

# DETERMINATION OF DEATH FIRST RESPONDER BLS

ALWAYS USE STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

## INDICATION

Patient in cardiac arrest where resuscitation may not be indicated

## PROCEDURE

- Confirm pulseless and apneic
- CPR may be withheld and death declared if ANY of the following criteria are met:
  - Obvious clinical signs of irreversible death
    - Rigor mortis
    - Dependent lividity
    - Decapitation
    - Transection
    - Decomposition
    - Incineration
  - Golden Gate Bridge / Richmond-San Rafael Bridge jumper: if pulseless and no signs of life and resuscitative measures not initiated by first responders, do not initiate cardiac arrest care
  - Submersion greater than or equal to one hour: physical examination of body with accurate and reliable history of submersion time.
  - A valid, signed, and dated advance directive or POLST form indicating that resuscitation is not desired
  - MCI incidents-where death is determined according to S.T.A.R.T. triage
- When patient meets criteria for declaration of death in the field:
  - Notify the appropriate law enforcement agency if applicable
  - Remain on the scene until law enforcement or coroner arrive if applicable
  - Complete a Field Determination of Death Form at scene and leave one copy for coroner if applicable

## DOCUMENTATION-ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

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

## RELATED POLICIES/ PROCEDURES

- DNR/POLST GPC 7
- Medical Emergencies BLS PR 6
- Patient Care Record (PCR) 7006