

EMS

Emergency Medical Services

EMS Administrative Services Plan Frequently Asked Questions

Table of Contents

- 1.0 Health Information**
- 2.0 Patients**
- 3.0 Minors**
- 4.0 Family Members/Friends**
- 5.0 Bystanders**
- 6.0 EMS Practitioners**
- 7.0 Dispatch**
- 8.0 Other Health Care Professionals**
- 9.0 Law Enforcement**
- 10.0 Fire Department**

Question		Answer
1.0 Health Information	1.1 Is patient name considered identifiable health information?	Yes, a patient name as well as contact information is considered identifiable health information when it is supplied to receive health services.
	1.2 Is the event number/ PCR number considered identifiable health information?	No, the event number/PCR number is not considered identifiable health information.
	1.3 Is response time considered identifiable health information?	No, the response time is not considered identifiable health information.
	1.4 Is information about drivers/passengers of vehicles considered identifiable health information?	No, information about drivers/passengers of vehicles is not considered to be identifiable health information. Once EMS provides the drivers/passengers with medical treatment, then their PCR information would be considered health information.
	1.5 Is all information that a patient provides during a medical history considered identifiable health information?	Yes, all information that a patient provides during a medical history is considered identifiable health information. This includes such information as, "I had three drinks today."
	1.6 What is classified as diagnostic, treatment and care information under the Health Information Act?	Diagnostic, treatment and care information includes; physical and mental health of individual, a health service provided to an individual or a drug provided to an individual.
	1.7 Which parts of the patient care report (PCR) are covered by HIA and which are covered by FOIP?	Any patient registration or diagnostic, treatment and care information is covered under HIA. Response times are covered under FOIP. If in doubt, consider it patient information and covered under HIA.
	1.8 What is the difference between sharing health information and disclosing health information?	You use or share health information within the arena of Alberta Health Services facilities, such as EMS to hospitals (all AHS custodians and affiliates). Disclosure or release of health information happens outside the AHS arena, such as EMS to Law Enforcement.

Question		Answer
2.0 Patients	2.1 We are obligated to notify patients about the collection of their information. Will posters be available in different languages?	No. The Act states that you must take “reasonable steps” to notify patients about the collection of their information. Because it would be difficult to print the posters in many different languages, it is best to use interpreter services provided through dispatch if a patient doesn’t speak English and has questions about the information they are providing.
	2.2 If patients have a reasonable expectation of privacy, can I still transport two or more patients in the same ambulance?	Yes. Usually, it is because of operational circumstances that we would transport more than one patient in the ambulance. Do the best you can to maintain confidentiality, but understand that it may not be possible in this circumstance.
	2.3 What if a patient doesn’t want to give me their information?	You can try to obtain information from a family member, friend, bystander, etc. Otherwise, we can only provide the best treatment with the information we have.
	2.4 What is the least amount of information I need to collect for billing?	You should fill out all applicable portions of the PCR. Finance staff have many ways of billing patients. If they have an Alberta Blue Cross number, AISH number or band name/treaty number, these patients will likely not receive a bill.
	2.5 What information am I authorized to <u>verbally give</u> to a patient?	You can tell a patient what they need to know in relation to the treatment that you provided. In particular, if they require the information for timely care. For example: If attending to a treat and release patient, and the patient requests what medication was administered (for family doctor follow-up care) you can tell them.
	2.6 Can a patient have a copy of their PCR?	Yes. The patient must submit a written request to the local EMS/AHS Records Department to obtain a copy of the PCR. It would be recommended that they use the AHS access request form.
	2.7 Is there a fee for obtaining a copy of the PCR?	Yes. There is a standard fee of \$25.00 for obtaining records. This fee may be waived based on financial circumstances or if it is deemed reasonable to waive fees in the specific circumstance.

