

Informed Consent for Emergency Procedures

The majority of procedures done in the emergency department do not require formal written consent since they are considered standard practice. Where possible the risks and benefits should be explained to the patient, and this documented in the patient record. Procedures with greater potential risk and those more elective in nature require more detailed explanation and documentation.

Explanatory note: The role of the emergency physician has expanded to include many procedures that are now considered a routine part of emergency care and management. These procedures are performed as standard practice and do not require special written consent. The patient gives general consent to treatment in the emergency department upon registration. It is felt that in situations where a procedure that has more risk is being performed, an attempt should be made to explain the risks and benefits more thoroughly to the patient. Local hospital policy may dictate that a formal written consent be obtained for certain procedures; however, this does not substitute for physician discussion of the risk and benefits with the patient and documentation of this in the record.