

## MANAGEMENT OF THE ARMED PATIENT

While the possibility of finding a dangerous weapon on-scene has always existed, EMS personnel must be aware of current issues, which impose unique hazards upon them while performing their duties. Though not all accidents can be prevented, awareness must be maintained regarding the State of Ohio Concealed-Carry Laws.

Ohio's Concealed-Carry Laws permit individuals to obtain a license to carry a concealed handgun, including into private businesses, so long as the licensee also carries a valid license and valid identification when carrying the concealed handgun AND there is no posted sign on the private property prohibiting the carrying of such weapons. Be aware that all patients may be carrying a deadly weapon (e.g. knives, guns, blunt weapons) at all times, regardless of whether or not a proper permit has been issued.

- Upon arrival at the scene, EMS personnel should directly ask patients if they are carrying a weapon prior to performing a physical assessment. If the patient is unable to answer, proceed with caution and assume the patient may be armed until proven otherwise
- If a weapon is present on-scene, it is recommended that a Law Enforcement official be present to secure the weapon
- Injured Law Enforcement officers should have their weapon secured, preferably by another Law Enforcement officer, but by EMS if necessary, prior to assessment and transport by EMS
- If a weapon is present and the patient is altered, it is recommended that a Law Enforcement official be present to secure the weapon. Patients who are confused, in shock, or under the influence may act erratically, violently and unpredictably. This is an inherently unsafe scene, and EMS should not initiate assessment of the patient until the weapon is secured. EMS should not attempt to wrestle the weapon away from the patient unless they are in imminent, life-threatening danger and no other option exists
- Ohio is an open-carry state, but individuals without a CCW permit who are in vehicles (e.g. the ambulance or a POV) must transport their weapons in a separate, locked container to which they do not have access, or else it effectively becomes an unlicensed concealed weapon. If a weapon is present on a patient who is alert, oriented, cogent, and calm, and the weapon is open-carry, the weapon must be secured inside an ambulance lockbox
- If a weapon is present on a patient who is alert, oriented, cogent, and calm and the patient has a valid CCW, but refuses to place their weapon in the EMS lockbox, the patient is in effect refusing safe care. EMS will create a patient chart, document that the patient refused to secure their weapon and thus rendered their care unsafe, that they had medical capacity to make this choice, and were encouraged to call EMS again at any time if they changed their mind. EMS will then leave the scene without treating or transporting the patient.

- The safety of the EMS crew is paramount. Under no circumstances shall EMS assess, treat, or transport a patient who is armed with a deadly weapon, even if it is holstered
- The training of EMS personnel in the safe handling and use of firearms lockboxes in squads is a departmental and municipal decision. If EMS does secure a patient's weapon inside an ambulance lockbox, that weapon shall go with the patient and the crew to the hospital. When EMS arrives at the hospital, the weapon shall be transferred to hospital Protective Services' lockbox, where it will remain for the duration of the patient's stay
- Caution is advised due to the many types of weapons and the handler's ability to modify them
- When transporting a patient to the hospital who was previously armed, please inform the receiving facility that a weapon has been found on the patient. This will allow enough time for hospital Protective Services to arrive and safely secure the weapon