

Erlanger Health System Policy and Procedure

Origination Date: _____		
Approval: _____		
Reviewed Date: 7-02	Revised Date: 3-04	Approval: _____
_____	12-04	_____
_____	6/09	_____
_____	6/12	_____
_____	_____	_____

Index Title: Deaths, Emergency Department
Originating Department: CHED
Number: 6231.018
Description for EHS Intranet:

Policy statement:

To provide legal, humane, and expeditious management of the death event at Children's Hospital Emergency Department at Erlanger.

Scope: CHED personnel, CHED physicians, Social Services staff, Medical Staff, and Allied Health Professional Staff

Procedure:

A physician licensed in the state of Tennessee and/or an Attending will pronounce the patient dead.

All deaths will be identified as one of two types:

1. Dead on Arrival (DOA): No sign of life noted at time of arrival and during time in ED.
2. Dead in Emergency Department (DED): Patient presents on arrival initially having evidence of signs of life. Any patient's condition that deteriorates while in ED and shows no signs of life will be considered dead in ED.

The following steps are necessary in the event of a death that occurs in ED:

A. Notification:

1. The Medical Examiner or his/her designee shall be notified of all DOAs and DEDs. Phone number 514-7406.
2. Parents, guardians, or other family members will be notified by the attending physician or his/her designee.
3. House Supervisor (HS) will be notified by the Charge Nurse or his/her designee.
4. Tissue Referral must be notified of all deaths. 1-800-969-4438 (GIFT)
5. The Organ Donor Coordinator will be notified of potential organ donors. The phone number is 756-5736.
6. Religious notifications will be made as requested by families.
7. The Funeral Home requested by the next of kin will be notified by ED personnel if there will be no autopsy or organ/tissue donation.

8. If there will be an autopsy or organ/tissue donation, pathology will notify the Funeral Home when it is completed.

B. Autopsy: Forensic Center

If an autopsy is to be performed, the nursing personnel must notify HS. The Medical Examiner or his/her designee and/or physician are responsible for requesting an autopsy. In the morgue logbook, a "Yes" is placed in the column "Hold Body for Autopsy." (8316.015). Anyone pronounced dead at Children's Hospital Emergency Department at Erlanger is the responsibility of the Hamilton County Medical Examiner, including deaths which have occurred outside of Hamilton County.

[(Reference policy #4301.29 Pathology Autopsies.) A death/autopsy is the responsibility of the County Medical Examiner of the county in which the patient is pronounced dead, not that of the county in which the accident, illness, homicide, etc. took place.]

HAMILTON COUNTY OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER
3300 AMNICOLA HIGHWAY
CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE 37406
423-493-5175

C. Documentation of Death

1. A "Record of Death" is completed by nursing personnel and must be signed by the legal guardian. Documentation is also noted in the Emergency Department's DOA book with the legal guardian signing the book. (8316.015)
2. A copy of the code sheet is made, and given to the Administrative Secretary.

D. Release of Body

1. Legal guardian and the responsible agency representative will sign for the Release of the Body in the log at the nurses' station as well as the Record of Death. Bodies may be released directly from the Children's Hospital Emergency Department with the approval of the Medical Examiner. Bodies not released within one hour will be transported to the Erlanger Morgue.
2. All bodies must be indentified with a toe tag, and placed in a shroud.

Suspected Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) deaths are reported to Social Services for follow-up and referral to the State/Local SIDS Program:

1. Pastoral Care and or Social Services may be paged for family support.
2. A photograph will be taken of the body, if desired by the parent/guardian.

Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect

1. Any CHED staff member that suspects child abuse and/or neglect should report it to the appropriate authorities immediately. See Policy 6231.019, Child Abuse/Neglect Suspected.
2. The CHED staff should also notify Social Services.
3. Social Services personnel should initiate the referral if not done by the CHED staff.

Committee	Approval/Date
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_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Medical Director	Approval/Date
_____	_____
_____	_____

References: