

## **Pronouncement of Death**

If a patient meets one of the criterion from the Dead on Scene protocol, then ALS or BLS personnel can begin the following procedure for obtaining a pronouncement of death:

1. Present to the online medical control physician results of the physical examination, including vital signs, cardiac monitoring or use of AED (if applicable) and summary of patient's condition, including:
  - a. present problem
  - b. past medical history, especially as it relates to any terminal illness that may be present
  - c. applicability of advance directives or presence of durable power of attorney, physician and/or family members and their agreement in limiting life support.
2. Online medical control physician will then do one of the following:
  - a. pronounce death
  - b. request initiation or continuance of basic/advanced life support
  - c. request further information or clarify issues.
3. Document time of pronouncement of death and names of online medical control physician and hospital on the GCMCA Run Record.
4. Notify the appropriate 911 center if local police authority are not already on scene.
5. If EMS personnel need to move a body in an effort to assess if one of the eight categories of obvious death are present, or if the scene is disturbed for any reason by EMS personnel, the crew must notify the appropriate law enforcement personnel on scene of such movement or of any disturbance in the scene. Such movement or disturbance shall also be discussed with the Medical Examiner Scene Investigator (MESI) from the Medical Examiner Office if one is on scene and recorded in the run record.
6. EMS may:
  - a. leave the scene once police, hospice, physician, nurse, body removal service, or funeral home personnel are on scene.
  - b. Transport the body to the appropriate facility.
7. If, after reviewing the Medical Examiner (ME) algorithm for a ME case, the EMS crew believes that the case meets the requirements for a potential ME case, they will report that to the appropriate 911 center if a police officer is not already on scene. If there is any doubt that the ME's office will not be contacted, then the EMS provider must contact the appropriate 911 center and report the potential ME case.

### **ME Algorithm**

1. "Do I know why this person died?"
  - a. "No" = Report the case (Unexplained death's are ME cases)
  - b. "Yes" = Go to next question
2. "Was the death in any way related to trauma?"
  - a. Yes = Report the case (Traumatic deaths are ME cases)
  - b. No = Go to the next question

***Genesee County Medical Control Authority***

System Protocols  
PRONOUNCEMENT OF DEATH

Page 2 of 2

---

3. “Has the person been to see a doctor within the last 2 days or under the doctor’s care at the time of death?”
  - a. No = report the case

If the answers to questions #1 and #3 are ‘Yes’ and question #2 is ‘No’ then this case does not require the ME’s office to be contacted.

Exceptions:

- Deaths in custody = always report
- Deaths during a medical procedure = always report
- Deaths of patients in hospice care (i.e. registered hospice working with a hospice agency) do not need to be reported however hospice paperwork must be present