

How to Handle Medical Situations

As promised, here is the new How to Handle Medical Situations policy. It is based on staff discussions and coordinator input. It will replace the medical situation policy in the Volunteer Manual and other publications. We suggest that you print it, go over it with volunteers and place it in a highly visible (TO VOLUNTEERS ONLY) location.

There are some medical situations that a guests and volunteers may feel comfortable handling themselves, such as, for example, taking temperatures and administering adult or infant Tylenol. But if a guest or volunteer is unsure of what to do, here's what we suggest:

- **Calling 911**

The volunteer, not guest, calls 911. (Sometimes the guest will call anyway, but this is to be discouraged. If the situation is not critical (determined by the paramedics) request that the guest be transported to University Hospital. University Hospital should not bill your congregation for emergency room services (see below for further explanation). If the situation is critical, the paramedics will probably take the guest to the nearest emergency room regardless of anyone's preferences.

- **Arranging for childcare -**

If the children don't (or can't) accompany their parents to the hospital, ideally the parent should try and reach an emergency contact (listed on the census) to let them know they may need to come and get the children within 2 hours. If the parent is unable to make this call, a volunteer should do it. The emergency contact should be told to bring identification and be informed that we won't release the children to anyone other than the emergency contact, or in lieu of that person, another person bringing BOTH a note from the emergency contact AND the emergency contact's driver license or other form of official identification (state-issued ID, utility bill). Tell the emergency contact that, if either of these possibilities can't be met, IHN staff will make other arrangements for the children.

On arrival, the emergency contact must show ID, as mentioned before, and be in stable condition to get the children. If you're uncomfortable with his/her condition, call the IHN on-call number, 325-4547, regarding what to do.

- If the emergency contact cannot be reached by either the guest or a volunteer, call the IHN on-call person, 325-4547, and we'll handle arrangements for the children.
- Tell guests that, once they're seen at the hospital, they should call a volunteer, who will want to know if the doctor is thinking of keeping the guest overnight, or is considering releasing him or her within several hours. If the volunteer is comfortable with giving the guest a cell phone number, that might be the easiest way to

communicate in order to get a time frame. Be sure and get the guest's cell phone prior to their going to the hospital. Remind the guest to keep emergency contacts apprised of what's going on.

- Return transportation -

If the guest doesn't arrange this with a spouse, relative, or emergency contact, etc., here are the options:

Return transportation from University Hospital -

The hospital is partially funded through the Hamilton County Indigent Care Levy, and, as such, doesn't bill uninsured or underinsured Hamilton County residents. In addition, the hospital has a well-established charity program and provides cabs and fare at no charge to IHN for return transportation to the congregation. If, for some reason, the hospital staff needs reminding of this, the guest should ask to see a social worker there.

Return transportation from a hospital other than University Hospital -

Because other area hospitals do not have well-established charity programs, it's possible that cab arrangements and fare will not be provided free of charge to IHN. This is one reason we encourage the use of University Hospital, as well as the fact that it's an excellent hospital and our IHN medical personnel are all practitioners there. In this case, a volunteer, NOT THE GUEST, should call Towne Taxi for return transport. IHN has an account with Towne, phone number 761-7700. **VERY IMPORTANT** - Please do not give this number to any guest or let any guest know that IHN has an account with Towne Taxi.

ALSO VERY IMPORTANT - We strongly advise volunteers NOT to transport guests to or from the hospital for several reasons: the possibility of a medical emergency, particularly on the way, and safety and liability.