

PURPOSE:

To provide guidance and criteria for the use of physical restraint of patients during care and transport.

DEFINITION:

Any mechanism used to physically confine a patient. This includes, but is not limited to: soft composite dressing, tape, leathers or hand cuffs wrapped and secured at the wrist and/or ankles and/or chest or lower extremities.

POLICY / PROCEDURE

- A. If EMS personnel judge it necessary to restrain a patient to protect him/her self from injury, or to protect others (bystanders or EMS personnel) from injury:
 1. Document the events leading up to the need for restraint use in the patient record.
 2. Document the method of restraint and the position of restraint in the patient record.
 3. Document the reason for restraining the patient.
 4. In the event that the patient spits, the rescuer may place over the patient's mouth and nose a surgical mask or an oxygen mask that is connected to high flow oxygen.
- B. Inform patient of the reason for restraint.
- C. Restrain patients in a manner that does not impair circulation or cause choking or aspiration. **DO NOT restrain patients in the prone position (face down)**. Prone restraint has the potential to impair the patient's ability to breathe adequately. Police officers are trained in restraining violent individuals safely. Utilize the police on the scene in deciding the appropriate restraint technique to maximize the safety of the rescuers and the patient.
- D. As soon as possible, attempt to remove any potentially dangerous items (belts, shoes, sharp objects, weapons) prior to restraint. Any weapons or contraband (drugs, drug paraphernalia) shall be turned over to a Law Enforcement Officer.
- E. Assess the patient's circulation (checking pulses in the feet and wrists) every 5-10 minutes while the patient is restrained. If circulation is impaired, adjust or loosen restraints as needed. Document the presence of pulses in each extremity and the patient's ability to breathe after restraint is accomplished. Be prepared to turn the patient to facilitate clearance of the airway while also having suction devices readily available.
- F. Inform hospital personnel who assume responsibility for the patient's care at the hospital of the reason for restraining the patient.
- G. The EMT at his discretion may request that law enforcement accompany and or follow the patient to the hospital. **Any patient restrained in handcuffs shall have law enforcement accompany the patient in the patient compartment or follow the ambulance.**