

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

A Division of the Fresno County Department of Public Health

Manual	Emergency Medical Services Administrative Policies and Procedures	Policy Number 551
Subject	Conduct at the Scene of a Deceased Person	Page 1 of 1
References		Effective 04/18/83

I. POLICY

When any EMT or Paramedic is at the scene of a person who obviously appears dead, the following guidelines shall be adhered to:

1. Under no circumstances should anything be removed from the body.
2. The only person allowed to remove anything from the body, other than the Coroner, is the law enforcement agency having jurisdictional authority.
3. No electrocardiogram should be taken on bodies that are in an advanced state of decomposition or showing lividity or rigor mortis.
4. The Coroner's Office or law enforcement agency within the incident shall be notified immediately.
5. In unnatural deaths, until such time as a Coroner's Deputy or law enforcement official arrives at the scene, a person should remain in the general area of the body and insure that it is in no way disturbed or moved. It should be noted that any official designee of county or local government may serve this purpose.
6. In natural deaths, it is not mandatory for the EMS unit to remain on the scene. However, EMS personnel should ensure that family members on scene have the available resources to care for the deceased (i.e., funeral home).
7. Do not attempt resuscitative efforts when the body shows signs of demonstrated rigor, skin slip, drying or discoloration of the extremities, or odoriferous changes. The best thing to do in these cases is to console any relatives or loved ones present and to protect the body from the public or any unauthorized individual until the Coroner's or law enforcement agency having jurisdictional authority arrives.

Approved By EMS Division Manager	DANIEL J. LYNCH (Signature on File at EMS Agency)	Revision
EMS Medical Director	JIM ANDREWS, M.D. (Signature on File at EMS Agency)	11/01/2016