

Addressing Advanced Directives in American Red Cross Training Courses

Advanced Directives are written instructions that describe the wishes of a person regarding medical treatment or health-care decisions in the event the person becomes incapacitated and can no longer express his or her wishes. Advanced Directives include Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Orders, Living Wills and Durable Powers of Attorney.

While these topics are not included as part of American Red Cross first aid, CPR and AED training programs, content for informational purposes only is included in most of the professional rescuer and lay responder program participant materials.

Lay responder course participants are not taught how to recognize or verify these directives as it is not appropriate to their level of training or expected under the auspices of Good Samaritan laws.

Professional rescuers are required to comply with state laws regarding Advanced Directives. They should receive this specific training from their employer, agency or medical director as all types of Advanced Directives are not recognized in every state. Guidance for Advanced Directives including any required identification and verification process is documented in state, regional or local laws, statutes and/or protocols.

Chapters and instructors should direct all questions about Advanced Directives to the state regulatory agency or office for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) or to the state Attorney General.

For further information contact your Service Area representative or the Program Administration and Support unit at national headquarters at programadmin@usa.redcross.org or at (703) 206-7120.