

Catawba County Emergency Medical Services

Forcible Entry

On occasion, we are confronted with the situation of being locked out of a house where there is a patient inside.

If you can confirm a patient is inside a locked structure and they cannot allow you access due to a condition you may force entry into the structure. You do not have to wait for law enforcement.

- There are some considerations to make in these cases:
 - Is there a life safety issue?
 - Any reasonable suspicion or confirmation that the patient is injured is an indication to force entry.
 - Types of confirmation?
 - C-MED tells you that they have talked to the patient and the patient is immobile on the floor or injured and cannot allow access.
 - If you can see a patient immobile on the floor.
- Items you should consider before forcibly entering a structure
 - Possibly have C-MED patch you and the patient together via phone. **DO NOT ALLOW THE CONNECTION TO BE BROKEN UNTIL YOU PHYSICALLY REACH THE PATIENT.** Remember, we do not want to lose an established line of contact with the patient.
 - If you or the dispatcher can talk to the patient, let the patient know that you are forcing entry. This is especially helpful if the patient is confused.
 - Remember your own **SAFETY FIRST!!** You cannot care for others if you do not take care of yourself. If you think a patient is armed and will defend their property, **DO NOT** force entry! Wait for law enforcement and contact the shift supervisor.
 - Do as little damage as possible (i.e. Break a window versus kicking in a door).
 - An incident report should be submitted any time we force entry into a structure. Include the reason for forcing entry and a description of any damage that occurred.
- When possible, make reasonable efforts to secure the structure prior to leaving. If you are unable to secure the structure, contact the on-duty Shift Supervisor or local law enforcement for assistance.