

PATIENT TREATMENT RIGHTS



Spokane County EMS guidelines and protocols are intended for use with a conscious and consenting patient, or an unconscious (implied consent) patient. Patients refusing EMS care or transport represent a significant medical legal risk for EMS agencies and their personnel. Adherence to medical release principles will minimize liability and maximize patient care.



MEDICAL RELEASE PRINCIPLES: The founding principle for medical release is informed consent by the patient. The patient cannot be held to have refused treatment or care unless and until (1) the patient has been fully informed of their condition, (2) the patient understands the information provided on their condition and the potential consequences of refusing the treatment or care, and (3) a medical release form has been read to, understood, and signed by the patient.

MINIMUM MEDICAL INCIDENT REPORT DOCUMENTATION

- ✓ Patient history*
- ✓ Vital signs*
- ✓ Physical examination appropriate for the complaint*
- ✓ Mental status documented as "alert and oriented" and no significant impairment of mental status by drugs, alcohol, other organic causes, or mental illness
- ✓ Informed consent: Risk of refusing care or transport explained to and understood by patient
- ✓ Spokane County Emergency Medical and Trauma Care Cancel/Refusal form signed by the patient and attached to the Medical Incident Report (**see next page for sample form**)

If a conscious patient who is irrational (or impaired by alcohol or drugs) or may harm themselves, refuses treatment, the emergency care provider should contact law enforcement.

*If these criteria cannot be met, document refusal by patient