

Instructional Terminology

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) 51.0904.00



This Instructional Terminology is aligned to both the Program Blueprint for Instruction and Assessment and the Instructional Framework. It corresponds with the technical standards adopted on January 25, 2023. Use of content-specific terminology is provided to help identify consistent definitions.

A

A-B-C Approach - Airway, Breathing, Circulation (used in responsive patients).

Anaphylaxis - A severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction.

APGAR Score - A quick test performed on a newborn at 1 and 5 minutes after birth. (Appearance, Pulse, Grimace, Activity, Respiration)

Arrhythmia - Disturbance in the regular rhythmic beating of the heart.

Arterial Bleeding - Bright red, spurting blood indicating a severed or punctured artery.

Arterial Gas Embolism - A condition in which air bubbles enter the bloodstream and subsequently travel to the brain; results from a rapid ascent from deep water, which expands air in the lungs too quickly.

Arteries - Large blood vessels that carry oxygen-rich blood from the heart to all parts of the body, except for the pulmonary arteries, which carry oxygen-poor blood from the heart to the lungs.

Artificial Ventilation - A mechanical means used to assist breathing, such as with a bag-valve-mask resuscitator (BVM) or resuscitation mask.

Asperger Syndrome - A disorder on the autism spectrum; those with Asperger syndrome have a milder form of the disorder.

Aspiration - To take, suck or inhale blood, vomit, saliva, or other foreign material into the lungs.

Assault - A crime that occurs when a person tries to physically harm another in a way that makes the person under attack feel immediately threatened.

Asthma - A condition in which a person's airway becomes narrow and swollen, producing extra mucus, and causing the passage to become constricted or blocked.

Asthma Attack - The sudden worsening of asthma signs and symptoms, caused by inflammation of the airways and the tightening of muscles around the airways of a person with asthma, making breathing difficult.

Asthma Trigger - Anything that sets off an asthma attack, such as animal dander, dust, smoke, exercise, stress or medications.

Asymptomatic - A situation in which a patient has no symptoms.

Asystole - A condition where the heart has stopped generating electrical activity.

Atherosclerosis - A condition where plaque, including cholesterol, builds up on artery walls, causing them to harden and narrow, which limits blood flow.

Atrial Fibrillation - Irregular and fast electrical discharges of the heart that lead to an irregular heartbeat; the most common type of abnormal cardiac rhythm.

Atrioventricular (AV) Node - A cluster of cells in the center of the heart, between the atria and ventricles; serves as a relay to slow down the signal received from the sinoatrial (SA) node before it passes through to the ventricles.

Atropine - An anticholinergic drug used to counteract the effects of nerve agents and organophosphate poisoning, which can occur from insecticides or toxic chemicals like sarin.

Audible Warning Devices - Devices in an emergency vehicle to warn oncoming and side traffic of the vehicle's approach; includes both sirens and air horns.

Aura Phase - The first stage of a generalized seizure, during which the patient experiences perceptual disturbances, often visual or olfactory in nature.

Auscultation - Listening to sounds within the body, typically through a stethoscope.

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) - A group of disorders characterized by some degree of impairment in communication and social interaction as well as repetitive behaviors.

Autoinjector - A device for injecting a single dose of medication, particularly used for epinephrine in allergic reactions.

Automated External Defibrillator (AED) - A portable electronic device that analyzes the heart's electrical rhythm and, if necessary, can deliver an electrical shock to a person in cardiac arrest.

AVPU - Mnemonic describing the four levels of patient response (Alert, Verbal, Painful and Unresponsive)

Avulsion - An injury in which a portion of the skin, and sometimes other soft tissue, is partially or completely torn away.

B

B NICE - An acronym for the main types of terrorist weapons- (Biological, Nuclear, Incendiary, Chemical, and Explosive)

Backboard - A piece of equipment used to immobilize a patient's head, neck, and spine during transport-suspected of trauma to the spine

Bacteria - One-celled organisms that can cause infection; a common type of pathogen.

Bag - Valve-Mask Resuscitator (BVM) - A hand-held breathing device consisting of a self-inflating bag, a one-way valve, and a face mask; can be used with or without emergency oxygen.

Bandage - Material used to wrap or cover a part of the body; commonly used to hold a dressing or splint in place.

Bandage Compress - A thick gauze dressing attached to a gauze bandage.

Barotrauma - Injury sustained because of pressure differences between areas of the body and the surrounding environment; most commonly occurs in air travel and scuba diving.

Battery - A crime that occurs when there is unlawful touching of a person without the person's consent.

Behavior - How people conduct themselves or respond to their environment.

Behavioral Emergency - A situation in which a person exhibits abnormal behavior that is unacceptable or intolerable, for example, violence to oneself or others.

Bereavement Care - Care provided to families during the period of grief and mourning surrounding a death.

Biohazard - A biological agent that presents a hazard to the health or well-being of those exposed.

Bioterrorism - The deliberate release of agents typically found in nature, such as viruses, bacteria, and other pathogens, to cause illness or death in people, animals or plants.

Bipolar Disorder - A brain disorder that causes abnormal, severe shifts in mood, energy, and a person's ability to function; also called manic-depressive disorder.

Birth Canal - The passage through which a baby moves during childbirth.

Blanket Drag - A method of moving a patient, using a blanket, in an emergency situation where equipment is limited and the patient is suspected of having a head, neck, or spinal injury.

Blast Injury - An injury caused by an explosion; may occur because of the energy released, the debris, or the impact of the person falling against an object or the ground.

Blast Lung - The most common fatal primary blast injury, describing damage to the lungs caused by the over-pressurization wave from high-order explosives. Also known as lung blast.

Bleeding - The loss of blood from arteries, veins, or capillaries.

Blood Glucose Level (BGL) - The level of glucose circulating in the blood; measured using a glucometer.

Blood Pressure (BP) - The force exerted by blood against the blood vessel walls as it travels throughout the body.

Blood Volume - The total amount of blood circulating within the body.

Bloodborne - A substance carried in the blood

Bloodborne Pathogens - Germs that may be present in human blood or other body fluids that can cause disease in humans.

Bloody Show - Thick discharge from the vagina that occurs during labor as the mucous plug (mucus with pink or light red streaks) is expelled; often signifies the onset of labor.

Blunt Trauma - An injury in which a person is struck by or falls against a blunt object resulting in an injury that does not penetrate the body.

Body Mechanics - The field of physiology that studies muscular actions and the function of the muscles in maintaining posture.

Body Substance Isolation (BSI) Precautions - Protective measures to prevent exposure to communicable diseases.

Body System - A group of organs and other structures that work together to carry out specific functions.

Bone - A dense, hard tissue that forms the skeleton.

Brachial Artery - The main artery of the upper arm; runs from the shoulder down to the bend of the elbow.

Braxton Hicks Contractions - False labor; irregular contractions of the uterus that do not intensify or become more frequent as genuine labor contractions do.

Breathing Emergency - An emergency in which breathing is impaired and can become life-threatening; also called a respiratory emergency.

Breathing Rate - The number of breaths per minute.

Breech Birth - The delivery of a baby's feet or buttocks.

Breech Presentation - A position of the baby in the uterus where the feet or buttocks appear first.

Bulb Syringe - Small nasal syringe to remove secretions from the newborn's mouth and nose.

Burn - An injury to the skin or other body tissues caused by heat, chemicals, electricity or radiation.

C

C-A-B Approach - Circulation, Airway, Breathing (used in unresponsive patients with cardiac arrest only).

