

## **West Penn Allegheny Health System**

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### **Medical Direction Practice Policy:**

Medical Directors are to apply “Just Culture” principles when managing the behaviors, attitudes, decisions, and mistakes of prehospital providers who are under the command of the West Penn Allegheny Health System.

“Just Culture” principles help to differentiate provider actions and your response based upon the following distinctions.

1. Can the action be defined as “Human Error”?
  - a. Defined as:
    - i. A slip, lapse, mistake, or inadvertent action.
  - b. Medical Director response:
    - i. Console the provider.
    - ii. Educate the provider.
2. Can the action be defined as “At-risk Behavior”?
  - a. Defined as:
    - i. A choice that increases risk for the patient, provider, service, and/or system.
  - b. Medical Director response:
    - i. Coach the provider.
    - ii. Educate the provider.
    - iii. Monitor the provider through regular quality assurance.
3. Can the action be defined as “A Reckless Choice”?
  - a. Defined as:
    - i. A conscious disregard leading to substantial and unjustifiable risk.
  - b. Medical Director response:
    - i. Timely appropriate punitive action or consequence for the provider.
      1. Sample consequences can include:
        - a. Completion or participation in the development of a continuing education program addressing the issue. The program should reinforce the need for the provider and others to avoid such actions in the future.
        - b. Completion of a probationary period.
        - c. Temporary suspension.
        - d. Loss of command.
      - ii. Educate the provider.
      - iii. Monitor the provider through regular quality assurance.

Medical Directors should remember the following points when dealing with such situations:

1. Maintain self-control. Take a brief “time out” and don’t jump to conclusions.
2. Research all events carefully.
3. Respond in a timely fashion, delays only weaken the impact of your decision.
4. Make your response appropriate based upon the above criteria.
  - a. Console or re-direct.
  - b. Educate.
  - c. Apply consequences.
  - d. Monitor (Quality Assurance).

References:

K. Scott Griffith. “Error Prevention in a Just Culture System Design or Human Behavior?” The Joint Commission Perspectives on Patient Safety, June 2010, Issue 6, Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, Copyright 2010.

Institute of Medicine: “To Err is Human: Rebuilding a Safer Health System  
Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1999.