

Medical Aid and Response

424.1 VERSION

Review Date	Effective Date	Approving Authority
11/30/2020	07/09/18	Gabriel Camacho, Interim Chief of Police

424.2 POLICY AND PURPOSE

This policy recognizes that employees often encounter persons in need of medical aid and establishes a law enforcement response to such situations. It is the policy of the Harrisonburg Police Department that all officers and other designated employees be trained to provide emergency medical aid and to facilitate an emergency medical response.

424.3 ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

All employees are expected to fully comply with the guidelines and timelines set forth in this policy. Responsibility rests with the supervisor to ensure that any violations of policy are investigated and appropriate training, counseling and/or disciplinary action is initiated. This directive is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violation of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

424.4 FIRST RESPONDING MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Whenever practicable, employees should take appropriate steps to provide initial medical aid (e.g., first aid, CPR, use of an automated external defibrillator (AED) in accordance with their training and current certification levels. This should be done for those in need of immediate care and only when the employee can safely do so (Va. Code § 8.01-225).

Prior to initiating medical aid, the employee should contact Emergency Communications Center (ECC) and request response by emergency medical services (EMS) as the employee deems appropriate.

Employees should follow standard precautions when providing medical aid, such as wearing gloves and avoiding contact with bodily fluids, consistent with the Communicable Diseases Policy. Employees should use a barrier or bag device to perform rescue breathing (patient in respiratory arrest).

When requesting EMS, the employee should provide Emergency Communications Center with information for relay to EMS personnel in order to enable an appropriate response, including:

- (a) The location where EMS is needed.
- (b) The nature of the incident.
- (c) Any known scene hazards.

Harrisonburg Police Department

Policy Manual

Medical Aid and Response

- (d) Information on the person in need of EMS, such as:
1. Signs and symptoms as observed by the employee.
 2. Changes in apparent condition.
 3. Number of patients, sex and age, if known.
 4. Whether the person is conscious, breathing and alert, or is believed to have consumed drugs or alcohol.
 5. Whether the person is showing signs or symptoms of excited delirium or other agitated chaotic behavior.

Employees should stabilize the scene whenever practicable while awaiting the arrival of EMS.

Employees should not direct EMS personnel whether to transport the person for treatment and employees should defer medical decisions to the appropriate medical personnel.

424.5 TRANSPORTING ILL, INJURED, PHYSICALLY DISABLED PERSONS

Except where alternatives are not reasonably available, officers should not transport persons who are unconscious, who have serious injuries, may be seriously ill or are physically disabled; EMS personnel should be called to handle these instances. In exceptional cases, officers should contact their supervisor prior to considering the transport of those persons described above.

Officers should search any person who is in custody before releasing that person to EMS for transport.

An officer should accompany any person in custody during transport in an ambulance when requested by EMS personnel, when it reasonably appears necessary to provide security, when it is necessary for investigative purposes or when so directed by a supervisor.

Employees should not provide emergency escort for medical transport or civilian vehicles.

Vehicles and equipment that may be contaminated from blood or bodily fluids should be decontaminated in accordance with the Communicable Disease Policy.

424.6 PERSONS REFUSING EMS CARE

If a person who is not in custody refuses EMS care or refuses to be transported to a medical facility, an officer shall not force that person to receive medical care or be transported.

However, officers may assist EMS personnel when EMS personnel determine the person lacks the mental capacity to understand the consequences of refusing medical care or to make an informed decision and the lack of immediate medical attention may result in serious bodily injury or the death of the person.

In cases where mental illness may be a factor, the officer should consider proceeding with a civil commitment or an involuntary commitment.

If an officer believes that a person who is in custody requires EMS care and the person refuses, he/she should encourage the person to receive medical treatment. The officer may also consider

Harrisonburg Police Department

Policy Manual

Medical Aid and Response

contacting a family member to help persuade the person to agree to treatment or who may be able to authorize treatment for the person.

If the person who is in custody still refuses, the officer will require the person to be transported to the nearest medical facility. In such cases, the officer should consult with a supervisor prior to the transport.

Other than as a witness, employees shall not sign "refusal for treatment" forms or forms accepting financial responsibility for treatment.

424.6.1 SICK OR INJURED ARRESTEE

If an arrestee appears ill, injured or handicapped, or claims illness, injury or handicap, he/she should be medically cleared prior to booking. If the officer has reason to believe the arrestee is feigning injury or illness, the officer should contact a supervisor, who will determine whether medical clearance will be obtained prior to booking.

If the jail or detention facility refuses to accept custody of an arrestee based on medical screening, the officer should note the name of the facility person refusing to accept custody and the reason for refusal, and should notify a supervisor to determine the appropriate action.

Arrestees who appear to have a serious medical issue or significant handicap should be transported by ambulance. Officers should, when practicable, comply with hospital protocol while continuing to maintain custody and provide for the safety of officers, arrestees and others. Officers shall not transport an arrestee to a hospital without a supervisor's approval.

Known injuries and medical conditions of an arrestee present both before and after transportation should be documented in the related report.

