PURPOSE

To set guidelines for involvement with law enforcement and evidence at the scene of a violent crime.

MISSION / VALUES RATIONALE

This policy is aligned with the Mission and Values for Amita Health. Our mission calls us to provide compassionate, holistic care with a spirit of healing and hope for all persons in the communities we serve. Our ministry is an enduring sign of our Core Values of HOPE, to instill us with integrity, inspire us to interconnect with each other, encourage us to honor diversity and dignity of each individual and empower us to always strive for exceptional performance to our patients/residents and to best serve those in need.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS/FORMS TO BE USED

N/A

PROCEDURE

Often the Pre-hospital care providers may arrive at the scene of a violent crime before the police arrive. This requires an understanding by the pre-hospital care providers of law enforcement in preserving, collecting, and using evidence. Anything at the scene may provide valuable clues and evidence for the police.

The recommended procedures to follow at the scene of a violent crime include:

I. Immediately notify the police or call your dispatcher to do so.

II. If the victim is obviously dead, then he or she should remain undisturbed. Even the position of the body can provide valuable clues. Contact your Resource Hospital for Triple 0. Then the coroner’s office needs to be contacted. Do not move the body until instructed by the coroner permission.

III. Do not touch, move, or relocate any item at the scene unless absolutely necessary to provide treatment to an injured victim. You should mark the location of any item that must be moved so the police can determine its original position.

IV. Do not let onlookers or other unauthorized personnel on the premises of the crime.
V. Observe and note anything unusual, especially if the evidence may not be present when the police arrive. This may include smoke and odors.

VI. Give immediate care to the patient. The fact that the patient is a probable crime victim should not delay prompt treatment. Remember, your role is to provide emergency care, not law enforcement or detective work.

VII. Keep detailed records of the incident including your observations of the victim and the scene of the crime. In many felony cases, pre-hospital care providers will be called to testify since they were first on the scene, and lack of records about the case can be professionally embarrassing.

VIII. Once the police arrive you should leave or at least not hinder their work; however, you should give them any information you believe would be useful.

IX. The police have broad legal authority to enforce the law. They also have the equal right to control a situation to the degree that it does not needlessly hinder emergency care. The police may let EMS personnel perform their work unhampered if the police understand the reason and need for treatment, and are sure that the treatment will not delay them from their rights to enforce the law. If a conflict should exist between the EMS personnel and the police, the following guidelines shall apply:

A. Meet with the police in private and try to agree on an approach that will satisfy the police needs along with your own.

B. Explain to the police why the treatment is needed, and how police work may hinder the treatment.

C. If the police still refuse to let you start treatment, advise the police diplomatically that the incident will be noted in the run form and tape recorded at the hospital.

D. Listen to the police; they also have a duty to perform.

E. If an agreement cannot be reached, you must give into their demands. Continue the treatment allowed by the police but never abandon the patient.

F. You are not required to perform services or treatment demanded by the police (ie. Blood alcohol).

G. You can advise the patient about limits placed on treatment by the police. This procedure should be followed so the patient knows that you have done everything allowed under the present circumstances.

Keep a complete and detailed record of the incident. Note all discussions with the police so the record is complete. State facts, not opinions.
NOTE: Policies with original signatures are on file in Administration.