

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AGENCY**



Program Document: **EMS Organ Donor Information**  
-SUNDOWN

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Signature on File  
EMS Medical Director

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EMS Administrator

**Purpose:**

- A. To establish guidelines for prehospital personnel to meet requirements to search for organ donor information on adult patients for whom death appears imminent.

**Authority:**

- A. California Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5
- B. California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 9

**Definitions:**

- A. "Reasonable Search": An attempt by prehospital personnel to locate documentation that may identify a patient as a potential organ donor or one who has refused to make an anatomical gift. This search shall be limited to checking a wallet or purse that is on or near the individual to locate a driver's license or other identification card with this information. This requirement may be met by asking a family member, if one is present, about the presence of an organ donor card. A reasonable search shall not take precedence over patient care/treatment.
- B. "Imminent Death": A condition wherein illness or injuries are of such severity that in the opinion of prehospital personnel, death is likely to occur before the patient arrives at the receiving hospital. For purposes of this policy, this definition does not include any conscious patient, regardless of the severity of illness or injury.

**Protocol:**

- A. Prehospital personnel shall attempt a "reasonable search" of an adult patient or emancipated minor to determine status as an organ donor when death is imminent, AND the search will not interfere with patient care. This search shall be done in the presence of a witness, preferably a public safety officer.
- B. Any organ donor document that is discovered should be transported to the receiving hospital with the patient unless a law enforcement officer requests it. In the event that no transport is made, any document should remain with the patient.
- C. No search is to be made by prehospital personnel after the patient has expired.
- D. If a member of the patient's immediate family objects to the search for an organ donor document at the scene, their response to a question about the patient's organ donation wishes shall be considered to satisfy the requirement.
- E. In cases where information exists to suggest the patient is an organ or tissue donor, this information shall be relayed to the Sacramento County Coroner's Office or the hospital receiving staff.

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