

MITCHELL POLICE DIVISION

CHAPTER 19

RESPONSE TO INJURIES OR CONFIRMED DEATHS

19.1 EMERGENCY UNIT RESPONSE TO INJURIES OR CONFIRMED DEATHS

- A. The purpose of this policy is to set forth specific guidelines to be followed in the response to injuries or confirmed deaths within Mitchell. Over a period of time it has been observed that in certain cases emergency units responding to calls involving known or suspected deaths have inadvertently and unintentionally compromised the integrity of a potential crime scene. With different agencies potentially responding to the same call, the possibility of altering or destroying valuable criminal evidence exists, and other problems with scene control have arisen as well. Not just law enforcement, but every agency involved in emergency response must bear partial responsibility for assuring that death scenes are preserved and controlled for subsequent investigative efforts. While it is clearly understood that the primary goal of each responding agency is the preservation of life, consideration must also be given to the events and circumstances surrounding an unattended death, in the event the death is by other than natural causes.
- B. This Standard Operating Procedure is specifically intended to deal with calls dispatched as "Possible DOA", "Confirmed DOA", "Unknown Problem", or any other similar dispatch message dealing with a potential death scene. As it is impossible to predict every possible incident where an unattended death may occur, this policy is intended to cover the broad spectrum of circumstances wherein emergency units respond to scenes where a person is found deceased or near death.
- C. Under no circumstances will this policy diminish the role of emergency units in rendering necessary life saving measures to those in need of those measures. Rather, it is intended to set forth specific guidelines to follow to not only preserve life, but to preserve crime scenes, in order to enhance the investigation which follows each unattended death.