



REGION 11 CHICAGO EMS SYSTEM POLICY	Title: Notification of the Coroner / Medical Examiner
	Section: Patient Care
	Approved: EMS Medical Directors Consortium
	Effective: December 6, 2023

NOTIFICATION OF THE CORONER / MEDICAL EXAMINER

I. PURPOSE:

To establish a procedure for how and when to call the Coroner or Medical Examiner in Region 11 Chicago EMS.

II. COOK COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER ORDINANCE

A. Under the Cook County Medical Examiner's Ordinance Number 15-5145, any EMS provider, who becomes aware of a death that a reasonable person would conclude may have occurred under any of the circumstances listed below shall immediately report such death to the Office of the Medical Examiner **or any law enforcement officer** within one hour of their becoming aware of the death.

1. Criminal violence;
2. Suicide;
3. Accident;
4. Suddenly, when in apparent good health;
5. Unattended by a practicing, licensed physician, other than apparent natural deaths;
6. Suspicious or unusual circumstances;
7. Unlawful fetal death under Public Act 101-0013;
8. Poisoning or attributable to an adverse reaction to drugs and/or alcohol;
9. Diseases constituting a threat to public health;
10. Disease, injury or toxic agent resulting from employment;
11. During medical diagnostic or therapeutic procedures that do not include death as a reasonable possible outcome;
12. In any prison or penal institution;
13. When involuntarily confined in jail, prison, hospitals or other institutions or in Police custody;
14. When any human body is to be cremated, dissected or buried at sea;



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15. Unidentified human remains;

16. When a dead body is brought into a new medico-legal jurisdiction without proper medical certification.

- B. No person who becomes aware of a death of the type described above, shall remove, cause to be removed, or release for removal, the deceased person from the place of their death without first reporting the death. The deceased person shall not be removed from the place of their death until the Medical Examiner gives approval for that removal.
- C. EMS providers are excused from the duty to report a death only if they reasonably believe, based upon information presented to them, that the death has already been reported to the Medical Examiner.
- D. No dead human body whose death may be subject to investigation, or the personal property of such a deceased person, shall be handled, disturbed, embalmed or removed from the place of death by any person except with the permission of the Medical Examiner, unless the same shall be necessary to preserve such body from damage or destruction, or to protect life, safety, or health.
- E. Any person who knowingly violates any provision of this ordinance is subject to fines and legal charges.

III. NOTIFICATION AND SCENE MANAGEMENT

- A. In the case of a prehospital death, EMS Providers shall notify the Chicago Police Department (CPD). CPD will notify the Office of the Medical Examiner in accordance with Police General Order – Processing Deceased Persons.
- B. Preservation of crime scene elements may be appropriate (see Interaction with Law Enforcement at a Crime Scene Policy).
- C. In situations where determination of death is done by EMS providers in accordance with the Region 11 Determination of Death / Withholding of Resuscitative Measures Policy, the name of the EMS Medical Director may be used for Medical Examiner documentation.



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IV. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- A. The body shall not be moved and the scene shall not be disturbed or altered in any way. The body may, however, be moved to verify the absence of vital signs, to perform an adequate assessment, or to gain access to a viable patient involved in the same incident.

- B. EMS providers should not remove lines or tubes from unsuccessful cardiac arrest resuscitation attempts.

- C. If there is a delay in the arrival of law enforcement the appropriate supervisor should be notified for escalation.

- D. In situations where there is an order for the termination of resuscitation (see Termination of Resuscitation Policy) and the deceased is in a public place or unsafe scene, CPD should be called to take custody of the body. In the rare circumstance where transport is needed, EMS may transport the patient to the closest comprehensive emergency department. The base station should notify the receiving hospital that they are receiving a patient whose resuscitation was terminated in the field.