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