Adult Treatment Protocols – General Procedures

These protocols and procedures define the Adult (age 15 and over) treatment standards for the Merced County Emergency Medical Services System. This document is divided into two sections: General Procedures and Adult Treatment Protocols.

The General Procedures section contains individual treatment procedures which are referenced in the Adult Treatment Protocols. Included in this section are standard procedures for performing cervical spine immobilization, oxygen administration, pulse oximetry, vascular access, fluid administration, initiation of patient transport, cardiac monitoring and the prehospital determination of death.

The Adult Treatment Protocols outline the specific treatment protocols for adult patients. The Pediatric Treatment Protocols (separate document) are written for patients newborn through age 14 years. Each treatment protocol consists of a table divided into several sections. The top part entitled "Field Treatment - BLS" outlines the procedures for treating that particular illness or injury which are appropriate for either First Responders or ALS personnel to perform. The "Field Treatment – ALS" section is for ALS personnel only. Additionally, there may be a section titled "Considerations," which outlines those medications or procedures that should be evaluated for use by the paramedic.

The bottom "reversed text" section titled "Base Physician Orders" outlines the treatment procedures which require an order from a Base Physician. These orders are known as "Base Physician Orders" and physicians must give these orders directly to paramedics via radio or telephone communication. MICNs may not relay a "Base Physician Order."

The section titled "Base Hospital Orders" outline those medications or procedures that require Base Hospital contact, and may be given by an MICN. In the event that paramedics cannot make base hospital contact or if the clinical condition of the patient is such that a delay in treatment may jeopardize the patient, a paramedic may perform treatments listed in this section without a base hospital order as an "ALS without Base Hospital Contact" procedure. Paramedics must document on an ALS without Base Hospital Contact Report Form each instance where a procedure or medication requiring a Base Hospital Order was performed or administered without such a direct order. Base Hospital Physicians may order any medication or procedure within the paramedic scope of practice for any patient condition regardless of the treatment protocols. Each "Base Hospital Order" must be documented on a Base Hospital Radio Report Form and be available for review.

Additionally paramedics have the right to speak directly to the Base Hospital Physician, if available, for any call.

CERVICAL SPINE IMMOBILIZATION:

While cervical immobilization is a key element in the patient care management of many injured persons, there exists clear indicators for its application. The Cervical Spine Clearance Algorithm card was developed pursuant to clinical standards that have been in use for many years by physicians, and validated through numerous clinical studies.

It is important to keep in mind that errors in the decision to not apply c-spine precautions can have disastrous results, and if any question remains about the necessity of c-spine precautions after applying the algorithm, you must error in favor of the patient's best interests and apply it.

Proper c-spine precaution includes all of the following:

* a rigid cervical collar
* lightweight head blocks
* adequate taping to restrict movement
* a long board which provides for the application of at least three straps
* minimum of three straps (traditional "X" trunk placement with a third strap across the lower thigh area just above the knees). Currently in this EMS system, "Spider" straps are utilized, which exceeds this minimum.

OXYGEN ADMINISTRATION:

The administration of oxygen is one of the most important interventions available to EMS personnel, and its role in improving compromised patients should not be overlooked. This section is included to provide the basic

Spinal Clearance Algorithm

Question	Answer	Action
Patient Conscious?	No	Immobilize
Yes		
Alert / Oriented?	No	Immobilize
Yes		
Loss of Consciousness?	Yes	Immobilize
No		
Alcohol / Drugs?	Yes	Immobilize
No		
Cervical Pain?	Yes	Immobilize
No		
Other Spinal Tenderness?	Yes	Immobilize
No		
Neuro Intact Grossly?	No	Immobilize
Yes		
Distracting Injuries?	Yes	Immobilize
No		
Painful Range of Motion?	Yes	Immobilize
No		

Clear Clinically