

Salt River Fire Department EMS Policies and Procedures

Prehospital Medical Care Directive



05/2003

406.01

PURPOSE

This procedure will describe the process of dealing with Prehospital Medical Care Directives (PMCD). Although the PMCD is intended for use by people who are terminally ill, any individual who wishes not to be resuscitated by prehospital EMS personnel can use it. Either the patient or someone designated by the patient (surrogate) can legally make this decision. Patient wishes for not being resuscitated will be honored by Salt River Fire Department personnel when a properly completed PMCD document is available or located within a "reasonable amount of time" (as defined by Arizona State Statute).

PROCEDURE

Emergency personnel will perform an assessment of the patient to determine the patient's condition. If a PMCD is present, the document appears valid and the patient is without vital signs, the emergency personnel will not begin resuscitation. EMS personnel will complete the necessary documentation, notify the proper law enforcement agency, and initiate Grief Support. Base station contact is not required.

The emergency personnel must make a reasonable effort to locate the document or a person/surrogate who may have information about the document. If the document is not available or a person is not available, then full resuscitative efforts will be initiated.

If at any time the patient or the patient's surrogate wishes to reverse the PMCD order, they may do so by verbally telling the emergency provider. Also, if at any time there is a lack of evidence of documentation, any doubt surrounding the incident or the validity of the PMCD, then full resuscitative efforts must be initiated.

THE DOCUMENT

Patients who do not wish to be resuscitated will have the following document in their possession:

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Prehospital Medical Care Directive is printed on an orange background and may be either letter or wallet size. This document will include biographical information about the patient and signatures of the patient's licensed health care provider and a witness. A photograph is not required but may be attached.

A patient is not required to, but may have an ankle or wrist bracelet signifying the existence of a PMCD:

A hospital-type bracelet may be worn on either the wrist or ankle and identifies the patient as having executed a PMCD. This will be on an orange background and will state in bold lettering "Do Not Resuscitate" and will contain the patient and physician name. The orange bracelet is a signal that a Prehospital Medical Care Directive exists. Upon finding a patient wearing such a bracelet, personnel should make a reasonable effort, if the circumstances permit, to locate a PMCD. The bracelet serves to inform that a PMCD exists but is not a substitute for the actual PMCD document.

To be valid, a PMCD must:

- * Be printed on an orange background (letter or wallet size)
- * Be completely filled out
- * Be signed and dated by the following individuals:
 1. Licensed health care provider.
 2. Patient or surrogate
 3. Witness (not a relative, surrogate, or beneficiary)
- * Readily available or located within a reasonable amount of time (1-2 minutes)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If a PMCD is not found, is absent, or if the patient's surrogate now wishes the patient to be resuscitated, then resuscitative efforts and advanced life support will be initiated, and base station medical control established. The PMCD remains valid until superseded by a new document (most recent document is in effect) or patient or surrogate requests resuscitation at any time.

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In the event that documents other than the PMCD are presented (Living Will or Medical Power of Attorney), resuscitative efforts and advanced life support must be initiated until on-line medical control is consulted.

It is important for all emergency personnel to document the encounter. Documentation should include information about the Prehospital Medical Care Directive (that it was complete and present), that the patient was found without vital signs, and that the patient was left with law enforcement personnel (include name and badge number). A reasonable effort must be made to obtain the Prehospital Medical Care Directive and include it with the EMS Encounter Form for entry into records. If the document is unavailable note that with an explanation on the encounter form.

Reference:

State of Arizona (1992). H.b. 2247, Living Wills and Health Directives