

# CARE OF PATIENTS ARRIVING IN THE EMERGENCY INCLUDING HANDLING OF MEDICO-LEGAL CASES

## Purpose

To establish a clear and systematic approach to manage patients arriving in the Emergency Department (ED), including those with Medico-Legal Cases (MLCs), in accordance with Indian healthcare regulations and ethical standards.

## Scope

This policy applies to all healthcare professionals and support staff working in the Emergency Department of the hospital.

## Policy Statement

The hospital is committed to providing immediate and appropriate care to all patients arriving at the Emergency Department, irrespective of their ability to pay, identity, or legal status. Medico-legal cases will be handled with due diligence, documentation, and in compliance with legal norms.

## Emergency Patient Management

- Triage all incoming patients based on severity using the standard triage protocol.
- Ensure prompt stabilization of airway, breathing, and circulation (ABCs).
- Record time of arrival, presenting complaint, vitals, and triage level in the Emergency Register.
- Inform the treating Emergency Medical Officer or Consultant immediately.
- Begin necessary investigations and interventions without delay.

## Handling of Medico-Legal Cases (MLCs)

- Identify MLCs based on history and clinical presentation (e.g., road traffic accidents, assaults, suicides, poisoning).
- Label the case as 'MLC' in the Emergency Register and patient file.
- Inform the local police station as per protocol, and document the name and badge number of the police personnel informed.
- Secure and preserve any evidence (e.g., clothing, foreign objects) carefully.
- Obtain consent from patient or next of kin where required.
- Prepare a detailed MLC report including the nature of injuries and cause.
- Forward a copy of the MLC report to the Medical Records Department and Police.

## Role and Responsibilities

- Emergency Doctor: Triage supervision, treatment initiation, MLC documentation.
- Nurse: Triage, vital signs recording, initial care, MLC handling support.
- Security Staff: Ensure safety, help in managing aggressive patients or family.
- Medical Records: Maintain confidential and secure documentation of MLCs.

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## **Confidentiality**

All information regarding the patient, especially in MLCs, must be treated as confidential and disclosed only to authorized personnel.

## **Audit and Quality Assurance**

Monthly audits will be conducted on emergency and MLC documentation, patient turnaround times, and incident reporting. Reports shall be submitted to the Hospital Quality Committee.

## **Legal Compliance**

- Comply with IPC, CrPC, and local State Acts related to emergency and medico-legal protocols.
- Cooperate with law enforcement while upholding patient rights and dignity.

## **References**

- National Accreditation Board for Hospitals (NABH) Guidelines
- Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC)
- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare Emergency Care Guidelines