

**OKALOOSA COUNTY
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**

Title: Crime Scene Operations
Policy: 122.00
Purpose: To provide procedures for OCEMS personnel responding to crime scenes. Okaloosa County EMS shall ensure that all response personnel are cognizant of the importance of proper crime scene operations procedures.

Policy:

Any location at which evidence of a crime or suspected crime is found, including, but not limited to; homicide, suicide, rape, pedestrian struck or other MVA involving serious injury or death, assault or discovery of drug paraphernalia, shall be considered a crime scene. Any location at which a DOA is found is to be considered a crime scene until otherwise designated by proper authority. The time of death and the paramedic's name must be on run reports for all DOAs.

Once a presumptive diagnosis of death is made, It is the role of the Medical Examiner's Office to determine the cause and time of death. Every effort will be made not to disturb physical evidence at a crime scene, especially in the case of DOA where there is not a critical time factor, and extra care can be taken to perform required tasks.

All EMS personnel are expected to utilize good judgment in the recognition of, and subsequent operation at any crime or suspected crime scene.

After evaluating the scene for personal hazards and the presence of a proper authority, the rendering of immediate patient care and transportation is the primary responsibility of EMS personnel.

1. Patient care shall not be compromised in order to protect the crime scene or any evidence. However, patient care shall be rendered without undue disturbance of the scene.
2. If proper authority is not present, at a suspected crime scene, EMS personnel will notify the Communications Center to have law enforcement respond to the scene.

All EMS personnel when operating at actual or suspected crime scenes shall:

1. Consider the entire location (e.g., house, apartment, park, roadway, etc.) as being involved in the crime scene.
2. Upon entering or leaving the scene, use a single path of travel, if possible, and have all personnel entering or leaving the scene utilize the same path.
1. Limit the number of EMS personnel from entering the scene to those needed to evaluate, treat and/or remove the patient(s). All nonessential personnel are to remain outside the crime scene area until their services are needed.
2. In absence of law enforcement at the scene, attempt to limit access to the scene by bystanders, family members and witnesses. EMS personnel shall not restrain, eject or otherwise physically restrict the movements of anyone at the scene, but should bear in mind that allowing unnecessary persons into the scene may impede the investigation of the crime.
3. After establishing a presumptive diagnosis of death, refrain from otherwise moving or disturbing any dead body. In addition, no obviously dead victim of a hanging shall be cut down, nor any bound body untied following determination of death.
4. Refrain from covering any corpse, except if in public view.
5. Refrain from eating, smoking, or drinking at the scene
6. Refrain from using the telephone at the scene for anything but extreme emergencies.
7. Refrain from using the sink, toilet or any other conveniences at the scene.

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8. Remove nothing from the scene and refrain from handling any object or entering any area of the scene more than is absolutely necessary in order to evaluate, treat and/or remove patients, as such actions may impede the investigation of the crime.
9. Cooperate with requests made by law enforcement, if possible, concerning the disposition of the patient(s) and/or dead body/bodies as long as such requests are in accordance with EMS procedures.
10. Communicate any information or observations pertinent to the investigation of the scene to the proper authority at the scene when requested to do so.
11. Restrict comments and/or opinions to known facts when communicating with other authorities. No statements shall be disseminated to the media, civilians or other agencies as this may also impede the investigation.
12. Complete all written records pertaining to the call accurately, using specific language to indicate the position in which the patient was found, the presence of visible wounds and other pertinent data (e.g. presence of rigor mortis and/or extreme dependent lividity). Bear in mind, run reports are legal documents, subject to court subpoena, and must be complete and accurate.

Accountability and Compliance:

1. Each employee that responds to a suspected or confirmed crime scene will operate in such a way as to provide high quality patient care with full regard of the crime scene and its contents.
2. Each Medical Commander will ensure that operations at crime scenes are in compliance with this policy. Any questions or concerns will be addressed immediately

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