

15 Crime Scene, Child Abuse, Dependent Abuse, and Domestic Violence.

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15.1 Purpose and Expected Results

On occasion, the Squad will be called to a crime scene or to the aid of a patient suspected of suffering abuse or neglect. Crewmembers must be aware of their legal responsibility and societal obligations when dealing with these circumstances.

15.2 Circumstances of Applicability

- A call location that is, or is suspected to be, a crime scene.
- Suspected abuse or neglect of a dependent individual such as a child, spouse, elderly person, or confined patient.

15.3 Requisites

None.

15.4 Procedure Description

In all cases, the foremost responsibility of the crew is personal safety. The crewchief must carefully determine that a scene is safe and that it will remain safe. It is good practice for the crew to appoint a crew member as a “safety officer” for each call. If the scene is not safe, the crew shall:

- Leave the scene immediately with as much equipment as can be accommodated with a safe departure
- Contact Tioga County Fire Control and request appropriate resources (such as law enforcement)
- Not return until the scene is secured and safe.

A line officer shall be notified as soon as practical.

15.4.1 Crime Scene

If at time of dispatch, a crew is dispatched to a suspected crime scene, the ambulance crew will verify that law enforcement is on the scene before the ambulance arrives.

In every situation where a crime is suspected, the crew will make every reasonable attempt to preserve evidence while, without delay, providing necessary patient care and transportation.

15 Crime Scene or Abuse

15.4.2 Child Abuse or Neglect

In New York State, by law an EMT must report suspected child abuse.

When dealing with pediatric emergencies all members should remain alert to potential child abuse or neglect situations. If child abuse or neglect is suspected, the crew should initiate all appropriate treatment, protect the child from further abuse, and transport the child to the hospital. All objective findings should be documented on the PCR (especially the observed conditions which raised the suspicion of abuse); included should be an objective description of parental actions and verbatim documentation of key statements made by parents and others. Suspicion of abuse or neglect and the reasons for that suspicion will be reported to the physician or nurse at the receiving hospital. The New York State required reporting procedure will be followed (see 15.4.2.1 New York State Reporting Procedure below).

If the parent or caregiver refuses the care or transportation for the child, the crew should report their suspicions to the appropriate law enforcement agency. If possible, meet with the appropriate law enforcement agency at the scene, doing this without raising suspicions of the suspected abuser or compromising scene safety.

15.4.2.1 New York State Reporting Procedure

Report suspected child abuse to the New York State Child Abuse and Maltreatment Register at 1-800-342-3720 as soon as reasonably possible from returning from the call. Obtain a state registry report number. Document all findings on NYS Form 'DSS-2221-A' at the current revision. Make one copy for EMS records and attach it to the PCR. The completed form should also be scanned into the ePCR original or as an addendum. Mail the completed DSS-2221-A to:

Tioga County Department of Social Services
PO BOX 240
Owego, NY 13827-0240

15.4.3 Geriatric or Confined Patient Abuse or Neglect

The primary sign of abuse or neglect in an elderly or confined patient is unexplained injuries. In the situation where the crew suspects abuse or neglect of an elderly or confined patient they should complete a full patient assessment, including a scene assessment, and report their suspicions to the receiving emergency department staff.

If the patient refuses transportation, and is deemed mentally capable of making an informed decision in that regard, the crew should report the situation and their suspicions to the appropriate law enforcement agency and document their objective finding on the PCR. If possible, meet with the appropriate law enforcement agency at the scene, doing this without raising suspicions of the suspected abuser or compromising scene safety.

15 Crime Scene or Abuse

15.4.4 Domestic Violence

In the situation where the crew suspects domestic violence, the crew should complete a full patient assessment, including a scene assessment, and report their suspicions to the receiving emergency department staff.

If the patient refuses transportation, and is deemed mentally capable of making an informed decision in that regard, the crew should report the situation and their suspicions to the appropriate law enforcement agency and document their objective finding on the PCR. If possible, meet with the appropriate law enforcement agency at the scene, doing this without raising suspicions of the suspected abuser or compromising scene safety.