



American College of
Emergency Physicians®

ADVANCING EMERGENCY CARE 

POLICY STATEMENT

Approved January 2017

Emergency Physicians' Patient Care Responsibilities Outside the Emergency Department

Reaffirmed January 2017, April 2011, September 2005 and March 1997

Originally approved as a policy statement August 1992, replacing Council Resolution titled "Relationship Between the Emergency Department and the Critical Care Unit" approved March 1977

The emergency physician's principal legal and ethical responsibility is to patients who present to be seen and treated in the emergency department. ACEP believes that:

- An emergency physician must be available at all times to respond to emergency department patients in a timely and safe manner.
- It is the responsibility of the hospital administration and the organized medical staff to assure adequate medical care for those emergency situations that occur in other hospital departments and areas.
- Hospital medical emergency response plans and teams should be organized in a manner that is not reliant upon an emergency physician unless the emergency department and its patients' medical needs can be safely provided for at all times.
- Emergency physicians shall have adequate legal protection when responding to in-hospital emergencies outside the emergency department.