

DETERMINATION OF DEATH - ALS

ALWAYS USE STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

INDICATION

Patient in cardiac arrest who does not meet criteria for BLS Determination of Death and does not have a valid DNR order.

PROCEDURE

- Confirm pulseless and apneic. Apply leads and document rhythm in two monitoring leads for one minute or in one lead if an AED is the only available monitor.
- Determination of death can be made prior to, or immediately after, initiating resuscitation when:
 - Medical (**ALL** must be present)
 - The presenting rhythm is asystole
 - Event was unwitnessed
 - Effective bystander CPR was not initiated, based on CPR guidelines/paramedic judgment
 - **No evidence of potentially reversible cause of arrest (e.g. hyperkalemia or hypothermia)**
 - No AED or manual shock delivered
 - Trauma (**EITHER** may be present)
 - MCI incident where triage principles preclude initiation of CPR
 - Blunt, penetrating or profound multi-system trauma with asystole or PEA
- If determination of death cannot be made, perform ALS resuscitation for 20 minutes.
 - If the above procedures have been completed without ROSC, resuscitation may be discontinued and determination of death made when **ANY** of the following are present:
 - Information (e.g. valid DNR or POLST form) becomes available which precludes continuation of resuscitation efforts
 - $ETCO_2 \leq 10\text{mm/Hg}$ and the rhythm is asystole or PEA
- If determination of death can still not be made for medical arrests, continue resuscitation for ten additional minutes (30 minutes total) at which point resuscitation may be discontinued and determination of death made if ROSC has not occurred. If patient in refractory VF, transport is warranted.

PHYSICIAN CONSULT

- Evidence exists that resuscitative efforts are not desired or appropriate (e.g. family request) and above criteria is not met
 - $ETCO_2 > 10\text{mm/Hg}$ after 30 minutes of resuscitation efforts
- When applicable, notify the appropriate law enforcement agency and remain on the scene until law enforcement or coroner arrives
 - Complete the Determination of Death form and leave a copy at the scene if the patient will be transferred to the coroner

DOCUMENTATION- ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

- Criteria for discretionary determination of death (i.e., DNR or valid POLST form)
- Name and phone number of physician authorizing termination of resuscitation
- When possible, attach copy of DNR to PCR or include type of DNR and physician information

RELATED POLICIES/ PROCEDURES

- BLS Determination of Death BLS 5
- DNR GPC 7
- Cardiac Policies: Asystole/PEA; Adult Cardiac Arrest Policy
- Cold Induced Injuries E2
- Trauma Triage and Destination Guideline Policy 4613