	Question	Answer
3.0 Minors	3.1 What privacy rights do minors have under the Health Information Act?	A mature minor has the same right of privacy as an adult. The determination of a mature minor is granted on a case-by-case basis. Under the Health Information Act, if the individual is under 18 years and understands the nature of the treatment and the consequences of their decisions, then they could be declared a mature minor and capable of exercising their own rights.
	3.2 If I attend to a minor, do I have to call their parents?	Yes, unless mature minor status has been determined. All situations are managed on a case-by-case basis. If you believe that the patient has the capacity to make an informed decision and understands the risks and benefits of their actions, you should abide by their wishes.
	3.3 If I attend to a minor, would I be authorized to call police?	You would call police under the same circumstances you would now call police. If you believe there is imminent danger or a possible commission of an offense AND there is a safety risk to the patient or others, you would contact police.
	3.4 Can I <u>disclose</u> information to parents if they request health information about their minor child?	Yes, you can disclose the health information of minor children to their parents. However, if you feel that the patient is a mature minor, and has the capacity to make an informed decision in relation to the disclosure of their health information, then consent should be obtained from the mature minor prior to disclosing information to their parents. Alternatively, if the parents are providing continuing care for the minor, you can provide them with information that they would need to know, without the consent of the minor. Circumstances should reasonably support the disclosure.
	3.5 Does a minor have the right to ask me to withhold information from their parents?	Yes. If you believe the minor has the capacity to make an informed decision, you should not disclose the information to the parents without the mature minor's consent.

	Question	Answer
	3.6 Does the minor need to sign a written consent form to disclose information to parents or is verbal consent sufficient?	We can disclose information to parents without written consent. However, if the minor indicates that they do not want information disclosed to their parents, we would have to make a judgment in relation to the minor's capacity to make an informed decision in relation to their rights under the HIA.
	3.7 If I pick up a 13-year-old who has been drinking and doing drugs, do I have the right to contact the parents? In the absence of parental consent, can the minor refuse our services?	You can reasonably assume in this situation that the minor does NOT have the capacity to make an informed decision and you could therefore contact the parents. The minor also would not have the capacity to refuse treatment – therefore, would need to be transported unless the parents agreed to no transport. If transport is refused, you should enlist the help of police, doctors, etc. to ensure that the minor patient is transported.
	3.8 Can we disclose health information to an older sibling (not an adult) about their younger sibling?	Normally health information can only be disclosed to a parent, guardian, trustee or legal representative. Exceptions to this provision would allow for disclosure to an older sibling where there is imminent harm to the patient.

	Question	Answer
4.0 Family Members/Friends	4.1 When a family member or friend asks where their relative/friend was transferred, can I tell them?	Yes. The only time you would not be able to disclose this information is if the patient specifically requested that no information is to be released.
	4.2 When a family member or friend asks what happened to their relative/friend, can I tell them?	Yes. The only time you would not be able to disclose this information is if the patient specifically requested that no information is to be disclosed. Information disclosed should be in general terms and only in relation to the presence, location, condition (such as good, fair, stable & critical) and progress on the day the information is being disclosed.

Question	Answer
<p>4.3 Can a family member/friend request a PCR copy?</p>	<p>No, only the patient or their legal representative can request PCR information. Any other disclosure would be with written patient consent.</p>
<p>4.4 Can a family member/friend request information about the call, not the patient?</p>	<p>Yes. You may disclose information about the call, as long as you do not disclose identifying health information about the patient or third party information about someone else. You could disclose information such as; arrival time of EMS unit, general location information (not specific address), and confirmation of hospital transport (or advise of treat & release).</p>

	Question	Answer
<p>5.0 Bystanders</p>	<p>5.1 If a bystander has provided medical assistance to a patient before our arrival, can I tell them where we will be transporting the patient and what their condition is prior to transport?</p>	<p>No, you cannot disclose this information to a bystander. The Health Information Act has only set out guidelines to disclose information if the bystander identified themselves as a family member or friend. Once identified as a family member or friend, the information disclosed should be in general terms and only in relation to the presence, location, condition (good, fair, stable or critical) and progress.</p>

