	1108	Determination of Death
Nor-Cal EMS Policy & Procedure Manual		Treatment Guidelines
Effective Date: 05/01/2022		Next Revision: 05/01/2024
Approval: Jeffrey Kepple MD – MEDICAL DIRECTOR		SIGNATURE ON FILE

## Authority

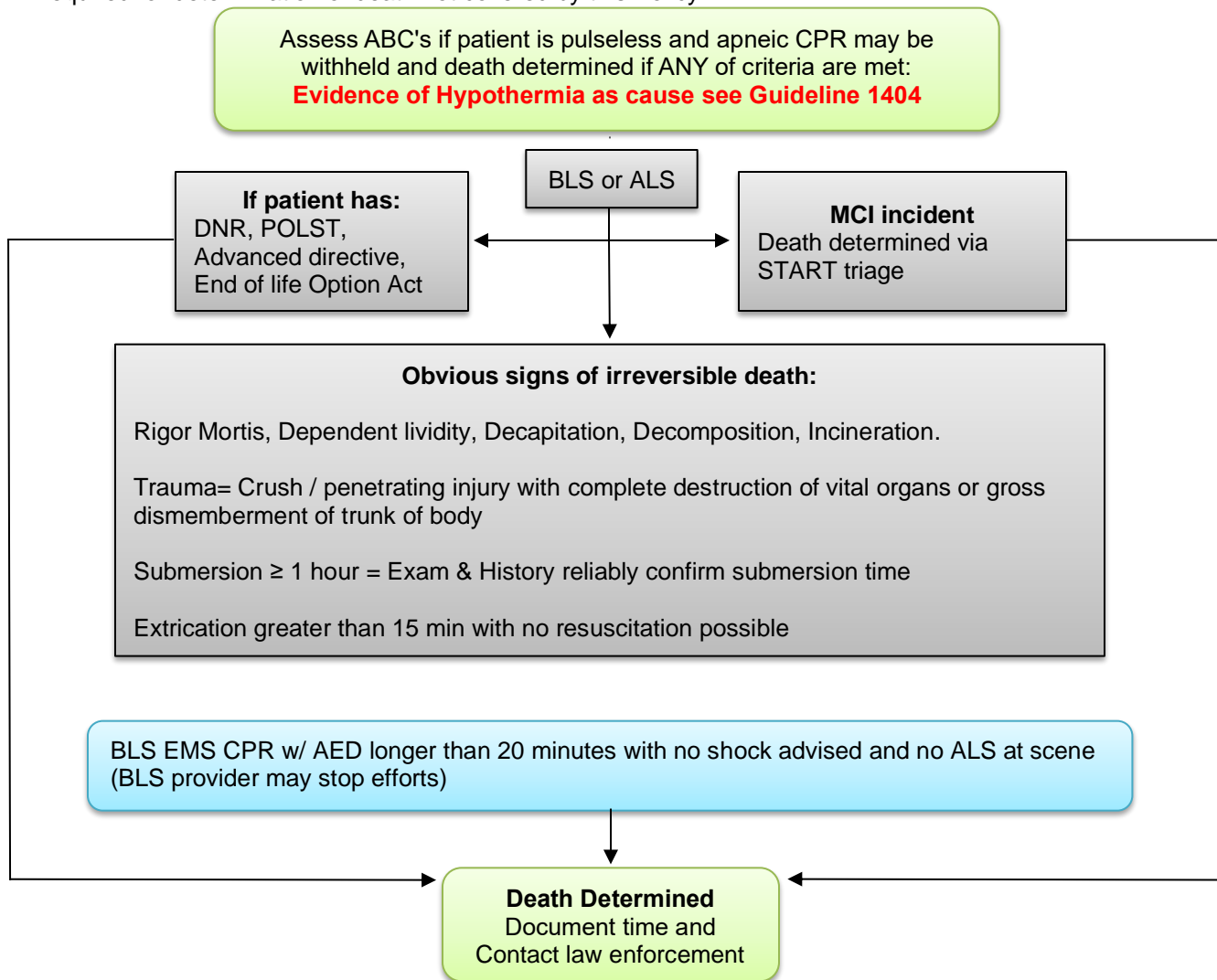
California Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, § 1797.220 and 1798.6.  
California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 9.

## Purpose

To establish criteria for determination of death by prehospital personnel.

## Policy

Prehospital providers do not pronounce death but rather determine death based on pre-determined criteria outlined below. An assessment by ALS personnel and consultation with the Base Hospital Physician is required for determination of death not covered by this Policy.



### Family interaction

**DNR Not present-** Resuscitation maybe withheld or stopped if family who is present and can be identified as an immediate family member or spouse and with full agreement of any other persons who are present at scene, requests no resuscitation.

**Any objection or disagreement by family** regarding terminating or withholding resuscitative effort- BLS efforts including CPR/AED shall continue or begin immediately and Physician contact should then be made for further direction.

Below is for  
ALS PERSONNEL ONLY

**For Presumed MEDICAL Arrest:**

All **MUST** be present-

ECG= Asystole  
Event not witnessed  
Effective bystander CPR not initiated  
Presumed downtime greater than 20 minutes  
Absence of potentially reversible cause  
No shocks delivered PTA

**For Presumed TRAUMATIC Arrest:**

All **MUST** be present-

ECG= Asystole or PEA less than 40  
Blunt, Penetrating, profound multisystem  
trauma, or significant blood loss  
Effective bystander CPR not initiated  
Absence of potentially reversible cause  
No shocks delivered PTA

ALL PRESENT

**Death Determined**  
Document time and  
Contact law enforcement

**If Determination of death cannot be made**

Perform ALS resuscitation for 20 minutes:  
**See Treatment Guidelines: 1101/1102**

**After 20 minutes of ALS resuscitation ROSC has not been obtained:**

Resuscitation maybe discontinued with: Asystole or PEA  
and  
 $ETCo_2 \leq 10\text{mm/Hg}$

**If V-Fib / V-Tach or  $ETCo_2 \geq 10\text{mm/Hg}$**

**Perform ALS resuscitation for an additional 10 minutes (30 min Total):**

At which point resuscitation may be discontinued and determination of death  
made if ROSC has not occurred and  $ETCo_2$  is less than 10mm/Hg.

**Physician Consult Required**

- Evidence exists that resuscitative efforts are not desired or appropriate and above criteria is not met.
- $ETCO_2 > 10\text{mm/Hg}$  after 30 minutes of resuscitation efforts
- **Do not transport with CPR in progress-** allowed only by Physician contact or if Hypothermia exists (See 1404)