

Southern Illinois Regional EMS System

A-23 DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN

Overview:

- Children who live at or visit drug-production sites or are present during drug production face a variety of health and safety risks including:
 - Absorption or ingestion of toxic chemicals, drugs, or contaminated foods
 - Fires and explosions
 - Abuse and neglect
 - Hazardous lifestyle related to the presence of booby traps, firearms, code violations, and poor ventilation
- According to Illinois law: (Section 325 ILCS 5/5) (from Ch. 23, par. 2055):
 - “An officer of a local law enforcement agency, designated employee of the Department, or a physician treating a child may take or retain temporary custody of the child without the consent of the person responsible for the child’s welfare, if (1) he has reason to believe that the child cannot be cared for at home or in the custody of the person responsible for the child’s welfare without endangering the child’s health and welfare”.

Pre-hospital Medical Protocols:

- (Based on the National Protocol for Medical Evaluation of Children Found in Drug Labs):
- If EMS responds to the scene of a potential drug lab situation:
 - Ensure scene safety
 - Contact local law enforcement
 - If law enforcement is unavailable:
 - Contact medical control for permission to retain any and all children in protective custody.
- If there is an explosion, obvious chemical exposure, active lab, or child appears ill:
 - Treat per System protocol and transport immediately.
- Decontamination of the child should occur prior to transport:
 - Minimum requirements of decontamination are:
 - Removal of clothing
 - Cleansing of skin and hair
 - Place in new clothing
 - The child’s clothing and personal belongings should remain at the scene in the custody of law enforcement for evidence.
- If the patient assessment is unremarkable at the scene, contact Medical Control for:
 - Release of the child into police custody.
 - Law enforcement should sign the run report to indicate he/she has taken the child into their custody.
 - Medical control may elect to transport the patient for examination in the Emergency Department.