424.7 MEDICAL ATTENTION RELATED TO USE OF FORCE

Specific guidelines for medical attention for injuries sustained from a use of force may be found in the Use of Force, Handcuffing and Restraints, Control Devices and Conducted Energy Weapon policies.

424.8 AIR AMBULANCE

Generally, when on-scene, EMS personnel will be responsible for determining whether an air ambulance response should be requested. An air ambulance may be appropriate when there are victims with life-threatening injuries or who require specialized treatment (e.g., gunshot wounds, burns, obstetrical cases), and distance or other known delays will affect the EMS response.

Headlights, spotlights and flashlights should not be aimed upward at the air ambulance. Officers should direct vehicle and pedestrian traffic away from the landing zone.

Officers shall follow these cautions when near an air ambulance:

- Never approach the aircraft until signaled by the flight crew.
- Always approach the aircraft from the front.

Harrisonburg Police Department

Policy Manual

Medical Aid and Response

- Avoid the aircraft's tail rotor area.
- Wear eye protection during the landing and take-off.
- Do not carry or hold items, such as IV bags, above the head.
- Ensure that no one smokes near the aircraft.

424.9 AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) USE

424.9.1 AED USER RESPONSIBILITY

Officers who are issued AEDs for use in department vehicles should check the AED at the beginning of the shift to ensure it is properly charged and functioning. Any AED that is not functioning properly will be taken out of service and given to the Property Clerk who is responsible for ensuring appropriate maintenance.

Following use of an AED, the device shall be cleaned and/or decontaminated as required. The electrodes and/or pads will be replaced as recommended by the AED manufacturer.

Any employee who uses an AED should contact Emergency Communications Center as soon as possible and request response by EMS.

424.9.2 AED TRAINING AND MAINTENANCE

The Training Officer should ensure appropriate training is provided to members authorized to use an AED. The training will be conducted every two years.

The Property Clerk is responsible for ensuring AED devices are appropriately maintained and will retain records of all maintenance in accordance with the established records retention schedule.

424.10 ADMINISTRATION OF OPIOID OVERDOSE MEDICATION

Harrisonburg Police Department personnel shall make every reasonable effort to administer aid, including administering Naloxone (Narcan), to victims suffering from an apparent opiate overdose. Administering Naloxone (Narcan) should only be done by employees trained in its use, and does not preclude immediate response by EMS personnel.

424.10.1 OPIOID OVERDOSE MEDICATION USER RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees who are qualified to administer opioid overdose medication, such as naloxone, should handle, store and administer the medication consistent with their training. Employees should check the medication and associated administration equipment at the beginning of their shift to ensure they are serviceable and not expired. Any expired medication or unserviceable administration equipment should be removed from service and given to the Training Officer.

Naloxone Use: Before any agency personnel deploy Naloxone the following facts must be considered:

- (a) Agency personnel shall maintain universal precautions.
- (b) Agency personnel shall perform a patient assessment based on their training in first aid and CPR.

Harrisonburg Police Department

Policy Manual

Medical Aid and Response

- (c) As a part of the assessment agency personnel shall speak with any by-standers, if appropriate and scan the area for any indication of opiate use by the patient.
- (d) Agency personnel shall determine the patient's level of alertness, check for signs of life and determine if depressed breathing is occurring.
- (e) Notify the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) that the patient is in a potential overdose state and request that Fire/Rescue be dispatched to the scene and/or verify if they are enroute.
- (f) Administer Naloxone as trained.

Any officer who administers an opioid overdose medication should contact Emergency Communications Center as soon as possible and request response by EMS.

424.10.2 OPIOID OVERDOSE MEDICATION TRAINING

- (a) Any sworn officer must receive the appropriate training in the maintenance, use and administration of Naloxone prior to accessing and/or administering the medication.
- (b) Training shall include a review of the Va. Code §54.1-3408 and §9.1-101 which authorizes and governs the use of Naloxone.
- (c) Training on the use of Narcan will be coordinated through the Harrisonburg Fire Department EMS Officer.
- (d) The Chief of Police shall designate a Naloxone coordinator. The coordinator will be the responsible party for scheduling the training of agency personnel.
 - 1. The coordinator and/or training officer shall ensure the proper training of those authorized to be issued Naloxone.
 - 2. The coordinator and/or training officer shall be responsible for the removal of any expired Naloxone from the agency inventory.
 - 3. The coordinator and/or training officer shall be responsible for the maintenance of all records pertaining to the training, issuance, inventory and the administering of Naloxone.

424.10.3 MAINTENANCE/REPLACEMENT

- (a) Periodic inspections of the Naloxone kits shall be conducted by the agency personnel assigned the kit.
- (b) Any missing/damaged/or expired Naloxone kits will be reported to the coordinator.
- (c) The coordinator shall replace any missing items in the kit or pull the kit from service. The kit shall be replaced by the coordinator as available.
- (d) Naloxone kits shall be stationed in the public safety building, in conspicuous areas, and accessible to HPD officers utilizing existing security measures.

424.11 FIRST AID TRAINING

Subject to available resources, the Training Officer should ensure officers receive periodic first aid training appropriate for their position.