



STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE

OPERATIONS

PATIENT CONCEALED CARRY

Effective: April 1, 2014

Revised: 28/Dec/2020

S.O.G. #: O-340

Page: 1 of 2



1.0 Objective:

- 1.1 The purpose of this Guideline is to establish best practice procedures for Fire Department personnel to safely handle incidents involving patients who, under the law, may be legally carrying a concealed firearm. The intent of this Guideline is to reduce the potential risk of injury to emergency responders, healthcare personnel and the general public.

2.0 Responsibility:

- 2.1 It is the responsibility of all Department personnel to understand the procedures documented in this Standard Operating Guideline.
- 2.2 Highland Park Fire Department buildings and vehicles are designated as “Prohibited Areas” under the CCA. Firearms will not be allowed in a Highland Park Fire Department ambulance or other vehicle, except when in the possession of an on-duty law enforcement officer that is not a patient and except as provided in this Guideline.

3.0 Definitions:

- 3.1 CCA - the Illinois Firearm Concealed Carry Act, 430 ILCS 66/1 *et seq.*
- 3.2 Concealed Firearm - A loaded or unloaded handgun carried on or about a person completely or mostly concealed from view of the public or on or about a person within a vehicle.
- 3.3 Lock Box - A secure steel box with a lock designed to safeguard handheld firearms.

4.0 General Guidelines:

- 4.1 Highland Park Fire Department Personnel should anticipate that any patient may have a concealed firearm, and, therefore, all necessary precautions need to be taken to ensure scene safety. Personnel should never approach a patient who appears threatening; in such instances, law enforcement shall be called to secure the scene. Ideally patients will self-disclose that they are in possession of a concealed firearm. However, patients may choose not to disclose or may not be able to disclose that they have a concealed firearm. Upon discovery or disclosure of a concealed firearm, the best practice is to have Highland Park Police personnel secure any and all firearms. In the event there is no Highland Park police officer available to respond to the scene before the patient enters a Department vehicle, the following procedures are to be followed.

5.0 Procedures:

- 5.1 Fire Department Personnel should always assume that firearms are loaded.
- 5.2 The Highland Park Police Department shall be the first choice for removing and handling firearms from victims who are impaired, unconscious, or unable to remove it themselves.
- 5.3 Inform the patient that the City is prohibited by state law to allow concealed firearms in the Department vehicle because the vehicle is a “Prohibited Area.”
- 5.4 Patients who are alert and oriented should be directed to leave their concealed firearm(s) in a secure location within a home or business prior to transport, if possible. In the alternative, if there is a third party present who may legally take possession of the firearm(s), patients should be asked to leave the concealed firearm(s) with that person. Patients should be informed that Department vehicles are “Prohibited Areas”.
- 5.5 Certain Fire Department vehicles will be equipped with a lock box. The lock box may be used to safely secure a firearm from a patient only when there is no other legal means by which the patient may leave their firearm in a secure location or with persons authorized to take possession of the firearm, and when law enforcement personnel are not able to respond to the scene prior to entry of the patient into a Department vehicle.



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Page: 2 of 2




- 5.6 Police personnel shall be summoned to secure all scenes involving persons who threaten themselves or others before emergency care is initiated.
- 5.7 Fire Department Personnel may remove firearms from the person of unconscious patients only when law enforcement personnel are not immediately available. Firearms that are holstered shall remain in the holster and both the firearm and holster/belt will be placed in the lock box. The lock box will then be safely stowed in an outside compartment of the ambulance, and that compartment door shall be locked.
- 5.8 Once the firearm is safely secured in the lock box, only Highland Park Police personnel are authorized to open the compartment and lock box, or to take custody of the firearm.
- 5.9 Weapons that are secured in the lock box should be retrieved by a Highland Park Police Officer at either the hospital, fire station, police station, or other location convenient for the responding officer. Fire Department vehicles that have a firearm secured in a lock box shall make every effort possible to have it removed as soon as possible by Highland Park Police personnel. In instances where this is not possible, Battalion-33 will exchange an empty lock box for the lock box containing the firearm. Battalion-33 will then make arrangements to have Highland Park Police personnel take custody of the firearm.
- 5.10 If a concealed firearm is discovered during transport to the hospital, the vehicle will make a complete stop, at which time the firearm will be placed in the lock box. Under no circumstance shall the firearm be removed from the person of a patient while the vehicle is in motion.
- 5.11 If Fire Department must handle a firearm, the firearm is to be handled with extreme care and shall not be pointed towards any individual. Under no circumstance will Fire Department Personnel attempt to "clear" the chamber or unload any firearms.
- 5.12 Once the patient is transferred to the hospital emergency room, patients will be provided with contact information from Department personnel regarding how and where to retrieve their firearm.
- 5.13 This Guideline applies with equal force to Fire Department personnel responding to an incident through the Department's Mutual and Auto Aid agreements.
- 5.14 Family members of transported patients who are concealing and carrying a firearm may not enter Department vehicles.

6.0 Documentation:

- 6.0 The chain of custody of any firearm must be documented from the time of Fire Department possession to Police custody of the firearm. A Department approved informational form will be left with the patient, which will include contact information for procedures required to retrieve the firearm.

7.0 References:

- 7.1 On July 9, 2013, Public Act 98-63, the CCA became state law (430 ILCS 66). You may view the full text of the law at: <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/98/PDF/098-0063.pdf>.

Approved:  Fire Chief