

**Big Tree Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.**  
Standard Operating Guideline

**Actions to Follow When Confronting Attended/Unattended Death**

*Revised October 5, 2002*

**Purpose:**

It is important that a cause of death be determined in each and every case. Frequently, the immediate cause of death is not known, especially when the death and circumstances surrounding the death are unknown or un-witnessed. Since EMS is frequently the first to encounter an unattended (un-witnessed) death, it is important for EMS to have procedures to follow when dealing with such a situation. This policy outlines those procedures to follow.

**Policy:**

When EMS providers are called to the scene of an unattended (un-witnessed) death, they should immediately confirm the death in accordance with the Western Regional Adult & Pediatric Advanced Life Support Treatment Protocols. Additionally, the EMS provider shall immediately notify the police so that they may respond to the scene to conduct an investigation and assume control of the scene. The integrity of the incident scene shall be preserved whenever a crime is suspected. At no time shall a dead body be moved or transported. This is the responsibility of the medical examiner, coroner, or funeral director. Finally, a New York State Prehospital Care Report (PCR) shall be completed in order to document all findings.