

17-01 - Deputy's Duty to Provide Emergency Medical Care

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department NEWSLETTER

Field Operations Support Services, (323) 890-5411



DEPUTY'S DUTY TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

Sworn personnel are usually the first uniform presence to arrive on scene of an emergency. When the situation involves a medical emergency, deputies have a duty to provide basic or emergency care to all injured persons including suspects.

The initial unit on scene should conduct a scene assessment prior to rendering any care. Evaluate the nature of the emergency, and communicate all critical and known information to dispatch and responding units, while ensuring officer safety, public safety, and the safety of any injured persons.

There is an assumption that everyone who needs help wants it. This may not always be true. In order to provide basic or emergency medical care to someone, the deputy must have the injured person's permission. This permission is referred to as "Medical Consent." Medical consent is either expressed or implied. Expressed consent must come from an adult who is not impaired and must be communicated to you verbally or in writing. Implied consent occurs when a deputy is unable to communicate with an injured person who is intoxicated, developmentally disabled, confused, or underage. These individuals are considered to be impaired and consent is implied.

When in doubt, assume you have consent any time a person's wishes and communication are not clear. An adult victim who is not impaired has the right to refuse treatment.

Once a deputy has initiated care, he/she must continue that care until:

- The scene becomes unsafe;
- The deputy is too physically exhausted to continue providing appropriate care;
- The deputy is relieved of the responsibility by personnel with an equal or higher level of medical training;
- The person revives.

Due to the nature of providing emergency medical care, deputies are at risk of exposure to airborne and blood- borne pathogens. For this reason, deputies must take appropriate precautions at all times when in direct contact with injured victims'/suspects' blood or bodily fluids. The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) can prevent possible exposure and infection.

When a call for emergent medical services is received by station/unit desk personnel, they shall be responsible for prompt notification to a local Fire Department dispatcher. A field unit shall also be dispatched to the scene of the emergency.

Health and Safety Code section 1799.102 provides emergency rescue personnel with qualified immunity from liability from civil damages for injury caused by an action taken when providing emergency medical services under certain conditions.

To be protected from liability for civil damages, emergency rescue personnel must:

- Act within the *scope of their employment*;
- *Act in good faith*;
- *Provide a standard of care that is within the scope of their training and Agency policy.*

Information regarding the content of this newsletter may be directed to the Field Operations Support Services at (323) 890-5411 or foss@lasd.org.

References:

Learning Domain 34, CA POST

American Red Cross CPR/AED for Professional Rescuers instructor's Manual

Peace Officers Standard and Training (POST) First Aid/CPR Instructor Course

Health and Safety Code section 1799.102

MPP Section 5-09/000.05, Responsibilities of Field Personnel

MPP Section 3-01/050.15, Duties of Deputy Personnel