



INVESTIGATION OF MEDICAL CASES

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I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Anne Arundel County Police Department to render assistance to injured or unconscious persons and conduct an investigation into the cause of these injuries. All sworn personnel are expected to render medical aid to ill, injured, or unconscious persons until Fire Department personnel, or other medical professionals, can take over.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to give guidelines for providing assistance and investigating incidents involving injured or unconscious persons.

III. PROCEDURES WHEN FINDING AN ILL, INJURED, OR UNCONSCIOUS PERSON

A. Whenever a member of this Department finds an ill, injured, or unconscious person on the street or other public place, or in a private home or institution, the officer will notify Communications to dispatch an ambulance to the scene.

B. In a public school setting, the Anne Arundel County Health Department, through the school nurse/health assistant program, provides health services to Anne Arundel County schools pursuant to State and Federal laws. Nurses are assigned full-time to every public high school and middle school. Working under the supervision of a registered nurse, a health assistant is assigned to each health room. Members of the Department assigned to the School Resource Unit routinely encounter ill or injured students and staff during normal duties. The illnesses and/or injuries range in severity and may arise from medical, accidental or criminal actions. A School Resource Officer who finds, or is notified of, an ill or injured person on school property may summon medical assistance from a school nurse or other qualified campus medical personnel. The school medical personnel will assist in evaluating the severity of the illness/injury and providing the appropriate degree of medical attention for cases not requiring transportation to a medical facility. For persons found unconscious, suffering from obvious serious injury/illness, or in the absence of a readily accessible nurse or other medical personnel on the school campus, Fire Department personnel will be immediately summonsed and/or are responsible for determining and providing the appropriate degree of medical attention, including transportation to a medical facility.

C. This procedure applies whether such condition is the result of illness, injury, alcohol or drug abuse, or any other condition.

D. Members of this Department should be aware that many persons carry, wear, or display a "MEDIC ALERT" bracelet or other identification emblem, designed to alert medical personnel that they have a specific medical problem which must be known prior to any treatment. The investigating officer will carefully inspect the victim's body, and if a "MEDIC ALERT" emblem or bracelet is found, the officer will alert medical personnel.

E. If a person is so severely injured that the officer feels transportation in a patrol vehicle is essential to preserve life, the officer will notify Communications of any apparent wounds and/or the condition of the victim, and instruct them to call ahead to the hospital and request that a doctor or nurse meet the officer at the emergency room entrance.

F. The personal property of the victim will not be retained by police personnel, but will accompany the victim to the hospital. Property seized from an unconscious person as evidence or contraband will be processed in accordance with the procedures outlined in Index Code 1201 (Evidence & Recovered Property).

IV. POLICE INVESTIGATION OF MEDICAL CASES

A. Officers will conduct an investigation to determine the cause of the victim's injuries or unconsciousness. Preliminary investigation will be the responsibility of the uniformed officer, up to and including the part where probable cause exists to believe a homicide or other felonious assault has occurred. At that point, the CID Major Crimes Section Homicide Unit or the appropriate District Detective Unit should be contacted for assistance, depending on the severity of injury.

If it appears that the victim may die, the case will be treated as a homicide until such time as criminal homicide is ruled out through investigation. If the victim's injuries are incapacitating, but not life-threatening, and are not self-induced, the case will be handled as an aggravated assault until such time as criminal assault is ruled out through investigation.

B. The investigating officer will attempt to contact a relative of the victim, if not already done so by hospital personnel, and request that they respond to the hospital to assist the victim.

C. The investigating officer will inform the hospital admitting desk that the Police Department is not financially responsible for the victim's medical treatment.

V. PROPONENT UNIT: Patrol Services Bureau.

VI. CANCELLATION: This directive cancels Index Code 1804, dated 01-29-09.