



DO-NOT-RESUSCITATE (DNR) AND HEALTH CARE DIRECTIVES

I. AUTHORITY:

Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Section 1798; California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 5, Section 72527; Probate Code Sections 4000-4026, 4600-4643, and 4780-4786.

II. PURPOSE:

Mentally competent adults have the right to control decisions relating to their own health care, including decisions to have life-sustaining treatment withheld or withdrawn. This policy identifies the types of documents and the circumstances in which EMS personnel may withhold or withdraw resuscitative measures based on the expressed desires of an individual.

III. APPLICATION:

- A. This policy shall apply to individuals in any licensed health care facility (e.g., long term health care facilities, skilled nursing facilities, hospice/other facilities) or to individuals in a private residence or other location who have expressed a desire about resuscitative measures.
- B. EMS personnel may withhold or withdraw resuscitative measures when presented with a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) directive or order, as long as it can be reasonably determined that the patient is the subject of the document. EMS personnel may also withhold or withdraw resuscitative measures for patients without DNR documents when immediate family is on scene and they desire to make a unanimous decision to withhold resuscitation.
- C. Exception:
 - 1. EMS personnel may relieve an airway obstruction.

IV. DEFINITIONS:

“Advance Health Care Directive” or “advance directive” means a document executed pursuant to the Health Care Decisions Law. This document allows either or both of the following:

- 1. Appoints another person as the patient’s “health care agent” or “attorney-in-fact.”
- 2. The patient may write specific health care wishes.

“Attorney-in-Fact” or “health care agent” means a person granted authority to act for the person as governed by the Power of Attorney Law (Division 4.5, commencing with Section 4670 of the Probate Code). This person has legal authority to make decisions about the named individual’s medical care.

“Do-Not-Resuscitate (DNR)” means no chest compressions, no defibrillation, no assisted ventilation, no basic airway adjuncts, no advanced airway adjuncts (endotracheal tube, Combitube/King Airway), no cardiotoxic medications or other medications or means intended to initiate a heartbeat or to treat a non-perfusing rhythm.

“DNR Directive” means a DNR document or order that is:



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1. An approved State of California Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA)/California Medical Association (CMA) prehospital DNR request or an equivalent document from another jurisdiction.
2. A Medic Alert ® medallion or bracelet with engraved directions.
3. DNR orders written by a physician for patients in hospices, skilled nursing facilities, or other licensed facilities. "Written" includes computerized order entry.

"DNR Medallion" means a Medic Alert ® medallion/bracelet engraved with the words "do not resuscitate", or the letters "DNR", or "DNR-EMS", a patient identification number, and a 24-hour toll-free telephone number.

"Immediate Family" means the spouse, adult child(ren), parent of a patient, adult sibling, or domestic partner (pursuant to Section 297 of the Family Code).

"POLST Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment" is a form available statewide that allows an individual to express his or her desires regarding resuscitation, including various resuscitation modalities.

V. GUIDELINES FOR HONORING A DO-NOT-RESUSCITATE ORDER:

- A. DNR patients shall receive non-resuscitation related supportive care and other comfort measures as would any other person.
- B. A DNR directive shall be disregarded if the patient requests resuscitative measures.
- C. EMS personnel shall honor a DNR request when it can be reasonably established that the patient is the subject of the DNR request, and
 1. EMS personnel have identified a DNR directive, DNR medallion, or POLST form as defined in this document, or
 2. EMS personnel have personally seen the DNR order in the patient's medical record in a health care delivery facility. This includes electronic medical records.
 - a. EMS personnel shall document in the prehospital care report (PCR) the name of the physician writing the order and the date the order was signed.
- D. EMS personnel may accept a verbal request to withhold or withdraw resuscitative measures under the following circumstances:
 1. A licensed physician and surgeon, identified as the patient's physician and present with the patient, gives a verbal DNR order.
 - a. The physician should write the DNR order within the PCR and sign the order.
 - b. The physician's name, address, telephone number, and medical license number should also be recorded within the PCR.
 2. A DNR request is communicated by an "attorney-in-fact" or "health care agent."