Cannabis Products - Substances such as marijuana and hashish that are derived from the Cannabis sativa plant; can produce feelings of elation, distorted perceptions of time and space, and impaired motor coordination and judgment.

Capillaries - Tiny blood vessels linking arteries and veins that transfer oxygen and other nutrients from the blood to all body cells and remove waste products.

Capillary Bleeding - Slow, oozing blood from damaged capillaries.

Capillary Refill - A technique for estimating how the body is reacting to injury or illness by checking the ability of the capillaries to refill with blood.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) - An odorless, colorless, toxic gas produced as a byproduct of combustion.

Cardiac Arrest - A condition in which the heart has stopped pumping blood effectively. loss of heart function, leading to a cessation of blood flow to the body

Cardiac Chain of Survival - A set of four critical steps in responding to a cardiac emergency - Early recognition and access to the emergency medical services (EMS) system, early CPR, early defibrillation, and early advanced medical care.

Cardiac Muscle - A specialized type of muscle found in the heart.

Cardiogenic Shock - The result of the heart being unable to supply adequate blood circulation to the vital organs, resulting in an inadequate supply of nutrients; caused by trauma or disease.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) - A technique that combines chest compressions and ventilations to circulate blood containing oxygen to the brain and other vital organs for a person whose heart and breathing have stopped.

Cardiovascular Disease - A disease affecting the heart and blood vessels.

Cardiovascular System - Consists of the heart and blood vessels and is responsible for circulating blood throughout the body.

Carotid Artery - The major artery located on either side of the neck that supplies blood to the brain.

Catastrophic Reaction - A reaction a person experiences when the person has become overwhelmed; signs include screaming, throwing objects, and striking out.

CBRNE - The current acronym used by the Department of Homeland Security to describe the main types of weapons of mass destruction - Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosives

Cells - The basic units that combine to form all living tissue.

Cerebrospinal Fluid - A clear fluid that flows within the ventricles of the brain and around the brain and spinal cord.

Certification - Credentialing at the local level; usually entails completing a probationary period and updating and/or recertification to cover changing knowledge and skills

Cervical Collar - A commercially produced rigid device that is positioned around the neck to limit movement of the head and neck; also called a C-collar.

Cervix - The lower, narrow part of the uterus (womb) that forms a canal that opens into the vagina, which leads to the outside of the body.

Cesarean Section - The delivery of a baby through an incision in the mother's belly and uterus. Also known as C-section.

Chain of Survival - Steps to improve survival from cardiac arrest (early recognition, CPR, defibrillation, advanced cardiac life support, recovery).

Chemical Burn - A burn caused by strong, caustic chemicals damaging the skin.

Chest Compressions - A technique used in CPR, in which external pressure is placed on the chest to increase the level of pressure in the chest cavity and cause the blood to circulate through the arteries.

Chest Tube - A tube surgically inserted into the chest to drain blood, UID, or air, and to allow the lungs to expand.

Chief Complaint - A brief description, usually in the patient's own words, of why EMS personnel were called to the scene.

Child - For the purpose of providing emergency medical care, anyone who appears to be between the ages of about 1 year and about 12 years.

Child Abuse - Action that results in the physical or psychological harm of a child; can be physical, sexual, verbal, and/or emotional.

Child Neglect - The most frequently reported type of abuse in which a parent or guardian fails to provide the necessary, age-appropriate care to a child.

Choking – A foreign object that is stuck or blocking the airway

Cholesterol - A fatty substance made by the liver and found in foods containing animal or animal products; diets high in cholesterol contribute to the risk of heart disease.

Chronic - Persistent over a long period of time.

Chronic Diseases - Diseases that occur gradually and last at least three months or longer.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) - A progressive lung disease in which the patient has difficulty breathing because of damage to the lungs; airways become obstructed and the alveolar sacs lose their ability to fill with air.

Circulatory System - A group of organs and other structures that carries oxygen-rich blood and other nutrients throughout the body and removes waste.

Circumferential Splint - A type of splint that surrounds or encircles an injured body part.

Clinical Depression - A mood disorder in which feelings of sadness, loss, anger or frustration interfere with everyday life for an extended period of time.

Clonic Phase - The third phase of a generalized seizure, during which the patient experiences the seizure itself.

Closed Fracture - A type of fracture in which the skin over the broken bone is intact.

Closed Wound - A wound in which soft tissue damage occurs beneath the skin and the skin is not broken.

Clothes Drag - A type of emergency move that uses the patient's clothing; used for a patient suspected of having a head, neck, or spinal injury.

Clotting - The process by which blood thickens at a wound site to seal an opening in a blood vessel and stop bleeding.

Cognitive Impairment - Impairment of thinking abilities including memory, judgment, reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making.

Cold Zone - Also called the support zone, this area is the outer perimeter of the zones most directly affected by an emergency involving hazardous materials.

Comotio Cordis - Sudden cardiac arrest from a blunt, non-penetrating blow to the chest, of which the basis is ventricular fibrillation (V- b) triggered by chest wall impact immediately over the heart.

Communications Center (Dispatch) - The point of contact between the public and responders (also known as a 9-1-1 call center or Public Service Answering Point [PSAP]); responsible for taking basic information from callers and dispatching the appropriate personnel.

Compartment Syndrome - A condition in which there is swelling and an increase in pressure within a limited space that presses on and compromises blood vessels, nerves, and tendons that run through that limited space

Competence - The patient's ability to understand the emergency medical responder (EMR's) questions and the implications of decisions made.

Complex Access - In an extrication, the process of using specialized tools or equipment to gain access to the patient.

Complex Partial Seizures - A type of partial seizure in which the patient may experience an altered mental status or be unresponsive.

Concussion - A temporary loss of brain function caused by a blow to the head.

Conduction - One of the ways the body loses or gains heat; occurs when the skin is in contact with something with a lower or higher temperature.

Confidentiality - Protection of a patient's privacy by not revealing any personal patient information except to law enforcement personnel or EMS personnel caring for the patient.

Confined Space - Any space with limited access that is not intended for continuous human occupancy; has limited or restricted means of entry or exit.

Congestive Heart Failure - A chronic condition in which the heart no longer pumps blood effectively throughout the body.

Consent - Permission to provide care; given by an injured or ill person to a responder.

Contraction - During labor, the rhythmic tightening and relaxing of muscles of the uterus.

Contusion - An injury to the soft tissues that results in blood vessel damage (usually to capillaries) and leakage of blood into the surrounding tissues; caused when blood vessels are damaged or broken as the result of a blow to the skin, resulting in swelling and a reddish- purple discoloration on the skin; commonly referred to as a bruise.

Convection - One of the ways the body loses or gains heat; occurs when air moves over the skin and carries away or increases heat.

COPD – see Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Core Temperature - The temperature inside the body.

Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) - A disease in which cholesterol and plaque buildup on the inner walls of the arteries that supply blood to the heart; also called coronary artery disease (CAD).

CPR Breathing Barrier - Devices that allow for artificial ventilation without direct mouth-to-mouth contact; includes resuscitation masks and BVMS.

Crackles - An abnormal crackling breath sound on inhalation that may be a sign of UIP in the lungs; also known as rales.

Cravat - A folded triangular bandage used to hold splints in place.

Crepitus - A grating or popping sound under the skin that can be due to several causes, including two pieces of bone rubbing against each other.

Cribbing - A system using wood or supports, arranged diagonally to a vehicle's frame, to safely prop it up, creating a stable environment.

Cricoid - A solid ring of cartilage just below and behind the thyroid cartilage.

Critical Burn - Any burn that is potentially life-threatening, disabling, or disfiguring; a burn requiring advanced medical care.

