GUIDELINES for CERVICAL SPINE IMMOBILIZATION

EXCLUSION

IMPORTANT

A complete assessment of the patient’s C-spine MUST be done. Lack of verbal complaint of neck and/or back pain is not sufficient reason for eliminating cervical spine and spinal immobilization without proper documentation of criteria to do otherwise:

Full C-Spine immobilization MUST include:
• C-Collar (appropriate size for patient)
• Backboard with straps at shoulders, hips, lower legs
• Head immobilization blocks or other CIM device

GUIDELINES:

Apply cervical collar and immobilize on backboard if:

1. Blunt trauma and altered level of consciousness (GCS < 14)
2. Knowledge or suspicion of ethanol/drugs on board or an inability to communicate
3. Midline spinal pain or tenderness to palpation
4. Anatomical deformity of the spine
5. Neurological complaint or deficit (Numbness or motor deficit)
6. Any co-existing distracting injury or pain (for example, head, chest, abdomen, long bone fracture)
7. Any patient with a mechanism of injury worrisome for cervical spine injury, including:
   - Falls
   - Blow to the head
   - Ejection from motor vehicle
   - Severe deformity of motor vehicle, roll-over or extrication required
   - Struck by motor vehicle with speed greater than 20 mph
   - Near-drowning/drowning patient
   - Death of another person in same vehicle

(added 9/25/13)
GUIDELINES for CERVICAL SPINE IMMOBILIZATION
EXCLUSION (cont.)

Patients with neck pain that meet the following criteria may be collared without a
backboard and transported securely on a cot:

1. The criteria to need backboard and collar as listed in the prior section has
been excluded

2. Normal level of consciousness (GCS 15)

3. No midline spine tenderness to palpation or anatomical deformity

No Backboard is needed for penetrating trauma to the head, neck or torso as long as documentation of:

NO NEUROLOGICAL DEFICIT on exam

Special care and attention should be paid attention to

Patients over the age of 65

Any un-witnessed fall especially if altered level of consciousness

Patients with inability to communicate

Dementia patients

Patients with osteoporosis, ankylosis spondylitis, or spinal stenosis

(added 9/25/13)