

COUNTY INTRODUCTION

To fully understand these protocols, you must understand the philosophy of Spokane County's delivery of EMS. The protocol book should not be viewed as the rule book, but rather as guidelines for your daily practice. No amount of rules can supplant good judgment and good thinking skills.

In order to develop good judgment, you must be allowed to use it. This privilege comes with responsibility for your actions. It is important that you develop a strong understanding of the reasons behind each protocol. With this understanding you will be able to think your way through each call, not just follow a set of rules.

We have developed a system where EMS Responders are expected to use their judgment. However, the EMS Responder is not an independent practitioner, but rather an extension of the physician into the prehospital phase of care. Therefore, physician involvement is of paramount importance.

In the same way, no EMS Responder training course can prepare you for every situation you will encounter, no protocol book can cover all possible situations that you may face. In cases where you are unsure of the care that is indicated, direct physician involvement in the case is recommended. The dedicated EMS ground line is a powerful tool, only if it is used.

Good field care is the direct result of proper education, medical control, and medical judgment. Each portion of this triad must be attended to, if a system is to function well. Experience alone will not keep you up to date. Continuing medical education is the only tool that will keep you abreast of the ever changing understanding of the delivery of EMS.

This book does not tell you how to run a prehospital medical scene; it only acts as a set of guidelines. You have the responsibility to see that each and every patient you encounter receives high quality medical care through knowledge and understanding.

All patient care protocols contained within this EMS manual should be followed to the extent of the individual EMS Provider's training and scope of practice.

(Borrowed from the City & County of Denver Department of Health & Hospital EMS/Paramedic Division).

“ Substituting rules for judgment starts a self-defeating cycle, since judgment can only be developed by using it. ”

From *In Search of Excellence*