Critical Incident Stress - Stress triggered by involvement in a serious or traumatic incident.

Croup - A common upper airway virus that affects children under the age of 5.

Crowning - The phase during labor when the baby's head is visible at the opening of the vagina.

Crush Injury - An injury to a body part, often an extremity, caused by a high degree of pressure; may result in serious damage to underlying tissues and cause bleeding, bruising, fracture, laceration, and compartment syndrome.

Cyanosis - A condition in which the patient's skin, nail beds, and mucous membranes appear a bluish or grayish color because of insufficient levels of oxygen in the blood.

Cyanotic - Showing bluish discoloration of the skin, capillary refill test on the nail beds and mucous membranes due to insufficient levels of oxygen in the blood.

D

DCAP - BTLS - A mnemonic for trauma assessment (Deformities, Contusions, Abrasions, Punctures, Burns, Tenderness, Lacerations, Swelling).

Dead Space - The areas within the respiratory system between the pharynx and the alveoli that contain a small amount of air that does not reach the alveoli.

Deafness - The loss of the ability to hear from one or both ears; can be mild, moderate, severe, or profound and can be inherited, occur at birth, or be acquired at a later point in life, due to illness, medication, noise exposure or injury.

Debriefing - A method of helping people cope with exposure to serious or traumatic incidents by discussing the emotional impact of the event.

Deceased/Non-Salvageable/Expectant (Black) - A triage category of those involved in a multiple- (or mass-) casualty incident (MCI) who are dead or who have suffered non-life-sustaining injuries

Decompression Sickness - A sometimes fatal disorder caused by the release of gas bubbles into body tissue; also known as "the bends"; occurs when scuba divers ascend too rapidly, without allowing sufficient time for gasses to exit body tissues and be removed through exhalation.

Defibrillation - An electrical shock that disrupts the electrical activity of the heart long enough to allow the heart to spontaneously develop an effective rhythm on its own.

Defusing - Similar to a debriefing but shorter and less formal; a method of discussing a serious or traumatic event soon afterward; done to help people cope. Also: to diffuse a situation, and reduce danger.

Dehydration - Inadequate fluids in the body's tissues.

Delayed Care (Yellow) - A triage category of those involved in an MCI with an injury, but whose chances of survival will not be reduced by a delay.

Dementia - A collection of symptoms caused by any of several disorders of the brain; characterized by significantly impaired intellectual functioning that interferes with normal activities and relationships.

Dependency - The desire or need to continually use a substance.

Depressant - A substance that affects the central nervous system and slows down physical and mental activity; can be used to treat anxiety, tension, and high blood pressure.

Dermis - The deeper layer of the skin; contains the nerves, sweat glands, oil glands, and blood vessels.

Designer Drugs - Potent and illegal street drugs formed from a medicinal substance whose drug composition has been modified (designed).

Detailed Physical Exam - An in-depth head-to-toe physical exam; takes more time than the rapid assessment and is only done when time and the patient's condition allow.

Diabetes - A disease in which there are high levels of blood glucose due to defects in insulin production, insulin action, or both.

Diabetic Coma - A life-threatening complication of diabetes in which very high blood sugar causes the patient to become unconscious.

Diabetic Emergency - A situation in which a person becomes ill because of an imbalance of insulin and sugar in the bloodstream.

Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA) - An accumulation of organic acids and ketones (waste products) in the blood; occurs when there is inadequate insulin and high blood sugar levels.

Diastolic Blood Pressure - The force exerted against the arteries when the heart is between contractions, or at rest.

Digestive System - A group of organs and other structures that digests food and eliminates waste.

Dilation - The process of enlargement or stretching; during delivery, refers to the opening of the cervix to allow the baby to be born.

Direct Carry - A method of moving a patient from a bed to a stretcher or vice-versa; performed by two responders.

Direct Contact - Mode of transmission of pathogens that occurs through directly touching infected blood or body fluid, or other agents such as chemicals, drugs, or toxins.

Direct Force - A force that causes injury at the point of impact.

Direct Ground Lift - A non-emergency method of lifting a patient directly from the ground; performed by several responders.

Direct Medical Control - A type of medical direction, also called "on-line," "base-station," "immediate" or "concurrent medical control"; under

this type of medical direction the physician speaks directly with emergency care providers at the scene of an emergency.

Direct Pressure - Pressure applied on a wound to control bleeding.

Disease-causing agent - A pathogen or germ that can cause disease or illness (e.g., a bacterium or virus)

Dislocation - Displacement of a bone from its joint.

Dispatch - Personnel trained in taking critical information from emergency callers and relaying it to the appropriate rescue personnel.

Distressed Swimmer - A swimmer showing anxiety or panic; often identified as a swimmer who has gone beyond his or her swimming abilities.

Distributive Shock - A type of shock caused by inadequate distribution of blood, either in the blood vessels or throughout the body, leading to inadequate volumes of blood returning to the heart.

Do No Harm - The principle that people who intervene to help others must do their best to ensure their actions will do no harm to the patient.

Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Order - A type of advance directive that protects a patient's right to refuse efforts for resuscitation; also known as a do not attempt resuscitation (DNAR) order.

DOTS - A mnemonic to help remember what to look for during the physical exam; deformities, open injuries, tenderness, and swelling.

Draw Sheet - A method of moving a patient from a bed to a stretcher or vice-versa by using the stretcher's bottom sheet.

Dressing - A pad placed directly over a wound to absorb blood and other body fluids and to prevent infection.

Droplet Transmission - Mode of transmission of pathogens that occurs when a person inhales a droplet from an infected person's cough or sneeze; also known as respiratory droplet transmission.

Dropping - “Engagement” or “lightening”; when a baby drops into a lower position and is engaged in the mother’s pelvis; usually occurs a few weeks before labor begins

Drowning - An event in which a victim experiences respiratory impairment due to submersion in water; may or may not result in death.

Drowning Victim—Active - Someone who is vertical in the water but has no supporting kick, is unable to move forward, and cannot call out for help.

Drowning Victim—Passive - Someone who is not moving and is floating either face-up or face-down, on or near the surface of the water, or is submerged.

Drug - Any substance, other than food, intended to affect the functions of the body.

DuoDote™ - A type of kit with pre-measured doses of antidote used to counteract the effects of nerve agents.

Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care - A legal document that expresses a patient’s specific wishes regarding his or her health care; also empowers an individual, usually a relative or friend, to speak on behalf of the patient should he or she become seriously injured or ill and unable to speak for him- or herself.

Duty to Act - A legal responsibility of some individuals to provide a reasonable standard of emergency care.

E

Echo Method - A communication technique in which the listener repeats orders word for word to ensure the message is heard and understood accurately.

Eclampsia - A complication during pregnancy in which the patient has convulsions or seizures associated with high blood pressure.

Ectopic Pregnancy - A pregnancy in which the fertilized egg implants outside the uterus.

Edema - Swelling in body tissues caused by fluid accumulation.

Elastic Bandage - A bandage designed to keep continuous pressure on a body part; also called an elastic wrap.

Elder Abuse - Physical or psychological harm to an elderly person; can be physical, sexual, verbal, and/or emotional.

Elder Neglect - Abuse in which a caregiver fails to provide the necessary care to an elderly person

Electrical Burn - A burn caused by contact with an electrical source, which allows an electrical current to pass through the body.

Electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG) - A test that measures and records the electrical activity of the heart.

Electrolytes - Substances that are electrically conductive in solution and are essential to the regulation of nerve and muscle function and fluid balance throughout the body; including sodium, potassium, chloride, calcium, and phosphate.

