
**Ames Fire Department
Standard Operating Guidelines
Guidelines**

Book: 1 - Organization

Section: VI - Rules and Regulations

Chapter: 1 – **Donor Search and Notification**

Date Approved: 10-08-2007

Revision No.: New

Approved by:



PURPOSE:

Provide direction to members of the Ames Fire Department when conducting search and notifications of potential organ/tissue donor patients.

POLICY:

Effective July 1, 2007, Iowa State Legislature added the new section 142C.5A to the revised Uniform Anatomical Gift Act, which now requires pre-hospital care providers to conduct a reasonable search of deceased or 'near death' patients for donor documents.

PROCEDURES:

The following procedures are required of firefighters, paramedics, or other emergency rescuers when attending patients who are deceased or 'near death':

- Conduct a reasonable search for a document of anatomical gift or other information identifying the individual as a donor or as an individual who refused organ donation.
Note: A donor may make an anatomical gift by any of the following means:
 - An authorizing statement or symbol indicating that the donor has made an anatomical gift will be imprinted on the donor's driver's license or identification card. Revocation, suspension, expiration, or cancellation of a driver's license or identification card upon which an anatomical gift is indicated *shall not* invalidate the gift.
 - In a will.
 - During a terminal illness or injury of the donor, or by any form of communication addressed to at least two adults, at least one of whom is a disinterested witness.
- If a document of gift or a refusal to make an anatomical gift is located in the search and the individual or deceased individual to whom it relates is taken to a hospital, the person responsible for conducting the search shall be responsible for ensuring delivery of the document of gift or refusal to the hospital.
- In cases where a document of gift or a refusal to make an anatomical gift is located in the search and the individual or deceased individual to whom it relates is *not* taken to a hospital, the person responsible for conducting the search shall be responsible for ensuring the delivery of the document of gift or refusal to the licensed or certified health care professional assigned to continued patient custody (i.e.; medical examiner, coroner, paramedics).
- Per section 142C.5A, subsection 3, a person is *not* subject to criminal or civil liability for failing to discharge the duties imposed by this section but *may* be subject to administrative sanctions, up to and including the revocation of health care license or

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certificate.

DEFINITIONS:

Adult: An individual who is eighteen years of age or older.

Anatomical gift or gift: A donation of all or part of the human body effective after the donor's death for the purposes of transplantation, therapy, research, or education.

Disinterested witness: A witness other than the spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandchild, grandparent, or guardian of the individual, who makes, amends, revokes, or refuses to make an anatomical gift, or any other adult who exhibited special care and concern for the individual.

Document of gift: A donor card or other record used to make an anatomical gift, including a statement or symbol on a driver's license or identification card, or an entry in a donor registry.

Donor: An individual whose body or part is the subject of an anatomical gift.

Identification card: A non-operator's identification card issued by the state department of transportation.

Near death: A patient exhibiting some or all of the following characteristics:

- Cardiac arrest
- Absence of vital signs
- Irreversible end of all brain activity, marked by fixed pupils, absence of consciousness, lack of spontaneous respirations, and no response to pain

Reasonable search: The 'reasonable person' or standard, in which said person in the same circumstances would act. A brief frisk searching for donor documents found in wallets, purses, or other common areas on a person's body, as well as a visual search of the victim's surroundings may suffice.

Tissue: Portions of the human body other than an organ or an eye, but does not include blood unless the blood is donated for the purpose of research or education .

REFERENCES:

Uniform Anatomical Gift Act, Volume II, Chapter 142C of the Code of Iowa (2007).