

# FIELD TRIAGE DECISION SCHEME: THE NATIONAL TRAUMA TRIAGE PROTOCOL

# 1

Measure vital signs and level of consciousness

Glasgow Coma Scale < 14 or  
Systolic blood pressure < 90 or  
Respiratory rate < 10 or > 29 (<20 in infant < one year)

**Yes**

**Take to a trauma center.** Steps 1 and 2 attempt to identify the most seriously injured patients. These patients should be transported preferentially to the highest level of care within the trauma system.

**No**

**Assess anatomy of injury.**

# 2

- All penetrating injuries to head, neck, torso, and extremities proximal to elbow and knee
- Flail chest
- Two or more proximal long-bone fractures
- Crushed, degloved, or mangled extremity
- Amputation proximal to wrist and ankle
- Pelvic fractures
- Open or depressed skull fracture
- Paralysis

**Yes**

**Take to a trauma center.** Steps 1 and 2 attempt to identify the most seriously injured patients. These patients should be transported preferentially to the highest level of care within the trauma system.

**No**

**Assess mechanism of injury and evidence of high-energy impact**

# 3

**Falls**

- Adults: > 20 ft. (one story is equal to 10 ft.)
- Children: > 10 ft. or 2-3 times the height of the child

**High-Risk Auto Crash**

- Intrusion: > 12 in. occupant site; > 18 in. any site
- Ejection (partial or complete) from automobile
- Death in same passenger compartment
- Vehicle telemetry data consistent with high risk of injury

**Auto v. Pedestrian/Bicyclist Thrown, Run Over, or with Significant (>20 MPH) Impact  
Motorcycle Crash > 20 MPH**

**Yes**

**Transport to closest appropriate trauma center,** which depending on the trauma system, need not be the highest level trauma center.

**No**

**Assess special patient or system considerations**

# 4

**Age**

- Older Adults: Risk of injury death increases after age 55
- Children: Should be triaged preferentially to pediatric-capable trauma centers

**Anticoagulation and Bleeding Disorders**

**Burns**

- Without other trauma mechanism: Triage to burn facility
- With trauma mechanism: Triage to trauma center

**Time Sensitive Extremity Injury**

**End-Stage Renal Disease Requiring Dialysis**

**Pregnancy > 20 Weeks**

**EMS Provider Judgement**

**Yes**

**Contact medical control and consider transport to a trauma center or a specific resource hospital.**

**No**

**Transport according to protocol**

**When in doubt, transport to a trauma center.**

**For more information on the Decision Scheme, visit: [www.cdc.gov/FieldTriage](http://www.cdc.gov/FieldTriage)**