Embolism - A blockage in an artery or a vein caused by a blood clot or fragment of plaque that travels through the blood vessels until it gets stuck, preventing circulation of blood.

Embryo - The early stage of development in the uterus, from fertilization to the beginning of the third month.

Emergency Medical Dispatcher (EMD) - A telecommunicator who has received special training for triaging a request for medical service, allocating appropriate resources to the scene of an incident, and providing medical instructions to patients or bystanders before more advanced medical personnel arrive.

Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) - A person trained in emergency medical care who may be called on to provide such care as a routine part of the job, paid or volunteer; often the first trained

professional to respond to emergencies; formerly called “first responder.”

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) System - A network of community resources and medical personnel that provides emergency medical care to people who are injured or suddenly fall ill.

Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) - Someone who has completed a state-approved EMT training program; EMTs take over care from EMRs and work on stabilizing and preparing the patient for transport; formerly referred to as EMT-Basic.

Emergency Oxygen - Oxygen delivered to a patient from an oxygen cylinder through a delivery device; can be given to a non-breathing or breathing patient who is not receiving adequate oxygen from the environment.

Emergency Response Guidebook - A resource available from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to help identify hazardous materials and appropriate care for those exposed to them.

Emphysema - A chronic, degenerative lung disease in which there is damage to the alveoli.

Endocrine System - A group of organs and other structures that regulates and coordinates the activities of other systems by producing chemicals (hormones) that influence tissue activity. Glands that produce hormones regulating various body functions.

Engineering Controls - Control measures that eliminate, isolate, or remove a hazard from the workplace; things used in the workplace to help reduce the risk of exposure.

Epidemiology - A branch of medicine that deals with the incidence (rate of occurrence) and prevalence (extent) of disease in populations.

Epidermis - The outer layer of the skin; provides a barrier to bacteria and other organisms that can cause infection.

Epiglottitis - A serious bacterial infection that causes severe swelling of the epiglottis, which can result in a blocked airway, causing respiratory failure in children; may be fatal.

Epilepsy - A brain disorder characterized by recurrent seizures.

Ethics - A branch of philosophy concerned with the set of moral principles a person holds about what is right and wrong.

Evaporation - One of the ways the body loses heat; occurs when the body is wet and the moisture evaporates, cooling the skin.

Evisceration - A severe injury that causes the abdominal organs to protrude through the wound.

Exposure - An instance in which someone is exposed to a pathogen or has contact with blood or body fluids or objects in the environment that contain disease-causing agents.

Exposure Control Plan - A plan in the workplace that outlines the employer's protective measures to eliminate or minimize employee exposure incidents.

Expressed Consent - Permission to receive emergency care granted by a competent adult either verbally, non-verbally, or through gestures.

External Bleeding - Bleeding on the outside of the body; often, visible bleeding.

Extremity - A limb of the body; upper extremity is the arm; lower extremity is the leg.

Extremity Lift - A two-responder, non-emergency lift in which one responder supports the patient's arms and the other the patient's legs.

Extrication - The safe and appropriate removal of a patient trapped in a motor vehicle or a dangerous situation.

F

Fainting - Temporary loss of consciousness; usually related to temporary insufficient blood flow to the brain; also known as syncope, “blacking out” or “passing out.”

Fast - An acronym to help remember the symptoms of stroke; stands for Face, Arm, Speech, and Time.

Febrile Seizure - Seizure activity brought on by an excessively high fever in a young child or an infant.

Fetal Monitoring - A variety of tests used to measure fetal stress, either internally or externally.

Fetus - The stage of development in the uterus after the embryo stage, beginning at the start of the third month.

Fever - An elevated body temperature, beyond normal variation.

Finger Sweep - A method of clearing the mouth of foreign material that presents a risk of blocking the airway or being aspirated into the lungs.

Firefighters Carry - A type of carry during which the patient is supported over the responder’s shoulders.

Firefighters Drag - A method of moving a patient in which the patient is bound to the responder’s neck and held underneath the responder; the responder moves the patient by crawling.

Five Rights of Medication Administration - Right patient, right medication, right dose, right time, right route.

Flail Chest - A serious injury in which multiple rib fractures result in a loose section of ribs that does not move normally with the rest of the chest during breathing and often moves in the opposite direction.

Flammability - The degree to which a substance may ignite.

Flowmeter - A device used to regulate, in liters per minute (LPM), the amount of oxygen administered to a patient.

Focused Medical Assessment - A physical exam on a medical patient, focused only on the area of the chief complaint, e.g., the chest in a patient complaining of chest pain.

Focused Trauma Assessment - A physical exam on a trauma patient, focused only on an isolated area with a known injury such as a hand with an obvious laceration.

Foreign Body Airway Obstruction (FBAO) - The presence of foreign matter, such as food, that obstructs the airway.

Fracture - A break in the bone.

Free Diving - An extreme sport in which divers compete underwater without any underwater breathing apparatus.

Frostbite - A condition in which body tissues freeze; most commonly occurs in the fingers, toes, ears, and nose.

Full-thickness burn - A burn injury involving all layers of skin and underlying tissues; skin may be brown or charred, and underlying tissues may appear white; also referred to as a third-degree burn

G

Generalized Tonic-Clonic Seizures - Seizures that affect most or all of the brain; types include petit mal and grand mal seizures.

Genitourinary System - A group of organs and other structures that eliminates waste and enables reproduction.

Gestational Diabetes - A type of diabetes that occurs only during pregnancy.

Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS) - A scale used to assess a patient’s level of consciousness. A measure of LOC based on eye-opening, verbal response, and motor response.

Glucose - A simple sugar that is the primary source of energy for the body's tissues.

Golden Hour - The first hour after a life-threatening traumatic injury; providing early interventions and advanced medical care during this time frame can result in the best chance of survival.

Good Samaritan Laws - Laws that apply in some circumstances to protect people who provide emergency care without accepting anything in return.

Grand Mal Seizures - A type of generalized seizure that involves whole-body contractions with loss of consciousness.

H

Hallucination - Perception of an object with no reality; occurs when a person is awake and conscious; may be visual, auditory, or tactile.

Hallucinogen - A substance that affects mood, sensation, thinking, emotion, and self-awareness; alters perceptions of time and space; and produces hallucinations or delusions.

Hard-of-hearing - A degree of hearing loss that is mild enough to allow the person to continue to rely on hearing for communication

Hazardous Material (Hazmat) - Any chemical substance or material that can pose a threat or risk to health, safety, and property if not properly handled or contained.

Hazardous Materials (Hazmat) Incident - Any situation that deals with the unplanned release of hazardous materials.

Head-On-Collision - A collision in which a vehicle hits an object, such as a tree or other vehicle, straight on

Head-Tilt/Chin-Lift Technique - A common method for opening the airway unless the patient is suspected of having an injury to the head, neck, or spine

Health Care Proxy - A person named in a health-care directive, or durable power of attorney.

Heart - A fist-sized muscular organ that pumps blood throughout the body.

Heat Cramps - A form of heat-related illness; painful involuntary muscle spasms that occur during or after physical exertion in high heat, caused by loss of electrolytes and water from perspiration; may be a sign that a more serious heat-related illness is developing; usually affects the legs and abdomen.

Heat Exhaustion - A severe form of heat-related illness; results when UID and electrolytes are lost through perspiration and are not replaced by other UIDS; often results from strenuous work or wearing too much clothing in a hot, humid environment.

Heat Index - An index that combines the air temperature and relative humidity to determine the perceived, human-felt temperature; a measure of how hot it feels.

