

## Withholding Resuscitation / Criteria for Death

### Policy:

It is the policy of the Peoria Area EMS System that CPR need not be initiated when death has been determined based on the criteria outlined below. Peoria Area EMS providers are required to contact Medical Control for determination of death covered in this policy.

### Purpose:

A person is presumed dead on arrival when all five signs of death are present and at least one associated "Factor of Death" is present.

Signs of Death (All must be present)	Factors of Death (At least one must be present)
<b>Medical</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unresponsiveness</li><li>• Apnea</li><li>• Pulselessness</li><li>• Non-reactive pupils</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lividity and/or any degree of generalized cyanosis</li><li>• Rigor mortis</li><li>• Presence of venous pooling in the body</li><li>• Decomposition</li><li>• Decapitation</li><li>• Incineration or extensive full thickness burns</li><li>• Transection of head or trunk</li><li>• Major blunt or penetrating trauma</li><li>• Separation of heart and/or brain</li><li>• Deforming brain injury</li></ul>
<b>Trauma</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unresponsiveness</li><li>• Absence of vital signs in a trauma victim upon arrival of EMS personnel despite a patent airway.</li></ul>	

### Procedure:

**Do not initiate resuscitation in the following:**

**Do Not Resuscitate orders:** No resuscitation efforts should be initiated when the person or family has evidence of a valid Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order in hand.

**Scene safety:** The physical environment is not safe for the EMS providers to enter.

**Infant death (SIDS):** An infant who is apneic, and meets the above criteria may be presumed dead.

**Neonatal death:** A neonate who is apneic, pulseless, and exhibits neonatal maceration (softening or degeneration of the tissues after death in utero), anencephaly (absence of a major portion of the brain, skull, and scalp), or if the gestational age is less than 22 weeks and neonate shows signs of obvious immaturity (translucent and gelatinous skin, lack of fingernails, fused eyelids) may be presumed dead.

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### Notes:

- Resuscitation may be initiated if the condition of the scene indicates that withholding resuscitation could cause a potential unsafe condition for the ambulance crew.
- If the EMS providers determine the situation warrants removal of the patient from the scene, resuscitation efforts must be initiated, continued throughout transportation to the hospital and circumstances documented in a patient care report.

2010 American Heart Association Guidelines for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Emergency Cardiovascular Care. *Circulation*. 2010; 122:S665-S675

### Critical Thinking Elements

- Pediatric patients and patient with hypothermia may have no signs of life but still be viable. Prolonged resuscitative efforts are indicated in these cases.