

DO NOT RESUSCITATE

**AUTHORITY
4010**

California Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5 Emergency Medical Services, Part 1. Emergency Medical Services and Emergency Medical Care Personnel, et al.

**PURPOSE
4010.1**

This policy outlines the procedures whereby prehospital care providers may withhold or terminate CPR in those patients who have expressed a wish not to be resuscitated. This policy establishes:

- # background of policy development;
 - # acceptable methods of establishing a Do Not Resuscitate order in the Coastal Valleys EMS System;
 - # procedures to follow when a DNR order is presented in the field.
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**LEGAL REFERENCE
4010.2**

"The right of the competent adult patient to refuse medical treatment is a constitutionally guaranteed right which must not be abridged."

Bartling v. Superior Court
163 Cal. App. 3d 186, 195 (1984)

EMS medical directors are responsible for the medical direction and management of EMS systems (California Health & Safety Code, Sections 1797.220 and 1798), and have the responsibility, authority and ethical obligation for implementing DNR directives.

Professional guidelines for cardiopulmonary resuscitation (such as the American Heart Association CPR standards) reflect patients' rights to self determination. Among reasons listed for withholding CPR are patient refusal and "do-not-resuscitate orders."

**METHODS FOR
ESTABLISHING DNR ORDERS
4010.3**

Do not resuscitate orders must be filled out completely and must include the following information:

- # patient's name;
 - # code status-indicating patients wish for no CPR or other limitations on resuscitation;
 - # (1) signature of a physician, or
 - # (2) completed Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care Decisions with code status;
 - # date DNR completed.
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**DURABLE POWER OF
ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH
CARE DECISIONS
4010.4**

If the Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care Decisions does not indicate a "no-code" status but the assigned surrogate is present and specifies "no resuscitation," that will be accepted as establishing code status.

DO NOT RESUSCITATE CONTINUED

PROCEDURES 4010.5

The State of California EMS Authority DNR form is recognized statewide. The Medic Alert Medallion is also recognized. The "Goldenrod" (orange color) DNR form developed by the Sonoma County Bioethics Committee and the EMS agency is being phased out and replaced by the State of California EMS Authority's DNR form.

- The decision to respect a DNR order or any portion thereof, will be honored by the paramedic or first responder.
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DO NOT RESUSCITATE 4010.6

Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) means that if the breathing has ceased or the heart has stopped (absent pulse) no medical treatment will be started or continued. A possible exception might occur if a patient has an airway obstruction from a foreign object or food. If the patient is awake and in distress, measures to clear the obstruction to make the patient more comfortable are justified even if there is a DNR order.

DO NOT INTUBATE 4010.7

Do Not Intubate (DNI) means that neither an endotracheal tube nor an esophageal obturator airway will be inserted to secure the airway or to assist ventilation. Oral/nasal airways and suctioning will be done where appropriate.

DOCUMENTATION PRESENT 4010.8

- If DNR documentation is present with the patient, EMS personnel need not initiate basic or advanced life support measures.
 - EMS personnel will at times encounter patients who clearly should not receive maximal resuscitation yet who do not have all of the necessary documentation for limiting resuscitation. In such situations the paramedic will make base station contact and communicate necessary patient medical information. The base station will issue appropriate orders which may include the limitation or termination of resuscitation.
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4010.9

IF FOR ANY REASON THE DNR ORDER DOES NOT SEEM TO APPLY TO THE SITUATION, RESUSCITATION SHOULD BE INITIATED.

TRANSPORTS/ TRANSFERS 4010.10

If transported, the paramedic will deliver the DNR documentation with the prehospital care form to the receiving facility to maintain continuity of resuscitation orders.

UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES 4010.11

Any unusual circumstances will be documented by the paramedic on the Coastal Valleys EMS Quality Improvement Incident Report form, which will be turned in to the base station for review and then forwarded to the EMS Agency.

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