Question	Answer
----------	--------

		Question	Answer
6.0 EMS Practitioners	6.1	Is an EMS practitioner a custodian or an affiliate?	Alberta Health Services is the custodian and the EMS practitioner is an affiliate of the custodian. Affiliates are employees, contracted agents, ambulance attendants, contractors, volunteers, ride-alongs and students working with a custodian.
	6.2	Is everyone that has an Alberta College of Paramedics (ACP) registration number in Alberta governed by the HIA? Or does it depend which organization I work for? (First Nations Reserve, STARS)	No, everyone that has an ACP registration number is NOT governed by the HIA. It does depend which organization you work for. If you are working for an EMS service which provides either direct delivery or contracted service to AHS, you will be governed by the HIA. Other providers, such as First Nations Reserves are not subject to HIA.
	6.3	Is the Alberta College of Paramedics governed by HIA?	No, ACP is governed by FOIP.
	6.4	Am I governed by the HIA if I attend to a patient while I am not working?	No, you are not governed by HIA when you are not working. You only fall under this legislation when you are fulfilling your duty as an employee or affiliate of AHS.
	6.5	At what point on a call does HIA come into play?	You would begin to deal with HIA when you start collecting or receiving “identifiable” health information.
	6.6	If a patient asks, do I have to give them my full name?	Normally you would provide this information as the patient is entitled to know who treated them. However, circumstance may dictate that you should not disclose your full name, such as when the release of your name is a health and safety issue (i.e. patient threatens your life)
	6.7	Will the Records Department disclose my name upon receipt of an authorized request?	Yes, in most circumstances the Records Department will disclose your name. The only time they would not provide this information would be if doing so could cause harm to you or our organization
	6.8	Can I share ambulance cost information with a patient if they ask?	You may tell patients that there is a response fee, as well as a transport fee; however, your primary concern is providing appropriate medical care. If they have concerns with a bill following the call, they can contact the local EMS Department.

Question	Answer
6.9 When can I disclose information without patient consent to other organizations outside AHS?	You may disclose information to other organizations when it is necessary for continuing patient care. You would only disclose the information they require for continuing care.
6.10 If I report a child in need to the authorities, is my name kept confidential?	Yes. Under the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act, your privacy is protected and your name would be kept confidential.
6.11 Can the media or anyone else take pictures of EMS members or patients at scenes, including public places or private residences without EMS or patient consent?	Yes. Although we have a duty to protect the privacy of patients, we have no authority to stop someone from taking photographs or filming at the scene. EMS only has control of this privacy issue when the patient is in their controlled arena such as in an ambulance. If they are interfering with patient treatment, ask them to stop, if they don't it is suggested that police be contacted.
6.12 Can I take a picture at a scene?	Check with your local EMS Zone Operations Office. If a picture is taken, it becomes a part of the PCR and needs to be managed as such. Therefore, it would not be disclosed at the scene, but may be provided after the fact in accordance with when a PCR would be disclosed. If a patient is captured in the image, written consent must be obtained for uses other than as part of the PCR health information.
6.13 What is a privacy breach under the Health information Act?	Under HIA, a breach is defined as an inappropriate access, use or disclosure of personal or health information (unintentional or intentional). Common breach examples include: inappropriate access into patient information (snooping), looking up your own health information or that of a colleague, members of management or other AHS staff members, family members, friends, friends of friends, and people featured in the media. Your supervisor is to be notified immediately in the event of a privacy breach, and you may contact the Privacy Intake line at 1-877-476-9874.
6.14 What is the fine for a privacy breach?	Under the HIA, fines for privacy breaches may be as much as \$50,000 for an individual and \$500,000 for an organization. Under FOIP, fines may be as much as \$10,000.

Question		Answer
6.15	What should I do if I find a PCR that is not mine at an AHS hospital?	If you find a PCR that is not yours at an AHS hospital, check with the Triage Nurse to see if it is associated with one of their patients. If not, call your Supervisor to have it returned to your local EMS Zone Operations Office. This would be classified as an internal (to AHS) breach of privacy and would need to be reported and investigated.
6.16	What should I do if I find a PCR that is not mine, at a facility outside AHS?	If you find a PCR that is not yours, at a facility outside AHS, call your Supervisor to have it returned to your local EMS Zone Operations Office. It would be classified as an external (to AHS) breach of privacy and would need to be reported and investigated.

Question		Answer
7.0 Dispatch	7.1 When a family member or friend calls to ask where their relative/friend was transferred can I tell them?	Yes, unless the patient specifically requested that no information is to be disclosed.
	7.2 When a family member or friend calls to ask what happened to their relative/friend, can I tell them?	Yes, unless the patient specifically requested that, no information be disclosed. You would only disclose in general terms and only in relation to the presence, location, condition (good, fair, stable or critical) and progress on the day the information is being disclosed.

