

Patient Management

Assessment

Assess for dependent lividity with rigor mortis and/or other inclusion criteria

Treatment and Interventions

1. If all the components above are confirmed, no CPR is required
2. If CPR has been initiated but all the components above have been subsequently confirmed, CPR should be discontinued, and medical direction contacted as needed
3. If any of the findings are different than those described above, clinical death is not confirmed, and resuscitative measures should be immediately initiated or continued. The [Termination of Resuscitative Efforts Guideline](#) should then be implemented
4. Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order (DNR/MOLST/POLST) with signs of life:
 - a. If there is a DNR bracelet or DNR transfer form and there are signs of life (pulse and respirations), provide standard appropriate treatment under existing protocols matching the patient's condition
 - b. To request permission to withhold treatment under these conditions for any reason contact medical direction
 - c. If there is documentation of a Do Not Intubate (DNI/MOLST/POLST) advanced directive, the patient should receive full treatment per protocols except for any intervention specifically prohibited in the patient's advanced directive
 - d. If for any reason an intervention that is prohibited by an advanced directive is being considered, contact medical direction

Patient Safety Considerations

In cases where the patient's status is unclear and the appropriateness of withholding resuscitation efforts is questioned, EMS personnel should initiate CPR immediately and then contact medical direction

Notes/Educational Pearls

Key Considerations

1. For scene safety and/or family wishes, clinician may decide to implement CPR even if all the criteria for death are met
2. At a likely crime scene, disturb as little potential evidence as possible

Pertinent Assessment Findings

None noted

Quality improvement

Associated NEMSIS Protocol(s) (eProtocol.01) (for additional information, go to www.nemsis.org)

- 9914169 – Cardiac Arrest - Do Not Resuscitate
- 9914201 – Cardiac Arrest - Determination of Death/Withholding Resuscitative Efforts

Key Documentation Elements

- Clinical/situational details that may be available from bystanders/caregivers