



**SIGNING AGAINST MEDICAL ADVICE (AMA) IN THE FIELD**

This standing order applies when a patient, guardian, or caregiver refuses prehospital emergency medical evaluation, treatment or transport.

**STANDING ORDER: ADULT AMA**

1. A competent adult or an emancipated minor may refuse specific EMS medical action (example – establishment of an IV), all EMS medical care indicated, or transport to an emergency receiving facility.
2. When patient refuses any EMS care assess the patient with particular attention to:
  - A. The complaint or the reason for the call
    - 1). Was call for assistance from a third party
    - 2). Is scene of situation safe for the patient who expresses desire to sign AMA
    - 3). Is patient a danger to self or others
  - B. Any important circumstances surrounding the call for assistance,
  - C. Significant patient medical history, and
  - D. Assessment including vital signs and mental status.

If patient is a danger to self or others or scene is unsafe for the patient, request law enforcement be dispatched to scene and explain circumstances to arriving officers.
3. If patient decides to sign or leave AMA:
  - A. Communicate the potential risks/consequences of refusal of care to the patient (guardian/Power of Attorney).
  - B. Present to the patient (guardian/Power of Attorney) alternatives for obtaining care/transport or modification of services offered.
4. The BH should be contacted for patients signing AMA but meeting BH contact criteria. If the patient refuses treatment and/or transport and there is some question on the part of field personnel as to the capacity of the patient, BH consultation should be obtained.
5. When a patient exhibits signs of being a danger to him/herself or others, or is gravely disabled due to a mental condition and cannot simply be treated and/or transported, notify law enforcement and remain with the patient until law authorities have made a determination regarding legal detention (51-50). Patients on a written 5150 hold cannot be released at the scene.
6. At no time is a patient to be asked to sign AMA when EMS personnel have convinced a patient they do not need transport or if EMS personnel decide not to transport a patient.

**STANDING ORDER: UNDER AGE OF CONSENT (LESS THAN 18 YEARS-OLD) AMA:**

1. Patients less than 18 years old must have a parent or legal representative present to refuse evaluation, medical care, and/or transport, unless they meet the definition of emancipated minor. The **parent/guardian** must be competent to make this decision and the steps listed above for adults should be followed. Telephone contact is appropriate in refusal situations if the EMT or Paramedic has taken the steps to confirm they are speaking with the appropriate parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian decision seems to grossly endanger the child, or the parent/guardian does not appear to be competent, contact BH or law enforcement for assistance.

Approved:

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**DOCUMENTATION:**

1. For Orange County EMS providers on OC-MEDS:

All AMA cases must be entered into the OC-MEDS AMA windows with all appropriate data fields completed and patient signature (when patient agrees to sign).

2. For Orange County EMS providers who are not submitting system data on OC-MEDS:

A prehospital care report (PCR) and an EMS Liability Release form must be completed for each incident of patient refusal or declination of emergency medical evaluation, care and/or transportation.

The EMT should ensure documentation includes patient history and assessment, a description of the patient which clearly indicates his/her decision-making capacity (see Liability Release check-box Criteria), why the patient is refusing care, a statement that the patient acknowledges their understanding of the risks/consequences of refusing medical attention, any alternatives presented to the patient, and BH contact (if performed).

After advising the patient and witness(es) regarding the adverse consequences of refusing medical care, obtain the signature of the patient and one witness on the liability release form. Preferably the witness should be a member of the patient's family if available at the scene.

If the patient is a minor, the parent/legal guardian should sign the liability release form. See telephone contact discussion above. Appropriate documentation should be on the liability release.

If the patient refuses to sign the liability release form, that fact should be documented on the form and in the PCR narrative. The release should include the fire incident (if applicable), and the signature of the field personnel and witnesses.

Provider agencies should review cases related to liability releases in accordance with their quality improvement plan.

**NOTES:**

**"Competent"** means an Adult patient (or independent minor), has the capacity to understand the circumstances surrounding his/her illness or impairment, and the risks associated with refusing treatment or transport. The patient is alert, oriented and his/her judgment is not significantly impaired by illness and/or injury.

**"Juvenile/Incompetent Patient"** means a patient under the age of 18 and does not meet the definition of "Emancipated Minor" as defined in this document OR does not meet the definition of "Competency" as defined in this document or is.

**"Emancipated Minor"** includes any of the following

Active duty military

Married or previously married

≥15 years old and living apart from parents and managing own finances

≥ 14 years old and declared an "Emancipated Minor" by a Superior Court

**"Evaluation and/or Treatment without EMS Transport"** means a competent patient that has been assessed and/or treated by an EMT/Paramedic for an illness or injuries. The patient has been advised and understands he/she may need further assessment and treatment by a physician. The patient has also been advised of possible clinical signs and symptoms and that clinical conditions may change. The patient **CHOOSES** to seek medical treatment by means other than EMS.

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