



COUNTY OF VENTURA HEALTH CARE AGENCY		EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	
Policy Title: Organ Donor Information Search		Policy Number 615	
APPROVED: Administration:	 Steven L. Carroll, Paramedic	Date: July 1, 2022	
APPROVED: Medical Director:	 Daniel Shepherd, M.D.	Date: July 1, 2022	
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- I. **PURPOSE:** To establish guidelines for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) field personnel to meet requirements that they search for organ donor information on adult patients for whom death appears to be imminent.
- II. **AUTHORITY:** Health and Safety Code Section 7152.5(b)
- III. **POLICY:** EMS field personnel shall make a brief reasonable search to determine the presence or absence of an organ donor card on adult patients for whom death appears to be imminent. This brief search shall not interfere with patient care and must be done in the presence of a witness, preferably a public safety officer, unless extenuating circumstances make having a witness clearly infeasible.
- IV. **DEFINITIONS:**

Reasonable Search: A brief attempt by EMS field personnel to locate documentation that may identify a patient as a potential organ donor, or one who has refused to make an anatomical gift. This search shall be limited to an electronic health application located on the patient's smartphone. Other locations may include patient's wallet, purse or other personal belongings on or near the individual likely to contain a driver's license or other identification card with this information. A REASONABLE SEARCH SHALL NOT TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER PATIENT CARE/TREATMENT.

Imminent Death: A condition wherein illness or injuries are of such severity that in the opinion of EMS field personnel, death is likely to occur before the patient arrives at a hospital. For purposes of this policy, this definition does not include any conscious patient regardless of the severity of illness or injury.

Receiving Hospital: The hospital to which the patient is being transported
- V. **PROCEDURE:**
 - A. When EMS field personnel encounter an unconscious adult patient for whom it

appears that death is imminent (that is, death prior to arrival at a hospital), they shall attempt a "reasonable search" as defined in Section IV. This search must be done in the presence of a witness, preferably a public safety officer, unless extenuating circumstances make having a witness clearly infeasible. If a family member or patient representative is the only witness available, EMS field personnel should clearly and carefully explain the intent of the brief search. The identity of the witness to the brief search will be documented on the Ventura County Electronic Patient Care Reporting System (VCePCR).

- B. Treatment and transport of the patient remains the highest priority for EMS field personnel. This search shall not interfere with patient care or transport.
- C. EMS field personnel shall notify the receiving hospital if organ donor information is discovered. Advanced Life Support (ALS) units shall notify the base hospital in addition to the receiving hospital.
- D. Any organ donor document that is discovered should be transported to the receiving hospital with the patient unless it is requested by the investigating law enforcement officer. If the investigating law enforcement officer retains the organ donor card, the presence of the card will be documented in the VCePCR. In the event that the patient is not transported, any document will remain with the patient.
- E. Field personnel should briefly note the results of the search, notification of hospital, and witness name(s) in the narrative section of the VCePCR.
- F. No search is to be made by EMS field personnel after patient death occurs.
- G. If a member of the patient's immediate family or other patient representative objects to the search for an organ donor document at the scene, no search shall be made, and their response to a question about the patient's organ donor wishes may be considered to satisfy the requirement of this policy. This information shall be documented in the VCePCR.