Question	Answer
----------	--------

	Question	Answer
8.0 Other Health Care Professionals	8.1 What information can I share with receiving doctors and other health care providers at AHS facilities, without the consent of the individual?	At an AHS facility you may share all your PCR information (PCR copy to be provided) for the purpose of providing a health service to the patient.
	8.2 What information can I disclose to a service provider at a shelter or remand center (non AHS) if I treat and transport the patient there?	Without patient consent, you may disclose only the health information that they “Need to Know” for the purpose of providing continuity of care. You wouldn’t give them a copy of the PCR.
	8.3 What information can I disclose to a service provider upon transport of a patient from a facility to another facility?	As you are transferring the patient to another custodian under the HIA, you must leave a copy of your PCR for the patient file.
	8.4 If a patient states that they don’t want me to share their information with the receiving doctor, what should I do?	In this circumstance, you must consider the patient’s request. If the doctor requires information for continuing care you may share it without the consent of the patient.
	8.5 When a patient is in a correctional facility or is a prisoner under the custody of a Law Enforcement Agency, can I disclose their health information for providing health services?	You may disclose information without patient consent for the purpose of providing a health service to a patient or for the continuity of care.
	8.6 If a patient needs to be transported by air (i.e. Alpine Helicopter or Medivac), can I disclose information to the transport company?	Yes, you can disclose information to the transport company for the purpose of providing continuing care. If the company is under contract with AHS to provide service, you could also share information with them based on the fact that they are an affiliate of AHS and they require the information to do their job.
	8.7 If I am exposed to the blood/body fluids of someone, can the hospital tell me if that person has an infectious disease or is this betraying the patient’s confidentiality?	No, you will not be advised, but hospital staff will treat you according to their knowledge of the patient’s condition, and determine if the risk to you of exposure to infection is high. Other specific medical acts address this issue and have different qualifiers for safeguarding of Health Service Providers (such as Public Health Act).

	Question	Answer
9.0 Law Enforcement	9.1 Are police services custodians or affiliates under the Health Information Act?	All police services are considered external agencies.
	9.2 On a call with police, what billing information can I disclose?	<p>Normally you would not disclose billing information. However, circumstances may dictate that you may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to locate a friend or family member of the patient • If there is imminent harm or danger • If there exists a possible commission of an offense AND the disclosure will protect the health and safety of Albertans. In this instance you may only disclose relevant data and patient name, date of birth, general nature of injury or illness, date and location that health service was sought and whether samples of bodily substances were taken.
	9.3 A patient is being treated by EMS at the scene of an accident prior to the attendance of police. EMS forms the opinion that the patient is intoxicated by alcohol and that he intends to drive a vehicle away from the scene. Can I disclose this information to police?	Yes, EMS can notify and/or disclose relevant information to police as the patient's upcoming driving poses an imminent danger to other drivers and the harm is urgent and immediate. Another disclosure to police would be authorized as the incident is a possible commission of an offence, AND the disclosure will protect the health and safety of Albertans. Relevant information can be released as well as patient's name, date of birth, nature of any illness or injury suffered (in general terms), date service provided, location of service and whether any samples of bodily substances were taken from the individual.
	9.4 EMS arrive on the scene of a serious vehicle collision. While treating the patient's serious injuries you smell alcohol and the patient indicates that he consumed "meth" prior to driving. Can I disclose this information to police?	Yes, disclosure to police is authorized as the information relates to the possible commission of an offense AND the disclosure would protect the health and safety of Albertans. The criminal offense could result in suspension of his driving privileges which acts not only as a deterrent to this individual, but also to other drivers; then protecting the health and safety of all Albertans. Relevant scene information, the patient's name, date of birth, nature of any illness or injury suffered (in general terms), date service provided, location of service and whether any samples of bodily substances were taken from the individual can be disclosed. You may also disclose the nature of the offence, in this case impaired driving,

