

Out of Hospital Care Provider Policy

Title: Autopsy Observation

Effective Date: February 1, 1995

POLICY:

In order to provide prehospital care providers with a valuable education tool, the Erie County Medical Examiner's Office will allow prehospital care providers to view autopsies when appropriate. It is recognized that viewing an autopsy often provides insight as to the cause of death and can be of assistance to prehospital care providers evaluating the appropriateness of treatments rendered. This may improve future patient care.

PROCEDURE:

Prehospital care providers who desire to observe the autopsy of a patient he/she cared for shall adhere to the following procedures:

- I. Since autopsies are generally scheduled each morning, call the Medical Examiner's Office at 898-3191 between 7:00-8:00 AM the morning following the day of death. Identify yourself as a prehospital care provider who would like to observe an autopsy on a patient. Provide the patient's name if available. If an autopsy has been scheduled and the Medical Examiner agrees to permit your observation, you will be notified as to the time that the "post" is scheduled for.

- II. Report to the Erie County Medical Examiner's Office located at the rear of the Erie County Medical Center approximately thirty minutes prior to the time of the scheduled "post". Upon arrival check-in with a staff member and advise them what you are there for. Additionally, the Erie County ID badge identifying you as a prehospital care provider should be worn. A generic ID badge can be obtained from the triage desk in the Emergency Department if necessary.

- III. When observing the "post" it is expected that you will act in a professional manner. Casual dress may be worn.

GENERAL NOTES:

Prehospital care providers may not be permitted to view autopsies on patients who have died as the result of a homicide or suicide.

Not every patient undergoes an autopsy, therefore, it is possible that a particular patient may not be scheduled for an autopsy.

In general, patients killed in an MVA do undergo an autopsy.

Autopsies are generally performed each morning beginning at 9:00 A.M..