

South Metro Fire Department
Clinical Policies and Procedures

Title: Family Members Accompanying Patient in the Ambulance
Effective Date: December 15, 2015
Authorized By: Keith Wesley, MD Medical Director
Standard: Patient Care and Transport
Policy: South Metro Fire shall allow family members or guardians to accompany the patient in the ambulance when approved conditions exist to do so.

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide SMFD patient care providers in the decision to transport family members and or guardians with a patient who is under their care.

II. Definitions

- A. Family Member - Person related by blood or marriage to the patient.
- B. Guardian - Person with legal authority as a surrogate decision maker for the patient.

III. Procedure

General Criteria

- A. Typically, only one family member or guardian may accompany a patient while transporting the patient.
 - 1. They must be secured with a safety restraint device at all times
- B. It is preferred that the individual accompanying the patient be in the front passenger seat of the ambulance for ease of patient care.
 - 1. Exceptions to this condition are parents accompanying children, interpreters, or any situation that will ease the care of the patient by having the family member ride in the patient compartment.
 - 2. All decisions will be at the discretion of the pre-hospital care providers.
- C. Any unusual circumstances (ex: disruptive behavior) related to an individual being forbidden to accompany the patient shall be documented on an incident form and forwarded to a supervisor.
- D. Certain situations may require additional patient care providers during patient transport. (i.e. transport teams, first responders.)
 - 1. These personnel are considered part of the “care team” and therefore, are exempt from this policy.

Exception/Refusal of Additional Riders

- A. The following are reasonable justifications to refuse transport of family members and guardians:
1. Physically interfering with care of the patient.
 2. Displaying strong emotions that can interfere with the care of the patient, making patient care difficult, or increases patient anxiety
 3. Patient's condition is serious or critical and delaying transport to wait for family could result in delay of continuity of care.
 4. Suspicion of abuse or maltreatment of the patient by the family member or guardian.
 5. Safety of the EMS personnel is threatened or in imminent danger by waiting for family/guardian such as but not limited to;
 - a) Dangerous road conditions due to inclement weather
 - b) Dangerous persons on scene

Unusual Circumstances that allow for the Transport of Additional Occupants

- A. Mass Casualty Incident: EMS crews may transport multiple persons or patients due to operational limitations, and/or by assignment from the EMS Incident Commander.
- B. Young children who are unable to care for themselves, may be transported with their parent who is receiving care by EMS team, if no other adult is present that can provide temporary care for them.

Previous Reviews/Revisions: 01/06, 12/09, 10/13