Question	Answer
	to police.
<p>9.5 EMS treat an unconscious patient who is believed to have been the victim of a violent assault and possible rape. Can EMS notify police or disclose the patient's information?</p>	<p>Yes, you can proactively notify police and alert them to this situation. If the offender has not been apprehended, there is an urgent and immediate risk of harm to the patient or others which would allow for disclosure of relevant information to police. Because this incident is a possible commission of an offence, and disclosing information will protect the health and safety of Albertans, in addition to the disclosure of relevant information, EMS may also share the following information; nature of the offence (assault and possible rape), victim's name and date of birth, nature of injuries, EMS arrival details, location of scene and patient transfer site, and whether staff took any samples of bodily substances from the victim. If the police require detailed health information, they should be advised to obtain a search warrant or patient consent to get the detailed medical records.</p>
<p>9.6 In a case where I need to disclose information to police based on the fact that there may be imminent harm, do I have to ask dispatch to have them respond to the scene?</p>	<p>Most dispatch centers already take this into account by how they handle 911 calls. For example, police may automatically be sent on assault calls, or gunshot calls. If police are not on scene with you and you suspect someone might be in imminent danger, contact dispatch and they will send police immediately.</p>
<p>9.7 In a case where I do not disclose information to police based on the fact that although there is a possible commission of an offense, there is NOT a health or safety risk to Albertans, does this mean that police will never be able to get this information?</p>	<p>No, police may be able to obtain this information at a later time. Health services providers will reassess this along the course of the patient's treatment and may disclose information to police should something change. Additionally, police could always get a warrant for the information or obtain patient consent for the disclosure.</p>
<p>9.8 If I find weapons on a patient or at a scene, can I tell police?</p>	<p>You may disclose this information to police under the authority of the Emergency Health Services Act.</p>
<p>9.9 Can police seize patient belongings while you are treating on scene in a public area (such as wallet or driver's license)?</p>	<p>Police typically have the authority to seize belongings while on public property. You should note on your PCR that these possessions were seized and not transported to hospital with the patient.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>9.10 Can police seize patient belongings while the patient is being treated in an ambulance (such as wallet or driver's license)?</p>	<p>No, if EMS has the patient's property in custody, then it is their duty to safeguard it. Normally, the patient would consent and voluntarily provide requested possessions or the police would need to produce a warrant.</p>
<p><u>9.11</u> If I arrive at a motor vehicle collision before police and they ask if the patient was wearing their seatbelt can I tell them?</p>	<p>You may disclose this information to police under the authority of the Emergency Health Services Act.</p>
<p>9.119.12 ___ In cases where I'm dealing with a suicidal patient and I may need police to "Form 10" the patient, what type of information can I disclose to them?</p>	<p>Form 10 under the Mental Health Act indicates that the patient is likely to cause harm to him/herself or others and that to proceed for an apprehension warrant by way of information to provincial court may be dangerous. You may disclose limited information to police that would help them determine this.</p>
<p>9.129.13 ___ If we determined that a patient had been weaving in and out of traffic due to a diabetic condition, could we tell police?</p>	<p>Yes, if the information would avert or minimize an imminent danger to the health and safety of any person. If the diabetic patient is unconscious, his condition could be disclosed to police.</p>
<p>9.139.14 ___ If police are going to transport a patient to the hospital or take over care at a scene, can I give them any information?</p>	<p>Yes, you can disclose information to police that would allow them to continue care.</p>
<p>9.149.15 ___ Can I tell police which hospital I'll be transporting the patient to?</p>	<p>Yes. The only time you would not be able to disclose this information is if the patient specifically requested that no information is to be disclosed.</p>
<p>9.159.16 ___ If a police officer rides in the back of the ambulance to assist with patient care, is this still okay?</p>	<p>Yes. You can disclose information with them for the purpose of continuing care. If they overhear information which they would normally not receive, they are able to document it.</p>
<p>9.169.17 ___ Can I show the police officer on scene a copy of my PCR?</p>	<p>No, you can't show the police officer on scene a copy of your PCR. EMS has processes in place for police to request paperwork. They need to contact the local EMS Records Department.</p>

Question	Answer
9.179.18 Can I verbally disclose health information details to a police officer?	<p>You can tell the police officer information which is not considered health information such as names of other people at the scene and anything call-related. If police request patient information, advise them to contact the local EMS Records Department. Verbal disclosure of health information would be allowed within the exceptions of protecting the health and safety of Albertans from imminent harm and when there is the possibility of a criminal offense AND the disclosure would protect the health and safety of Albertans.</p>
9.189.19 If the police officer asks me to write a witness statement at the call, can I?	<p>You can write a witness statement at the call, however it cannot be released until a Supervisor has reviewed it. You will need to contact your Supervisor.</p>
9.199.20 What do I write in a witness statement for police?	<p>You may disclose this information to police under the authority of the Emergency Health Services Act.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of patient and other individuals • Patient Date of Birth • Nature of injury or illness, including any observation of possible impairment • Time and date of dispatch and scene attendance • Location where patient sought or received service • Scene observations • Observations of any scene disruptions • Whether any bodily substance samples were taken • <u>Transport destination</u>
9.209.21 If a police officer shows up at the station to ask me questions about a previous call, what can I tell him/her?	<p>You may disclose the above information to police under the authority of the Emergency Health Services Act.</p>
9.219.22 How does a police officer request information from the local EMS Records Department?	<p>The police officer can contact the Zone EMS Office at the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary: (403-538-7652) • Central: (403-343-4726)