Heat Stroke - The most serious form of heat-related illness; life-threatening and develops when the body's cooling mechanisms are overwhelmed and body systems begin to fail.

Hematoma - A mass of usually clotted or partially clotted blood that forms in soft tissue space or an organ as a result of ruptured blood vessels.

Hemodialysis - A common method of treating advanced kidney failure in which blood is filtered outside the body to remove wastes and extra fluids.

Hemopneumothorax - An accumulation of blood and air between the lungs and chest wall.

Hemorrhage - The loss of a large amount of blood in a short time or when there is continuous bleeding.

Hemorrhagic Shock - Shock due to excessive blood loss.

Hemostatic Agent - A method of external hemorrhage control that uses a substance that absorbs moisture from blood and speeds the process of coagulation and clot formation to achieve hemostasis (control of bleeding).

Hemothorax - An accumulation of blood between the lungs and chest wall; caused by bleeding that may be from the chest wall, lung tissue, or major blood vessels in the thorax.

Hepatitis - An inflammation of the liver most commonly caused by a viral infection; there are several types including hepatitis A, B, C, D, and E.

High-Order Explosives (HE) - Explosives such as TNT, nitroglycerin, etc., that produce a supersonic over-pressurization shockwave

History Taking - Gathering patient history, including symptoms and past medical conditions.

HIV - A virus that weakens the body's immune system, leading to life-threatening infections; causes AIDS.

Homeostasis - A constant state of balance or well-being of the body's internal systems that is continually and automatically adjusted.

Hospice Care - Care provided in the final months of life to a terminally ill patient.

Hot Zone - The area in which the most danger exists from a HAZMAT incident; also called the exclusion zone.

Hyperglycemia - A condition in which too much sugar is in the bloodstream, resulting in higher than normal BGLs; also known as high blood glucose.

Hyperkalemia - Abnormally high levels of potassium in the blood; if extremely high, can cause cardiac arrest and death.

Hyperoxia - A condition in which an excess of oxygen reaches the body's cells.

Hypertension - Another term for high blood pressure.

Hyperthermia - Overheating of the body including heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.

Hyperventilation - Rapid, deep, or shallow breathing; usually caused by panic or anxiety.

Hypervolemia - A condition in which there is an abnormal increase of UID in the blood.

Hypodermis - A deeper layer of skin, located below the epidermis and dermis, that contains fat, blood vessels, and connective tissues.

Hypoglycemia - A condition in which too little sugar is in the bloodstream, resulting in lower than normal BGLs; also known as low blood glucose.

Hypoperfusion - A life-threatening condition in which the circulatory system fails to adequately circulate oxygenated blood to all parts of the body; also referred to as shock.

Hypotension - Abnormally low blood pressure.

Hypothalamus - Control center of the body's temperature; located in the brain.

Hypothermia - The state of the body being colder than the usual core temperature, caused by either excessive loss of body heat and/or the body's inability to produce heat.

Hypovolemia - A condition in which there is an abnormal decrease of UID in the blood.

Hypovolemic Shock - A type of shock caused by an abnormal decrease in blood volume.

Hypoxemia - A condition in which there are decreased levels of oxygen in the blood; can disrupt the body's functioning and harm tissues and may be life-threatening.

Hypoxia - A condition in which insufficient oxygen is delivered to the body's cells.

Hypoxic - Having below-normal concentrations of oxygen in the organs and tissues of the body.

I

Immediate Care (Red) - A triage category of those involved in an MCI whose needs require urgent life-saving care.

Immobilize - To use a splint or other method to keep an injured body part from moving.

Immune System - The body's complex group of body systems that is responsible for fighting disease.

Impaled Object - An object that remains embedded in an open wound; also referred to as an embedded object.

Implantable Cardioverter - Defibrillator (ICD) - A miniature version of an AED, implanted under the skin, that acts to automatically recognize and help correct abnormal heart rhythms

Implantation - The attachment of the fertilized egg to the lining of the uterus, 6 or 7 days after conception.

Implied Consent - Legal concepts that assume a patient would consent to receive emergency care if he or she were physically able or old enough to do so.

In Good Faith - Acting in such a way that the goal is only to help the patient and that all actions are for that purpose.

Incendiary Weapons - Devices designed to burn at extremely high temperatures, such as napalm and white phosphorus; mostly designed to be used against equipment, though some (e.g. napalm) are designed to be used against people.

Incident Command System (ICS) - A standardized approach to the command, control, and coordination of emergency response that allows for the integration of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure.

Indirect Contact - Mode of transmission of a disease caused by touching a contaminated object.

Indirect Force - A force that transmits energy through the body, causing injury at a distance from the point of impact.

Infant - For the purpose of providing emergency medical care, anyone who appears to be younger than about 1 year of age.

Infection - A condition caused by disease-producing microorganisms, called pathogens or germs, in the body.

Infectious Disease - Disease caused by the invasion of the body by a pathogen, such as a bacterium, virus, fungus, or parasite.

Ingested Poison - A poison that is swallowed.

Inhalant - A substance, such as a medication, that a person inhales to counteract or prevent a specific condition; also, a substance inhaled to produce mood-altering effects.

Inhaled Poison - A poison breathed into the lungs.

Injected Poison - A poison that enters the body through a bite, sting, or syringe.

In-Line Stabilization - A technique used to minimize movement and align the patient's head and neck with the spine

Innate Immunity - The type of protection from disease that humans are born with.

Insulin - A hormone produced by the pancreas to help glucose move into the cells; in patients with diabetes, it may not be produced at all or may not be produced in sufficient amounts.

Integumentary System - A group of organs and other structures that protects the body, retains fluids, and helps to prevent infection.

Intercostal - Located between the ribs.

Internal Bleeding - Bleeding inside the body.

J

Jaw-thrust (without head extension) maneuver - A maneuver for opening the airway in a patient suspected of having an injury to the head, neck, or spine.

Joint - A structure where two or more bones are joined.

Jump Kit - A bag or box containing equipment used by the EMR when responding to a medical emergency; includes items such as resuscitation masks and airway adjuncts, gloves, blood pressure cuffs, and bandages.

K

Kinematics of Trauma - The science of the forces involved in traumatic events and how they damage the body.

L

Labor - The birth process, beginning with the contraction of the uterus and dilation of the cervix and ending with the stabilization and recovery of the mother.

Laceration - A cut, usually from a sharp object, that can have either jagged or smooth edges.

Landing Zone (LZ) - Any area where an aircraft, such as an air medical helicopter, can land safely

Legal Obligation - Obligation to act in a particular way in accordance with the law.

Level of Consciousness (LOC) - A person's state of awareness, ranging from being fully alert to unconscious; also referred to as mental status.

Licensure - Required acknowledgment that the bearer has permission to practice in the licensing state; offers the highest level of public protection; may be revoked at the state level should the bearer no longer meet the required standards.

Ligament - Fibrous band that holds bones together at a joint.

Litter - A portable stretcher used to carry a patient over rough terrain.

Lividity - Purplish color in the lowest-lying parts of a recently dead body, caused by pooling of blood.

Living Will - A type of advance directive that outlines the patient's wishes about certain kinds of medical treatments and procedures that prolong life.

Local Credentialing - Local requirements EMRs must meet to maintain employment or obtain certain protocols so that they may practice.

Log Roll - A method of moving a patient while keeping the patient's body aligned because of a suspected head, neck, or spinal injury.

Low-Order Explosives (LE) - Explosives such as pipe bombs, gunpowder, etc., that create a subsonic explosion

M

Malpractice - A situation in which a professional fails to provide a reasonable quality of care, resulting in harm to a patient.

