

# SAEMS PREHOSPITAL PROTOCOLS

## ABUSE OR NEGLECT, SUSPICION OF

### I. COMMUNICATION

All EMS personnel shall patch to a medical direction authority when an individual is suspected of having been, or being at risk for physical abuse, exploitation or neglect (A.R.S. 13-3620 (A & B)). Suspicion may be based on physical evidence, or based upon behaviors which provide reasonable belief that an individual may have been or may become a victim.

### II. PROCEDURE

All suspected cases of abuse, exploitation, or neglect are to be reported to Law Enforcement, Adult or Child Protective Services.

A. Medical direction authority or law enforcement will provide guidance to EMS personnel regarding the need for further hospital evaluation. This may include "hold" orders to protect the vulnerable adult or child in need of treatment and protection.

B. If the EMS provider suspects that an individual is a victim of abuse, neglect or exploitation, the provider will:

1. Contact medical direction as stated above
2. Make a report to local law enforcement providing all pertinent medical reports/information.
3. Contact local Adult or Child Protective Services
4. Document on the first care form all assessment findings, any orders received, case numbers (if available) from local law enforcement agencies and Adult or Child Protective Services.
5. Complete the Suspicion of Abuse or Neglect Report

C. If the individual or caregiver is refusing treatment and transport, the medical direction authority shall be notified prior to clearing the scene. The EMS provider will document the name of the person accepting responsibility for the individual.

### II. DEFINITIONS

A. Abuse:

Intentional infliction of physical harm  
Injury caused by criminally negligent acts or omissions  
Unreasonable imprisonment  
Sexual abuse or sexual assault

B. Neglect:

A pattern of conduct without the person's informed consent resulting in deprivation of food, water, medication, medical services, shelter, cooling, heating, or other services necessary to maintain minimum physical or mental health

C. Exploitation:

The illegal or improper use of an incapacitated or vulnerable adult of his resources for another's profit or advantage

D. Incapacity:

An impairment by reason of mental illness, mental deficiency, mental disorder, physical illness or disability, advanced age, chronic use of drugs, chronic intoxication or other

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cause to the extent that the person lacks sufficient understanding or capacity to make or communicate informed decision concerning his person

- E. **Physical Injury:**  
The impairment of physical condition which includes but shall not be limited to any skin bruising, pressure sores, bleeding, failure to thrive, malnutrition, dehydration, burns, subdural hematoma, soft tissue swelling, injury to any internal organ, or any physical condition which imperils health or welfare
- F. **Serious Physical Injury:**  
Physical injury which creates a reasonable risk of death, or which causes serious or permanent disfigurement, or serious impairment of health, or loss or protracted impairment of the function of any bodily organ or limb
- G. **Vulnerable Adult:**  
Any individual who is eighteen years or older who is unable to protect himself from abuse, neglect, or exploitation because of mental or physical impairment
- H. **Child, Youth or Juvenile:**  
Any individual who is under the age of eighteen