

ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCIES

BLS PROCEDURES

ALWAYS USE STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

INDICATION

- For the following environmental emergencies:
 - Near Drowning
 - Bites/ Stings (animal/ snake)
 - Heat Injuries
 - Cold Injuries
 - Localized cold injuries

EQUIPMENT

- Airway management per patient condition
- BP monitor
- Suction
- Dressings
- Cold packs
- Hot packs

PROCEDURE

- BLS RMC
- **Near Drowning**
 - Consider spinal motion restriction
 - Keep patient warm
 - Prepare to log-roll if vomiting occurs
 - Frequent evaluation of lung sounds
- **Bites/ Stings**
 - Restrict patient physical activity
 - Immobilize extremity
 - Apply cold pack to site
 - Advise patient to self-administer **EpiPen** (or equivalent) or provider to administer epinephrine per EMS Agency approved policy
 - Observe for allergic reactions and refer to Medical Emergencies Procedures BLS PR 6
- **Animal Bites**
 - Apply appropriate dressing
 - Re-evaluate size of swelling every 5-10 minutes
- **Snake Bites**
 - Identify or provide description of snake if seen
 - Do not use ice or apply constricting bands
 - Remove rings, bracelets, or other constricting items from all extremities
 - Limit patient's movement as much as possible
 - Mark extent of affected area, noting time on skin
 - Immobilize extremity in a position of comfort and monitor distal pulses

- **Heat Injuries**
 - Move to a cool environment and remove clothing
 - Rapid cooling measures:
 - Apply wet towels and promote cooling by fanning
 - Apply cold packs to axilla and groin
 - BLS RMC; treat hypoglycemia per policy
 - Replenish electrolytes by mouth if able to swallow
 - Recheck vital signs frequently
 - Transport all patients rapidly, even if in cardiac arrest
- **Cold Injuries**
 - Remove wet clothing and patient from cold environment
 - Apply warming measures with blankets, heaters, etc. If patient is no longer shivering be less aggressive with re-warming efforts and minimize stimulation of patient.
- **Localized Cold Injuries**
 - Gently remove clothing from injured area
 - Cover area with sterile dressing
 - Avoid direct contact with affected area