Mania - An aspect of bipolar disorder characterized by elation, hyperexcitability, and accelerated thoughts, speech, and actions.

Manual Stabilization - A technique used to achieve spinal motion restriction by manually supporting the patient's head and neck in the position found without the use of any equipment.

Mark Item Kit - A type of kit with pre-measured doses of antidote to counteract the effects of nerve agents.

Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) - A sheet (provided by the manufacturer) that identifies the substance, physical properties, and any associated hazards for a given material (e.g., re, explosion, and health hazards), as well as emergency first aid.

Mechanism of Injury - The force or energy that causes a traumatic injury (e.g., a fall, explosion, crash, or attack).

Meconium Aspiration - Aspiration of the first bowel movement of the newborn; can be a sign of fetal stress and can lead to meconium aspiration syndrome.

Medical Control - Direction given to EMRs by a physician when EMRs are providing care at the scene of an emergency or are en route to the receiving facility; may be provided either directly via radio or indirectly by pre-established local medical treatment protocols.

Medical Direction - The monitoring of care provided by out-of-hospital providers to injured or ill persons, usually by a medical director.

Medical Director - A physician who assumes responsibility for the care of injured or ill persons provided in out-of-hospital settings.

Medical Futility - A situation in which a patient has a medical or traumatic condition that is scientifically accepted to be futile should resuscitation be attempted and, therefore, the patient should be considered dead on arrival.

Meningitis - An inflammation of the meninges, the thin, protective coverings over the brain and spinal cord; caused by viruses or bacteria.

Mental Illness - A range of medical conditions that affect a person's mood or ability to think, feel, relate to others, and function in everyday activities.

Metabolism - The physical and chemical processes of converting oxygen and food into energy within the body.

Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) - A Staph bacteria that can cause infection; difficult to treat because of its resistance to many antibiotics

Midaxillary Line - An imaginary line that passes vertically down the body starting at the axilla (armpit); used to locate one of the areas for listening to breath sounds.

Midclavicular Line - An imaginary line that passes through the midpoint of the clavicle (collarbone) on the ventral surface of the body; used to locate one of the areas for listening to breath sounds.

Mid scapular Line - An imaginary line that passes through the midpoint of the scapula (shoulder blade) on the dorsal surface of the body; used to locate one of the areas for listening to breath sounds.

Minimum Data Set - A standardized set of details about patients; this information is included in the prehospital care report (PCR).

Minute Volume - The amount of air breathed in a minute; calculated by multiplying the volume of air inhaled at each breath (in mL) by the number of breaths per minute.

Miscarriage - A spontaneous end to pregnancy before the 20th week; usually because of birth defects in the fetus or placenta; also called a spontaneous abortion.

Moral Obligation - Obligation to act in a particular way in accordance with what is considered morally right.

Morals - Principles relating to issues of right and wrong and how individual people should behave.

Morbidity - Illness; effects of a condition or disease.

Mortality - Death due to a certain condition or disease.

Mucous Plug - A collection of mucus that blocks the opening into the cervix and is expelled, usually toward the end of the pregnancy, when the cervix begins to dilate.

Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR TB) - A type of tuberculosis (TB) that is resistant to some of the most effective anti-TB drugs

Multiple- (or mass-) casualty incident (MCI) - An incident that generates more patients than available resources can manage using routine procedures

Multiple Birth - Two or more births in the same pregnancy.

Muscle - A tissue that contracts and relaxes to create movement.

Musculoskeletal System - A group of bones, muscles, tissues, and other structures that support the body and protect internal organs, allow movement, store minerals, manufacture blood cells, and create heat.

Myocardial Infarction (Heart Attack) - A blockage of blood flow to the heart muscle.

Myocardial Infarction (MI) - The death of cardiac muscle tissue due to a sudden deprivation of circulating blood; also called a heart attack.

N

Narcan (Naloxone) - A medication used to block the effects of opioids, especially in overdose.

Narcotic - A drug derived from opium or opium-like compounds; used to reduce pain and can alter mood and behavior.

Nasal (Nasopharyngeal) Airway (NPA) - An airway adjunct inserted through the nostril and into the throat to help keep the tongue from obstructing the airway; may be used on a conscious or an unconscious patient.

Nasal Cannula - A device used to administer emergency oxygen through the nostrils to a breathing person.

National Response Framework (NRF) - The guiding principles that enable all response partners to prepare for and provide a united national response to disasters and emergencies—from the smallest incident to the largest catastrophe. Establishes a comprehensive, national, all-hazards approach to domestic incident response.

Nature of Illness - The medical condition or complaint for which the person needs care (e.g., shock, difficulty breathing), based on what the patient or others report as well as clues in the environment.

Needlestick - A penetrating wound from a needle or other sharp object; may result in exposure to pathogens through contact with blood or other body fluids.

Negligence - The failure to provide the level of care a person of similar training would provide, thereby causing injury or damage to another.

Nerve Agents - Toxic chemical warfare agents that interrupt the chemical function of nerves.

Nervous System - Comprises the brain, spinal cord, and nerves; controls body functions and responses.

Neurogenic/Vasogenic Shock - A type of distributive shock caused by trauma to the spinal cord or brain, where the blood vessel walls abnormally constrict and dilate, preventing the relay of messages and causing blood to pool at the lowest point of the body.

Next of Kin - The closest relatives, as defined by state law, of a deceased person; usually the spouse and nearest blood relatives.

Non-Rebreather Mask - A type of oxygen mask used to administer high concentrations of oxygen to a breathing person

Non-Swimming Rescues and Assists - Rescues and assists that can be performed from a pool deck, pier, or shoreline by reaching, using an extremity or object, by throwing a floating object, or by standing in the water to provide either of these assists; performed instead of swimming out to the person in distress

Normal Sinus Rhythm (NSR) - The normal, regular rhythm of the heart, set by the SA node in the right atrium of the heart.

O

O-Ring Gasket - Plastic, O-shaped ring that makes the seal of the pressure regulator on an oxygen cylinder tight; can be a built-in or an attachable piece.

Obstetric Pack - A first aid kit containing items especially helpful in emergency delivery and initial care after birth; items can include personal protective equipment, towels, clamps, ties, sterile scissors and bulb syringes.

Obstructive Shock - A type of shock caused by any obstruction to blood flow, usually within the blood vessels, such as a pulmonary embolism.

Occlusive Dressing - A special type of dressing that does not allow air or fluid to pass through.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) - Federal agency whose role is to promote the safety and health of American workers by setting and enforcing standards; providing training, outreach, and education; establishing partnerships; and encouraging continual process improvement in workplace safety and health.

Ongoing Assessment - The process of repeating the primary assessment and physical exam while continually monitoring the patient; performed while awaiting the arrival of more highly trained personnel or while transporting the patient.

Open Fracture - A type of fracture in which there is an open wound in the skin over the fracture.

Open Wound - A wound resulting in a break in the skin's surface.

Opportunistic Infections - Infections that strike people whose immune systems are weakened.

OPQRST - A mnemonic for assessing pain (Onset, Provocation, Quality, Radiation, Severity, Time).

Oral (Oropharyngeal) Airway (OPA) - An airway adjunct inserted through the mouth and into the throat to help keep the tongue from obstructing the airway; used only with unconscious patients.

Organ - A structure of similar tissues acting together to perform specific body functions.

Overdose - The use of an excessive amount of a substance, resulting in adverse reactions ranging from mania (mental and physical hyperactivity) and hysteria to coma and death.

Oxygen Cylinder - A steel or alloy cylinder that contains 100 percent oxygen under high pressure.

