions on crime scenes or suspected crime scenes.

Section 1: Types of Calls Requiring Police Department Involvement. Police are to be requested if not already dispatched.

**IN CERTAIN THREATENING OR POTENTIALLY UNSAFE SITUATIONS EQUIPMENT WILL STAGE AT A SAFE POSITION UNTIL POLICE ARRIVE AND ADVISE THE SCENE IS SECURE AND SAFE TO ENTER.**

- A. Any incident involving one or more moving vehicles that involves any personal injury, or that involves property damage that is serious and/or requires that a vehicle be towed. If possible, non-injured persons, and involved vehicles, should remain at the incident scene until the arrival of police.
- B. All serious (potentially life threatening) traumatic injuries (including burns), regardless of the nature of the injury or type of incident.
- C. Any incident involving unlawful drugs.
- D. Any incident involving the discharge of a firearm or the use of any implement as a weapon, resulting in an injury.
- E. Any incident involving suspected suicide, suicide attempt, or expressed suicidal intent (written or verbal).
- F. All incidents involving any of the following: cardiac arrest, expired subject, animal bites (including snake bites), drowning or near drowning, diving accidents, serious electrocutions, industrial accidents, overdoses (all types), assaults, hangings, stabbings, and gun shot wounds.
- G. Any incident involving a person who may be a danger to themselves or others, regardless of the reason. (Note: Police can require a person to be transported to a treatment facility when the person presents a “clear and imminent danger” to themselves or others due to their behavior. This includes situations where a patient is in clear and imminent danger of dying if definitive treatment is withheld, delayed or refused.)
- H. Situations where minors are injured but are refusing to allow transport to the hospital. Minors include all persons under the age of 18, unless they are emancipated. Persons 14 to 17 years of age are emancipated only if they are married or have been emancipated through court action. Police personnel may be of assistance in tracking down the parents or legal custodians of a child when those individuals are not present at the scene. (Refer to the Department’s “Post Run Documentation Guidelines” for further information regarding refusals.)
- I. Anytime forced entry must be made and the owner or other responsible party is not present, or when a residence or building must be left unsecured.
- J. Any situation with the potential for violence (domestics, mob scenes, etc.), or where the safety of Fire Department personnel is in jeopardy.

- K. Any situation that appears suspicious or involves apparent or possible violation of criminal law. Examples include incidents where the history given is inconsistent with the circumstances, suspected domestic violence, suspected child abuse, suspected elder abuse, etc. If in doubt, it is best to have police respond and make the decision regarding the extent to which they need to be involved in the incident.
  - 1. Maryland law requires health care providers to report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to the police or local child welfare agency. Simply advising hospital staff of your suspicions of child abuse does not satisfy the requirements of the law. When child abuse is suspected, fire department personnel are to notify police directly and pass on information to them first hand. The time that the police are notified is to be documented.
- L. any other situations where law enforcement agency involvement may be appropriate or help in mitigation of the emergency.

Section 2: Crime Scene Operations by Fire Department Personnel

- A. Fire Department personnel should not knowingly enter a crime scene or potentially dangerous situation until the police have secured the scene and advised that it is safe to enter. The only exception shall be where an injured or ill patient is awaiting treatment and it can be reasonably concluded, based on the available information, that entering the scene will not compromise the safety of Fire Department personnel. In all other cases, Fire Department personnel shall stage a safe distance (at least one block) from the incident location until advised by the police that it is safe to enter.
- B. Fire Department personnel should not disturb a crime scene unless it is necessary to provide essential patient treatment. In the rare instances when a crime scene must be disturbed or a patient must be moved prior to the arrival of the police, note the position of the body and other important aspects of the crime scene, in writing, at the member's earliest opportunity. These written notes may be of great assistance to Police Department investigators. Fire Department personnel will provide police investigators with the name, address (or duty station), and phone number of all persons who enter the crime scene prior to the arrival of Police Department personnel.
- C. When patient care activities take place on a crime scene, disturb the scene as little as possible, limit personnel to those essential for proper patient care, and remove the patient to be transported as soon as practical, while at all times maintaining the proper standards of patient care. Remove nothing from the scene (including hazardous waste), until authorized to do so by the police.
- D. If a victim is determined to be Priority 4 on a suspected crime scene and the police have not yet arrived, isolate and deny further entry to the scene until the arrival of police.
- E. When determining the resuscitation status of a patient on a crime scene, move the body only as much as necessary to properly assess the patient and determine if resuscitation efforts are appropriate.
- F. Only essential personnel should enter the crime scene; no "lookers" or other non-essential personnel are to enter the scene.
- G. The Police Department investigators require the name, address (or duty station), and phone number of every person that enters the crime scene, regardless of the level of their involvement in the incident. Fire Department personnel should not leave the scene until their complete information has been provided to the on-scene police investigators and their presence at the scene is no longer required.
- H. On crime scenes, as in all other situations, our priorities are the safety of Fire Department personnel, quality patient care, and the protection of property. Nothing in this S.O.P. should be considered as justification for delaying or failing to provide appropriate patient care or other essential services to the public.

Section 3: Weapon Accountability

- A. The police officer(s) who accompany the medic personnel, should secure their weapon in the front cab of the medic unit or in the glove compartment. It is strongly recommended that the service weapon not be carried on the officer in the rear patient compartment.

Section 4: TASER Policy

- 1. Under no condition will an EMS provider remove the TASER probes from a subject. All probes will be treated as impaled objects.
- 2. EMS providers do not have the authority to “clear a subject” and release them to the police.
- 3. Patient care will depend upon the presenting signs and symptoms. Use extreme caution with any patient who has been “Tased”. Use the following approach for all patients who have been ”Tased”:
  - a. Find out what was happening before the patient got tased. This will help identify potential threats.
  - b. Approach the patient with caution.
  - c. Complete a thorough physical exam and history. Tased patients are “fall” patients until proven otherwise.
  - d. Consider the potential for sudden unexpected death syndrome (SUDS).
  - e. Monitor and transport the patient. Police should always accompany these patients.
- 4. Any patient for whom a TASER has been used on will be transported to the Emergency Department.

Section 5: General Applicability

- A. This S.O.P. was developed with the cooperation and assistance of the Baltimore County Police Department, the Maryland State Police, and the Maryland Office of the Attorney General. The guidance provided herein also applies in situations where other law enforcement agencies have jurisdiction.
  
- L. Any situation with the potential for violence (domestics, mob scenes, etc.), or where the safety of Fire Department personnel is in jeopardy.
  
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