



American College of  
Emergency Physicians®

ADVANCING EMERGENCY CARE 

# POLICY STATEMENT

Approved September  
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## *Understanding the Effects of Law Enforcement Presence in the Emergency Department*

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Emergency departments (EDs) should be a safe place to receive and provide emergency care. The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) acknowledges the diversity of individuals' perceptions and experiences with law enforcement and the complexities of law enforcement presence in the ED. Hospital policies and community partnerships can help eliminate barriers to care and avoid marginalization of patients. The first priority of hospitals and emergency physicians is to care for patients.

ACEP believes that:

- No legal or law enforcement process should interfere with patient care in the ED absent immediate safety threats or specific applicable laws.
- Whenever possible, law enforcement officers seeking to conduct enforcement activities inside or immediately outside of an ED should first coordinate with hospital security, hospital administration, and medical staff.
- Hospitals should partner with community groups and law enforcement agencies to develop clear and specific policies which ensure that the community can access ED evaluation free from actual or perceived deterrents.
- Patients should have the opportunity to understand their rights regarding interactions with law enforcement officers in an ED setting.
- Patient health information should be kept private and confidential as governed by state and federal law. Law enforcement officers using body-worn cameras should avoid or minimize active recording in patient care areas outside of direct interactions with a specific individual.