Oxygenation - The addition of oxygen to the body; also, the treatment of a patient with oxygen.

P

Pacemaker - A device implanted under the skin, sometimes below the right collarbone, to help regulate heartbeat in someone with a weak heart, a heart that skips beats, or one that beats too fast or too slow.

Packaging - The process of getting a patient ready to be transferred safely from the scene to an ambulance or a helicopter.

Pack-Strap Carry - A type of carry in which the patient is supported upright, across the responder's back

Palpation - Examination performed by feeling part of the body

Pandemic Influenza - A respiratory illness caused by virulent human influenza A virus; spreads easily and sustainably and can cause global outbreaks of serious illness in humans.

Panic - A symptom of an anxiety disorder, characterized by episodes of intense fear and physical symptoms such as chest pain, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, and dizziness.

Paradoxical Breathing - An abnormal type of breathing that can occur with chest injury; one area of the chest moves in the opposite direction to the rest of the chest.

Paramedic – An individual with more training than AEMTs and who can perform all of the former's duties plus has additional knowledge of physical exams; may also perform more invasive procedures than any other prehospital care provider; formerly referred to as EMT-Paramedic.

Paranoia - A condition characterized by feelings of persecution and exaggerated notions of perceived threat; may be part of many mental health disorders and is rarely seen in isolation.

Parenchyma - Tissue that is involved in the functioning of a structure or organ as opposed to its supporting structures.

Partial Seizures - Seizures that affect only part of the brain; may be simple or complex.

Partial-Thickness Burn - A burn injury involving the epidermis and dermis, characterized by red, wet skin and blisters; also referred to as a second-degree burn

Passive Immunity - The type of immunity gained from external sources such as from a mother's breast milk to an infant.

Pathogen - A germ; a disease-causing agent (e.g., bacterium or virus).

Pathophysiology - The study of the abnormal changes in mechanical, physical and biochemical functions caused by an injury or illness.

Patient Narrative - A section on the prehospital care report where the assessment and care provided to the patient are described.

Patient's Best Interest - A fundamental ethical principle that refers to the provision of competent care, with compassion and respect for human dignity.

Pediatric Assessment Triangle - A quick initial assessment of a child that involves observation of the child's appearance, work of breathing and skin.

Penetrating Trauma - An injury in which a person is struck by or falls onto an object that penetrates or cuts through the skin, resulting in an open wound or wounds, the severity of which is determined by the path of the object (e.g., a bullet wound).

Percussion - A technique of tapping on the surface of the body and listening to the resulting sounds, to learn about the condition of the area beneath.

Perfusion - The circulation of blood through the body or through a particular body part for the purpose of exchanging oxygen and nutrients with carbon dioxide and other wastes.

Peritoneal Dialysis - A method of treatment for kidney failure in which waste products and extra UID are drawn into a solution which has been injected into the abdominal cavity and are withdrawn through a catheter.

Peritoneum - The membrane that lines the abdominal cavity and covers most of the abdominal organs.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - All specialized clothing, equipment and supplies that keep the user from directly contacting infected materials; includes gloves, gowns, masks, shields and protective eyewear.

Phobia - A type of anxiety disorder characterized by strong, irrational fears of objects or situations that are usually harmless; may trigger an anxiety or panic attack.

Physical Exam - Exam performed after the primary assessment; used to gather additional information and identify signs and symptoms of injury and illness.

Physiology - How living organisms' function (e.g., movement and reproduction).

Placenta - An organ attached to the uterus and unborn baby through which nutrients are delivered; expelled after the baby is delivered.

Placenta Previa - Placental implantation that occurs lower on the uterine wall, touching or covering the cervix; can be dangerous if it is still covering part of the cervix at the time of delivery.

Pleural Space - The space between the lungs and chest wall.

Pneumonia - A lung infection caused by a virus or bacterium that results in a cough, fever and difficulty breathing.

Pneumothorax - Collapse of a lung due to pressure on it caused by air in the chest cavity.

Poison - Any substance that can cause injury, illness or death when introduced into the body, especially by chemical means.

Poison Control Center (PCC) - A specialized health center that provides information on poisons and suspected poisoning emergencies.

Position of Comfort - The position a patient naturally assumes when feeling ill or in pain; the position depends on the mechanism of the injury or nature of the illness.

Positive Pressure Ventilation - An artificial means of forcing air or oxygen into the lungs of a person who has stopped breathing or has inadequate breathing.

Post-Ictal Phase - The final phase of a generalized seizure, during which the patient becomes extremely fatigued

Power Grip - A hand position for lifting that requires the full surface of the palms and fingers to come in contact with the object being lifted.

Power Lift - A lift technique that provides a stable move for the patient and protects the person lifting from serious injury.

Pralidoxime Chloride (protopam chloride; 2 - PAM CL) - A drug contained in antidote kits used to counteract the effects of nerve agents, commonly called 2-PAM chloride.

Preeclampsia - A type of toxemia that occurs during pregnancy; a condition characterized by high blood pressure and excess protein in the urine after the 20th week of pregnancy.

Prehospital Care - Emergency medical care provided before a patient arrives at a hospital or medical facility.

Prehospital Care Report (PCR) - A document filled out for all emergency calls; used to keep medical personnel informed so they can provide appropriate continuity of care; also serves as a record for legal and billing purposes; may be written or electronic; if electronic, it is then an E-PCR.

Premature Birth - Birth that occurs before the end of the 37th week of pregnancy.

Pressure Bandage - A bandage applied snugly to create pressure on a wound, to aid in controlling bleeding.

Pressure Points - Sites on the body where pressure can be applied to major arteries to slow the flow of blood to a body part.

Pressure Regulator - A device on an oxygen cylinder that reduces the delivery pressure of the oxygen to a safe level.

Primary (Initial) Assessment - A check for conditions that are an immediate threat to a patient's life.

Primary Assessment - Initial evaluation to determine the patient's immediate needs.

Primary Effects - In referring to explosive and incendiary devices, the effects of the impact of the over-pressurization wave from high-order explosives on body surfaces.

Prolapsed Cord - A complication of childbirth in which a loop of the umbilical cord protrudes through the vagina before delivery of the baby.

Protocols - Standardized procedures to be followed when providing care to injured or ill persons.

Pulmonary Embolism - Sudden blockage of an artery in the lung; can be fatal.

Pulse - The beat felt from each rhythmic contraction of the heart.

Pulse Oximetry - A test to measure the percentage of oxygen saturation in the blood using a pulse oximeter.

Puncture/Penetration - A type of wound that results when the skin is pierced with a pointed object.

R

Rabies - An infectious viral disease that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals; has a high fatality rate if left untreated.

Radiation - One of the ways the body loses heat; heat radiates out of the body, especially from the head and neck.

Radiation Burn - A burn caused by exposure to radiation, either nuclear (e.g., radiation therapy) or solar (e.g., radiation from the sun).

Rales - An abnormal breath sound; a popping, clicking, bubbling or rattling sound, also known as crackles.

Rape - Non-consensual sexual intercourse often performed using force, threat or violence.

Rape-Trauma Syndrome - The three stages a victim typically goes through following a rape, Acute, Outward Adjustment, Resolution; a common response to rape

Rapid Medical Assessment - A quick, head-to-toe exam of a medical patient.

Rappelling - The act of descending (as from a cliff) by sliding down a rope passed under one thigh, across the body, and over the opposite shoulder or through a special friction device.

Reaching Assist - A method of rescuing someone in the water by using an object to extend the rescuer's reach or by reaching with an arm or leg.

Reactivity - The degree to which a substance may react when exposed to other substances.

