

Catawba County Emergency Medical Services

Weapons Encountered During Patient Care

This policy explains procedures which must be followed when an EMS employee encounters a weapon during the course of treatment or transport of an EMS patient. This is intended to provide guidance to personnel in the event of such an encounter.

- A lawfully armed person will often tell an EMS employee about the presence of a weapon before the employee discovers it. If an EMS employee becomes aware that a patient might be armed (i.e., seeing the weapon, holster clips, magazines, etc.), the EMS employee should ask the patient if he or she is armed. A patient who acknowledges being armed before being moved to the ambulance should be instructed to leave the weapon at the residence or somewhere secure at the scene.
 - If the patient refuses to leave the weapon, EMS employees should calmly evacuate the area and request law enforcement assistance.
 - Placing a knowingly armed patient in an ambulance is strictly prohibited.
- If the patient is an on duty law enforcement officer that is sick or injured, another law enforcement officer should be asked to take custody of the officer's weapon(s) until the patient is able to get the weapon(s) back.
- EMS employees who encounter weapons not acknowledged by a patient must exercise sound judgment.
 - Firearms found in a holster are best left in the holster in which they are found. The holster containing the firearm may be removed and placed in a secure location in the ambulance (such as the medvault).
 - Depending on the patient condition and attitude or the EMS employee's lack of comfort with the weapon, an EMS employee may stop and request law enforcement assistance wherever they are located. EMS employees may also take other well-considered actions, including evacuation of themselves from the vicinity of the armed person.
- Upon arrival at the hospital, the weapon must be left in the ambulance and the ambulance completely secured. Law enforcement must be contacted to meet one of the EMS employees at the ambulance, be briefed on the situation, and then transfer the custody to law enforcement.