Question	Answer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South: (403-529-8944) • Edmonton & North (780-496-1533)
<p>9-229.23 Does a police officer need to make a written request for PCR copies?</p>	<p>The police may get a PCR copy without patient consent by producing a court order or search warrant.</p>
<p>9-239.24 Does a police officer need to make a written request for call-related records?</p>	<p>No, this information can be given verbally as it contains no health information. A written statement of the call related records can also be provided upon request.</p>
<p>9-249.25 Does the police officer need to make a written request for witness statements?</p>	<p>No. They can ask verbally, through email or by a written request. The “Request for Personal or Health Information by a Law Enforcement Agency” form is not applicable in this case.</p>
<p>9-259.26 Does the police officer need consent from the patient in order to obtain:</p> <p>a) PCR copy b) Call-related records</p>	<p>a) Yes, the police officer requires written patient consent to obtain a PCR copy. There may be circumstances where we can disclose without consent such as imminent danger, or if there is the possible commission of an offense AND it will protect the health and safety of Albertans. The police can also produce a court order, or search warrant to obtain the information.</p> <p>b) Police do not need patient consent to obtain call-related records.</p>
<p>9-269.27 Do police need to pay for a copy of the PCR?</p>	<p>No, police do not pay a fee to receive records.</p>
<p>9-279.28 If the patient is deceased, can I leave my PCR with a police officer to give to the Medical Examiner?</p>	<p>No, under direction from the office of the Medical Examiner, EMS is not to release PCR copies on scene. Upon demand for a PCR copy, contact your Supervisor.</p> <p>If a police officer does act on behalf of the Medical Examiner, he/she has the authority to investigate the cause of death only.</p>

		Question	Answer
10.0 Fire Department	10.1	Are fire departments custodians or affiliates under the Health Information Act?	Integrated EMS/Fire departments are classified as affiliates of Alberta Health Services. Stand alone fire services are not custodians or affiliates and are considered external agencies.
	10.2	When firefighters run blood pressure clinics, or other health awareness clinics, is the information they collect governed by the HIA?	No, fire departments are governed by FOIP, and they would deal with the information they collect accordingly. The only exceptions are integrated EMS/Fire services that are governed under HIA by way of contract with AHS.
	10.3	On a call with fire, can I disclose billing information to them?	Normally, you wouldn't disclose billing information on a call with the fire department. However, circumstances may dictate that you may if there is imminent harm or danger.
	10.4	For the firefighter to write their incident report, can I disclose health information to them?	Normally, you wouldn't disclose health information on a call with the fire department. However, circumstances may dictate that you may if there is imminent harm or danger.
	10.5	Does the patient need to sign a written consent form to disclose information to the fire department or is verbal consent sufficient?	Ambulances will not carry consent forms. If a patient wants to disclose information to the fire department, they can speak with the fire department themselves. If the patient needs any information from the ambulance crew, they can ask, and then relay that information to the fire department.
	10.6	If a firefighter rides in the back of the ambulance to assist with patient care, is this still okay?	Yes. You can disclose information to them for the purpose of continuing care. If they overhear information which they would normally not receive, they are able to document it.
	10.7	Can lawyers request copies of the fire department's Incident reports?	Yes. Anyone can request any information from fire departments. Currently, most fire departments are governed by FOIP, and can therefore release information in accordance with this legislation.

Question

10.8 If a patient from a fire tells me that they caused the fire from a cigarette or other source, can I disclose this information to the fire department to aid in their investigation?

Answer

No, you do not have to release this information on scene, but you may have to disclose information to the fire investigator under the "Safety Codes Act" later. This question should be referred through your Supervisor.