

Patient Refusal of Treatment or Transport

Designation of Condition: To provide guidelines for instances where patients are not treated or transported to a hospital

Interpretations and Guidelines: As emergency service providers, we should respond to all calls with the intention of providing appropriate pre-hospital patient care. At no time should we try to talk the patient out of going to the hospital. Whatever their decision, it must be theirs alone. If the patient asks you whether he/she really needs to go to the hospital or be seen by a physician, it is recommended that you tell them, "We can't make that determination. If you would like to go to the emergency room to be seen by a doctor, we will provide transportation for you to the hospital of your choice, if available."

Requirements for Patient Refusals: Certain criteria must be met before a patient may sign a refusal of treatment and/or transport.

Age Criteria:

- Adult—18 years of age or older
- [Emancipated minor](#)—16 years of age and married, a minor in the military, or court order divorcing a minor from the parents

Patient Assessment Criteria:

- Patient must be alert and able to maintain coherent thought and speech
- Patient must be oriented and able to reference Time/Date/Place/Person/Situation
- Patient judgment must not be clouded with alcohol or drug use
- Patient must not have evidence of suicidal tendencies and must not have evidence that they are a danger to themselves or others
- Patient vital signs must be within normal limits or at patient's established baseline
- Patient must have a neurologic exam, including coordination and gait that is normal or consistent with their past medical history
- Despite a patient having a life or limb threatening illness or injury if a patient demonstrates appropriate decisional capacity, the patient may refuse care or transport and the on scene provider will document accordingly the risks/benefits of transport with a signed refusal.

If above criteria are met and the patient refuses treatment or transport, they must demonstrate an understanding of their medical situation and the risks associated with refusal.

If the patient meets the above criteria and refuses treatment and/or transport, have the patient sign the patient refusal portion of the run report.

If the patient does not meet the above criteria, attempt to persuade the patient of the need for treatment / transport. If the patient continues to refuse, consider utilizing the [Involuntary Emergency Transport Guideline](#) or contact an [MCEP](#).

Minors: Reference [Guidelines for the Transport of Minors](#)

The refusal MUST BE SIGNED BY: Natural Parent or Adopted Parent or Legal Guardian

In no event will legal consent procedures delay emergent patient care or transport. All cases resulting in non-transport will generate a thorough patient care narrative for each patient seen.