



JEFFERSON COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES AGENCY

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To: Attached Distribution List

From: Douglas M Pittinger, Director *D.M. Pittinger*

Reference: JCESA OG #2390 "Handling & Transportation Deceased Patients"

Date: July 16, 2014

The Jefferson County Emergency Services Agency (JCESA) will implement the attached Operating Guideline #2390 effective August 16, 2014. This operating guideline results from a legal opinion from the Jefferson County Prosecuting Attorney, the unanimous approval of the JCESA Board of Directors and Jefferson County volunteer departments in the County.

The need for implementation of this new operations guideline is a direct result of reduced availability of both volunteer providers as well as reduced hours of career emergency medical service staff. Our mission is to provide life-saving emergency medical services. This cannot be done by dedicating limited personnel for extended periods to handle and transport deceased individuals while other resources are available for this purpose. On numerous occasions, this activity has delayed response in the next emergency call.

JCESA shall no longer operate or maintain a morgue effective August 16, 2014. Access to the existing JCESA morgue is terminated effective August 16, 2014.

An official press release will be issued by JCESA no later than July 25, 2014 for the public.

Questions may be directed to Doug Pittinger, Director or Ed Hannon, Deputy Director at 304 728-3287.

Distribution List

Friendship Fire Company	Donald Shirley, Jefferson County Medical Examiner
Citizens Fire Company	West Virginia Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
Shepherdstown Fire Department	Allen Mock, MD – Chief Medical Examiner
Independent Fire Company	Jim Henshaw – Chief Investigator
Blue Ridge Mt Fire Company	
Middleway Fire Company	
Bakerton Fire Department	
Brown's Funeral Home	
Rosedale Funeral Home	
Jefferson Chapel Funeral Home	
Melvin T Strider Funeral Home	
Eackles - Spencer and Norton Funeral Home	
Charles Town Police Department	
Harpers Ferry Police Department	
Jefferson County Sheriff's Department	
Ranson Police Department	
Shepherdstown Police Department	
Shepherd University Police Department	
West Virginia State Police	
Debbie Keyser, Jefferson County Administrator	
Jefferson County 911 Center	
Hassan Rasheed, Ass't. Prosecuting Attorney of Jefferson County	
Jefferson Medical Center	
Berkeley Medical Center	
Jefferson County Health Department	



HANDLING AND TRANSPORTATION DECEASED PATIENTS

Effective: August 16, 2014

Revised:

If no arrangements were made in advance or no preference is known, EMS will provide the family with contact information of all local funeral homes to arrange for transportation. Jefferson County Emergency Services Agency EMS staff shall return to service as soon as possible. Volunteer EMS providers may, at their discretion, remain on scene pending notification of funeral home or return to service.

If no family is present, transportation shall be coordinated by law enforcement and/or the medical examiner. EMS may return to service upon arrival of law enforcement if they desire.

4) Special Notations

Jefferson County Emergency Services Agency (JCESA) staff shall not remain on the scene for the arrival on the medical examiner and/or a funeral home transport unit. An all-volunteer EMS crew may elect to transport the deceased if they desire to do so. However, on-duty JCESA staff shall not be utilized for the transport of the deceased with an effective date of August 16, 2014.

Emergency Medical Service providers are not mandated to transport deceased individuals per WVOEMS Protocol # 9101.

Jefferson County Emergency Services Agency shall cease operations of the JCESA owned morgue located at Eackles-Spencer and Norton Funeral Home with an effective date of August 16, 2014. From that date forward, no Jefferson County EMS providers are to transport deceased patients to the JCESA owned morgue that was in service at Eackles-Spencer and Norton Funeral Home. JCESA is not mandated to own and/or operate any type of morgue operation in Jefferson County.



HANDLING AND TRANSPORTATION DECEASED PATIENTS

Effective: August 16, 2014

Revised:

1) Purpose

To provide direction for incidents in which EMS personnel encounter a patient who is dead at the time of arrival where resuscitation is medically inappropriate or where resuscitation efforts have been discontinued.

2) Initial Actions

Cease-Efforts

If resuscitation efforts have begun, the EMS provider considering the discontinuation of such efforts shall follow West Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services "Cease-Efforts Protocol #9102"

Death in the Field

If the decision is made to cease efforts, or if the patient is found to be dead on arrival and resuscitation would be medically inappropriate, the EMS provider will immediately proceed to the West Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services "Death in the Field Protocol #9101"

3) Transportation

Medical Examiner Cases

If the case meets the criteria for Medical Examiner investigation as determined by the County Medical Examiner on call; Jefferson County Emergency Services Agency EMS staff will return to service upon arrival of law enforcement. Volunteer EMS providers may, at their discretion, remain on scene pending the arrival of the medical examiner. The medical examiner will assume custody of the body, transportation and control of the scene. Notification will be made by contacting Jefferson County ECC (911) for the on call medical examiner for Jefferson County. If they cannot contact the County medical examiner, have them call the West Virginia Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (304) 558-6920.

Hospice Patients

If the deceased is enrolled in Hospice, EMS will contact Hospice of the Panhandle and request immediate scene response of a Hospice representative (if not already on scene) to coordinate transport of the deceased. Jefferson County Emergency Services Agency EMS staff will return to service as soon as possible. Volunteer EMS providers may, at their discretion, remain on scene pending the arrival of a Hospice representative or return to service. Hospice of the Panhandle should be contacted by calling (304) 264-0406 anytime.

Non-Hospice Patients Where the Medical Examiner Declines the Case

If the patient is not enrolled in Hospice and the Medical Examiner has declined the case, EMS shall immediately notify law enforcement and determine from family (if present) whether any arrangements have been made. If so, EMS will suggest the family contact the appropriate funeral home for transportation.

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May 29, 2014

Doug Pittinger
Jefferson County Emergency Services Association

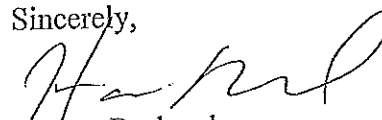
Re: Dead Bodies

Dear Mr. Pittinger:

This letter is being written in response to your request to guidance on the issue of storage and/or disposal of dead bodies by your organization. It is the opinion of this office that the JCESA should not be storing dead bodies under any circumstances. The appropriate authority to make decisions regarding the disposition of a dead body would be the State Medical Examiner or the County Coroner. Additionally, the Department of Health and Human Resources has a program to assist indigent persons in the disposal of relative's bodies. I would encourage the board of directions of the JCESA to contact the DHHR and see if arrangements can be made for the disposal of the bodies after contacting the Medical Examiner.

In the future I would suggest that emergency service personnel not take custody of dead bodies and simply notify the Medical Examiner or the County Coroner and let them make arrangements for the disposal of the body.

Sincerely,


Hassan Rasheed
Assistant Prosecutor