



**BCAS
POLICY**

Policy:

**PROTECTING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE
ADULTS UNDER A PATIENT’S CARE**

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Approved by: Chief Operating Officer

Area: Patients - General

Policyholder: Vice President,
Corporate Policy and Planning

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Purpose

Paramedics frequently provide emergency health services to patients caring for children or vulnerable adults. In many cases, paramedics may have to transport the child’s or vulnerable adult’s present caregiver to hospital. Paramedics can comfort patients, and protect children and vulnerable adults, by ensuring that either another appropriate caregiver or an agency will look after children or vulnerable adults. Therefore, paramedics must transport a patient’s children and vulnerable adults with the patient to hospital or arrange for the care and supervision of any children or vulnerable adults.

Definitions

In this policy:

child	“Child” means an individual under 19 years old.
vulnerable adult	“Vulnerable adult” means an individual 19 years or older who receives assistance in performing the normal activities of daily living or who is unable to provide for his or her own care or protection.

Policy

Paramedics and dispatchers must arrange for the supervision of a child or vulnerable adult under the care or the supervision of an adult patient when there is no other adult caregiver available.

A. MINIMUM CARE AND AGE REQUIREMENTS

- (1) Paramedics and supervisors must not leave children or vulnerable adults under the care of a patient unattended.
- (2) Despite section A(1), children may be temporarily left alone if the paramedics are confident that the child's age, maturity, and level of development demonstrates an ability to care for themselves.
- (3) Paramedics must not, under any circumstances and despite section A(2), leave children under 12 years of age unattended.

B. PATIENT-MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CARE

- (1) If an adult patient is competent and a resulting delay in transport
 - (a) does not compromise the patient's health, paramedics must ask the patient to arrange for the care of a child or a vulnerable adult, or
 - (b) compromises the patient's health, paramedics must obtain advice from the patient to make arrangements for the child or vulnerable adult.

C. WHEN PATIENT UNABLE TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CARE

- (1) If an adult patient is unable to arrange for a child's or vulnerable adult's care, paramedics may leave the child or vulnerable adult in the care of an alternate caregiver if
 - (a) the alternate caregiver is a parent or an immediate family member who lives in the same residence as the child or vulnerable adult,
 - (b) the alternate caregiver is able and willing to assume care,
 - (c) the alternate caregiver is able to produce photo identification or is capable of verifying his or her identity to paramedics' satisfaction, and
 - (d) the child or vulnerable adult does not object to being taken care of by the alternate caregiver.
- (2) Where a child or vulnerable adult objects to, or appears uncomfortable with, an alternate caregiver, paramedics may choose not to hand over care to the alternate caregiver. An objection or an appearance of discomfort indicating a possible safety risk is a valid basis for not choosing an alternate caregiver.
- (3) In all cases where paramedics leave a child or vulnerable adult with an alternate caregiver, paramedics must record the caregiver's full name, relationship to the child or vulnerable adult, and the type of identification used to verify identity, on the patient's Patient Care Report.

- (4) If an adult patient is unable to arrange for the care of a child or a vulnerable adult and no alternate caregiver is available, or where paramedics are in doubt about the suitability of alternate caregivers, paramedics must:
 - (a) ask the child or vulnerable adult for the name and phone number of other possible alternate caregivers;
 - (b) request that a supervisor attend and make arrangements for care;
 - (c) call the Ministry of Children and Family Development at 310-1234 or the police for assistance in arranging care for a child; and
 - (d) call the police or a regional health authority for assistance in arranging care for a vulnerable adult.
- (5) In cases where a patient's medical condition prevents paramedics from immediately arranging care, paramedics and dispatchers must transport the child or the vulnerable adult with the patient.
- (6) When admitting a patient to hospital, paramedics must ensure that hospital staff acknowledge and confirm that the patient has been brought to the hospital with a child or a vulnerable adult. Paramedics must record the name of the hospital employee who makes this acknowledgement on the Patient Care Report.