

## ***Patient Property***

Supersedes: 1-16-06

Effective: 11-10-19

1. After obtaining the patient's permission, members shall only inspect a patient's wallet, handbag, back-pack, luggage, or other personal property if there is a medical necessity, such as when searching for a MedicAlert card, or when attempting to determine if any "ICE" (In Case of Emergency) contact information is stored in a cellular telephone. If any personal item is removed from the patient or given to the police, it shall be documented on the PCR.
2. An EMS crew on scene in a home or business establishment shall not inspect the premises unless there is a direct bearing on patient care, e.g., to gain access or egress. Bureaus, cabinets, drawers or other furniture shall not be inspected unless the patient, a family member, a Field Supervisor, or a member of the Boston Police Department is present and is fully aware of the search.
3. If there is a clinical need to remove a ring, watch, necklace, or other jewelry from the patient, the EMT removing the item shall be responsible for taking custody of the jewelry. A notation shall be made on the PCR indicating that the jewelry was removed, and to whom it was transferred to at the receiving hospital.
4. If there is a clinical need to remove dentures, eyeglasses, or other prosthetics, the EMT removing the item shall be responsible for taking custody of these items. A notation shall be made on the PCR indicating that the item was removed, and to whom it was transferred to at the receiving facility.
5. If the patient is conscious and competent, and a family member, friend, or co-worker is present, the patient may elect to transfer his personal effects (wallet, handbag, etc.) to such person.
6. If the patient is not responsive (or is conscious but not competent), except for a spouse, parent of a minor child, or police officer, no other person should be given the personal effects of the patient while the patient is under the care of EMS personnel. Personal property shall be put in a plastic "patient belongings" bag and transferred to the responsible staff person at the receiving facility. The name or title of the staff person should be noted on the Patient Care Report;
7. If there is a clinical need to remove the patient's clothing, an effort shall be made to remove the clothing without cutting. If the nature and severity of the injuries warrants cutting clothing items, they should be cut off as discreetly as possible while avoiding cutting through potential physical evidence such as bullet holes and knife marks, etc;
8. Items of personal property (wallet, cellular phone, handbag, jewelry, identification cards, etc.) found in the ambulance after the patient has been transported shall be returned to the patient as soon as possible. If the owner of the property is unknown or cannot be located, the property shall be turned in to a Field Supervisor as soon as possible along with an incident report indicating where, when, and by whom the property was discovered. Found property and associated reports will then be turned in to the Professional Standards Division at the EMS Administrative Headquarters.

9. OEMS requires that any item in the patient compartment of the ambulance must be secured in the event of an accident to prevent injury to any occupant of the vehicle, this includes EMS equipment as well as patient belongings.
10. If a patient's belongings, such as backpacks, suitcases, duffel bags, luggage, etc. pose a potential threat to the crews or patient members are not required to transport such items.
11. Items that can be safely stored in an exterior compartment or secured via a seatbelt in the patient compartment may be transported if the crew deems it safe to do so. If there are multiple items, crews may request that family members, the facility, or law enforcement on scene secure these items until retrieved by the patient at a later time.
12. Smaller items similar to a "carry on" type bag that contains personal items, identification, other types of cards, medications, etc. may be transported with the patient if it is safe to do so and the bag can be safely secured in the vehicle. Crews should use their discretion in the best interest of their and the patient's safety. A supervisor shall be consulted as needed should there be any questions.