

## Medical Aid and Response

### 434.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy recognizes that members often encounter persons who appear to be in need of medical aid and establishes a law enforcement response to such situations.

### 434.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office that all deputies and other designated members be trained to provide emergency medical aid and to facilitate an emergency medical response.

### 434.3 FIRST RESPONDING MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Whenever practicable, members should take appropriate steps to provide initial medical aid (e.g., first aid, CPR and use of an automated external defibrillator (AED)) in accordance with their training. This should be done for those in need of immediate care and only when the member can safely do so.

Prior to initiating medical aid, the member should contact WhatComm and request response by emergency medical services (EMS) as the member deems appropriate.

Members should follow universal precautions when providing medical aid, such as wearing gloves and avoiding contact with bodily fluids, consistent with the Communicable Diseases Policy. Members should use a barrier or bag device to perform rescue breathing.

When requesting EMS, the member should provide WhatComm with information for relay to EMS personnel in order to enable an appropriate response, including:

- (a) The location where EMS is needed.
- (b) The nature of the incident.
- (c) Any known scene hazards.
- (d) Information on the person in need of EMS, such as:
  1. Signs and symptoms as observed by the member.
  2. Changes in apparent condition.
  3. Number of patients, sex and age, if known.
  4. Whether the person is conscious, breathing and alert, or is believed to have consumed drugs or alcohol.
  5. Whether the person is showing signs or symptoms of excited delirium or other agitated chaotic behavior.

Members should stabilize the scene whenever practicable while awaiting the arrival of EMS.

Members should not direct EMS personnel whether to transport the person for treatment.

## *Medical Aid and Response*

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### **434.4 TRANSPORTING ILL AND INJURED PERSONS**

Except in extraordinary cases where alternatives are not reasonably available, members should not transport persons who are unconscious, who have serious injuries or who may be seriously ill. EMS personnel should be called to handle patient transportation.

Deputies should search any person who is in custody before releasing that person to EMS for transport.

A deputy should accompany any person in custody during transport in an ambulance when requested by EMS personnel, when it reasonably appears necessary to provide security, when it is necessary for investigative purposes or when so directed by a supervisor.

Members should not provide emergency escort for medical transport or civilian vehicles.

### **434.5 PERSONS REFUSING EMS CARE**

If a person who is not in custody refuses EMS care or refuses to be transported to a medical facility, a deputy shall not force that person to receive care or be transported. However, members may assist EMS personnel when EMS personnel determine the person lacks mental capacity to understand the consequences of refusing medical care or to make an informed decision and the lack of immediate medical attention may result in serious bodily injury or the death of the person.

In cases where mental illness may be a factor, the deputy should consider proceeding with an emergent detention in accordance with the Emergent Detentions Policy.

If a deputy believes that a person who is in custody requires EMS care and the person refuses, he/she should encourage the person to receive medical treatment. The deputy may also consider contacting a family member to help persuade the person to agree to treatment or who may be able to authorize treatment for the person.

If the person still refuses, the deputy will require the person to be transported to the nearest medical facility. In such cases, the deputy should consult with a supervisor prior to the transport.

Members shall not sign refusal-for-treatment forms or forms accepting financial responsibility for treatment.

### **434.6 SICK OR INJURED ARRESTEE**

If an arrestee appears ill or injured, or claims illness or injury, he/she should be medically cleared prior to booking. If the deputy has reason to believe the arrestee is feigning injury or illness, the deputy should contact a supervisor, who will determine whether medical clearance will be obtained prior to booking.

If the jail or detention facility refuses to accept custody of an arrestee based on medical screening, the deputy should note the name of the facility person refusing to accept custody and the reason for refusal, and should notify a supervisor to determine the appropriate action.

Arrestees who appear to have a serious medical issue should be transported by ambulance.

Nothing in this section should delay a deputy from requesting EMS when an arrestee reasonably appears to be exhibiting symptoms that appear to be life threatening, including breathing problems

## *Medical Aid and Response*

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or an altered level of consciousness, or is claiming an illness or injury that reasonably warrants an EMS response in accordance with the deputy's training.

### **434.7 MEDICAL ATTENTION RELATED TO USE OF FORCE**

Specific guidelines for medical attention for injuries sustained from a use of force may be found in the Use of Force, Handcuffing and Restraints, Control Devices and Techniques, and Conducted Energy Device policies.

### **434.8 AIR AMBULANCE**

Generally, when on-scene, EMS personnel will be responsible for determining whether an air ambulance response should be requested. An air ambulance may be appropriate when there are victims with life-threatening injuries or who require specialized treatment (e.g., gunshot wounds, burns, obstetrical cases), and distance or other known delays will affect the EMS response.

Members should follow these cautions when near an air ambulance:

- Never approach the aircraft until signaled by the flight crew.
- Always approach the aircraft from the front.
- Avoid the aircraft's tail rotor area.
- Wear eye protection during landing and take-off.
- Do not carry or hold items, such as IV bags, above the head.
- Ensure that no one smokes near the aircraft.

### **434.9 AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) USE**

A semi-automatic external defibrillator or AED should only be used by members who have completed a course approved by the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) that includes instruction in CPR and the use of an AED (RCW 70.54.310).

#### **434.9.1 AED USER RESPONSIBILITY**

Members who are issued AEDs for use in office vehicles should check the AED periodically to ensure it is properly charged and functioning. Any AED that is not functioning properly will be taken out of service and given to the AED program coordinator who is responsible for ensuring appropriate maintenance.

Following use of an AED, the device shall be cleaned and/or decontaminated as required. The electrodes and/or pads will be replaced as recommended by the AED manufacturer.

Any member who uses an AED shall contact WhatComm as soon as possible and request response by EMS (RCW 70.54.310).

#### **434.9.2 AED REPORTING**

Any member using an AED will complete an incident report detailing its use. Any data from usage shall be made available, upon request, to EMS or other health care providers (RCW 70.54.310).

## *Medical Aid and Response*

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### **434.9.3 AED TRAINING AND MAINTENANCE**

The Administrative Sergeant should ensure appropriate training is provided to members authorized to use an AED.

The AED program coordinator is responsible for ensuring AED devices are appropriately maintained and tested consistent with the manufacturer's operational guidelines, and will retain records of all maintenance in accordance with the established records retention schedule (RCW 70.54.310).

### **434.10 ADMINISTRATION OF OPIOID OVERDOSE MEDICATION**

Members may administer opioid overdose medication in accordance with protocol specified by the health care practitioner who prescribed the overdose medication for use by the member (RCW 69.41.095).

#### **434.10.1 OPIOID OVERDOSE MEDICATION USER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Members who are qualified to administer opioid overdose medication, such as naloxone, should handle, store and administer the medication consistent with their training. Members should check the medication and associated administration equipment periodically to ensure they are serviceable and not expired. Any expired medication or unserviceable administration equipment should be removed from service and given to a supervisor.

Any member who administers an opioid overdose medication should contact WhatComm as soon as possible and request response by EMS.

#### **434.10.2 OPIOID OVERDOSE MEDICATION REPORTING**

Any member administering opioid overdose medication should detail its use in an incident report and flag the report with the NARC circumstance code.

#### **434.10.3 OPIOID OVERDOSE MEDICATION TRAINING**

The Administrative Sergeant should ensure training is provided to members authorized to administer opioid overdose medication.

### **434.12 FIRST AID TRAINING**

Subject to available resources, the Administrative Sergeant should ensure deputies receive periodic first aid training appropriate for their position.