

SUBJECT: SPINAL PRECAUTIONS

- I. In general, all patients with blunt trauma, head trauma or axial spine trauma require that spine immobilization be implemented.
 - A. Patients older than age 65 should be placed in spinal precautions if they report any spinal pain or if any spinal tenderness is elicited by palpation [Updated 12/18/07].
 - B. Patients younger than age 65 should be placed in spinal precautions if they report midline spinal pain, or if midline spinal tenderness is elicited by palpation. [Updated 12/18/07].

- II. Cervical spine precautions, in particular, **may be omitted** by paramedic personnel when all of the following conditions apply:
 - A. Normal neurological exam
 - 1. Alert
 - 2. Fully oriented to person, place, time and circumstances, or behavior appropriate to patient age and circumstances
 - 3. Baseline normal sensory and motor function in all extremities
 - B. Absence of midline neck and spinal pain by patient report for age < 65
 - C. Absence of neck or spinal tenderness elicited on palpation
 - D. No evidence of intoxication or impairment by any drug, including alcohol
 - E. Normal vital signs
 - F. Absence of any major painful injury that could distract the patient's ability to appreciate spinal pain

- III. ALS personnel **may release cervical spine precautions** applied by first responders when:
 - A. The physical exam and patient history have been completed
 - B. The patient meets the above criteria for omission