Reasonable Force - The minimum force necessary to keep a patient from harming him- or herself or others.

Recovery Position - A posture used to help maintain a clear airway in an unresponsive, breathing patient.

Refusal of Care - The declining of care by a competent patient; a patient has the right to refuse the care of anyone who responds to an emergency scene.

Respiratory Arrest - A condition in which breathing is absent.

Respiratory Distress - A condition in which a person is having difficulty breathing or requires extra effort to breathe.

Respiratory Failure - Condition in which the respiratory system fails in oxygenation and/or carbon dioxide elimination; the respiratory system is beginning to shut down; the person may alternate between being agitated and sleepy.

Respiratory Rate - The number of breaths per minute; normal rates vary by age and other factors.

Respiratory Shock - A type of shock caused by the failure of the lungs to transfer sufficient oxygen into the bloodstream; occurs with respiratory distress or arrest.

Respiratory System - A group of organs and other structures that brings air into the body and removes wastes through a process called breathing, or respiration.

Restraint - A method of limiting a patient's movements, usually by physical means such as a padded cloth strap; may also be achieved by chemical means, such as medication.

Resuscitation Mask - A pliable, dome-shaped breathing device that fits over the mouth and nose; used to provide artificial ventilations and administer emergency oxygen.

Retraction - A visible sinking of soft tissue between the ribs of a child or an infant.

Reye's Syndrome - An illness brought on by high fever that affects the brain and other internal organs; can be caused by the use of aspirin in children and infants.

Rhonchi - An abnormal breath sound when breathing that can often be heard without a stethoscope; a snoring or coarse, dry rale sound.

Rigid Splint - A splint made of a rigid material such as wood, aluminum, or plastic.

Risk Factors - Conditions or behaviors that increase the chance that a person will develop a disease.

Roller Bandage - A bandage made of gauze or gauze-like material that is wrapped around a body part, over a dressing, using overlapping turns until the dressing is covered.

Rollover - A collision in which the vehicle rolls over.

Rotational Impact - A collision in which the impact occurs off-center and causes the vehicle to rotate until it either loses speed or strikes another object.

RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) - A common respiratory virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms.

Rule of Nines - A method for estimating the extent of a burn; divides the body into 11 surface areas, each of which comprises approximately 9 percent of the body, plus the genitals, which are approximately 1 percent.

Run Data - A section on the PCR where information about the incident is documented.

Rule of Thumb - A guideline for positioning oneself far enough away from a scene involving HAZMAT

S

Sample History - A mnemonic for gathering patient history (Signs/symptoms, Allergies, Medications, Pertinent past medical history, Last oral intake, Events leading to injury or illness).

Scene Size-up - Initial assessment of an emergency scene to ensure safety and identify potential hazards

Schizophrenia - A chronic mental illness in which the person hears voices or feels that his or her thoughts are being controlled by others; can cause hallucinations, delusions, disordered thinking, movement disorders, and social withdrawal.

Scope of Practice - The range of duties and skills that are allowed and expected to be performed when necessary, according to the professional's level of training, while using reasonable care and skill.

Secondary Assessment - A head-to-toe physical exam as well as the focused history; completed following the primary assessment and management of any life-threatening conditions.

Secondary Effects - In referring to explosive and incendiary devices, the impact of flying debris and bomb fragments against any body part.

Seizure - Temporary abnormal electrical activity in the brain caused by injury, disease, fever, infection, metabolic disturbances, or conditions that decrease oxygen levels.

Self-Mutilation - Self-injury; deliberate harm to one's own body used as an unhealthy coping mechanism to deal with overwhelming negative emotions

Self-Splint - A splint formed by supporting one part of the body with another; also called an anatomic splint

Sepsis - A life-threatening illness in which the body is overwhelmed by its response to infection; commonly referred to as blood poisoning.

Septic Shock - A type of distributive shock that occurs when an infection has spread to the point that bacteria are releasing toxins into the bloodstream, causing blood pressure to drop when the tissues become damaged from the circulating toxins.

Service Animal - A guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to assist a person with a disability.

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) - A viral respiratory illness caused by the SARS-associated coronavirus (SARS-CoV).

Sexual Assault - Any form of sexualized contact with another person without consent and performed using force, coercion, or threat.

Shaken Baby Syndrome - A type of abuse in which a young child has been shaken harshly, causing swelling of the brain and brain damage.

Shipping Papers - Documents drivers must carry by law when transporting hazardous materials; list the names, possible associated dangers, and four-digit identification numbers of the substances in the load.

Shock - A life-threatening condition that occurs when the circulatory system fails to provide adequate oxygenated blood to all parts of the body; also referred to as hypoperfusion.

Shoulder Drag - A type of emergency move that is a variation of the clothes drag.

Shunt - A surgically created passage between two natural body channels, such as an artery and a vein, to allow the flow of fluid.

Side-Impact Collision - A collision in which the impact is at the side of the vehicle; also known as a broadside or T-bone collision

SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) - The sudden, unexplained death of a baby younger than one year of age.

Signs - Any observable evidence of injury or illness, such as bleeding or unusual skin color.

Signs of Life - Breathing and a pulse in an unresponsive patient.

Silent Heart Attack - A heart attack during which the patient has either no symptoms or very mild symptoms that the person does not associate with heart attacks; mild symptoms include indigestion or sweating.

Simple Access - In an extrication, the process of getting to the patient without the use of equipment.

Simple Partial Seizures - Seizures in which a specific body part experiences muscle contraction; does not affect memory or awareness.

Simple Triage and Rapid Transport (START) - A method of triage that allows quick assessment and prioritization of injured people.

Sinoatrial (SA) Node - A cluster of cells in the right atrium that generates the electrical impulses that set the pace of the heart's natural rhythm.

Smooth Muscles - Muscles responsible for the contraction of hollow organs such as blood vessels or the gastrointestinal tract.

Soft Splint - A splint made of soft material such as towels, pillows, slings, swathes, and cravats.

Soft Tissues - Body structures that include the layers of skin, fat, and muscles.

Sphygmomanometer - A device for measuring blood pressure; also called a BP cuff.

Spinal Column - The series of vertebrae extending from the base of the skull to the tip of the tailbone (coccyx); also referred to as the spine.

Spinal Cord - A cylindrical structure extending from the base of the skull to the lower back, consisting mainly of nerve cells and protected by the spinal column.

Spinal Motion Restriction - All methods and techniques used to limit the movement of the spinal column of a patient with a suspected spinal injury.

Splint - A device used to immobilize body parts.

Sprain - The partial or complete tearing or stretching of ligaments and other soft tissue structures at a joint.

Squat Lift - A lift technique that is useful when one of the lifter's legs or ankles is weaker than the other.

Stabilization - The final stage of labor in which the mother begins to recover and stabilize after giving birth.

Staging Area - Location established where resources can be placed while awaiting tactical assignment.

Stair Chair - Equipment used for patient transport in a sitting position.

Standard of Care - The criterion established for the extent and quality of an EMR's care.

Standard Precautions - Safety measures, including BSI and universal precautions, taken to prevent occupational-risk exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials; assumes that all body fluids, secretions, and excretions (except sweat) are potentially infective.

Standing Orders - Protocols issued by the medical director allowing specific skills to be performed or specific medications to be administered in certain situations.

Status Asthmaticus - A potentially fatal episode of asthma in which the patient does not respond to usual inhaled medications.

Status Epilepticus - An epileptic seizure (or repeated seizures) that lasts longer than 5 minutes without any sign of slowing down; should be considered life-threatening and requires prompt advanced medical care.

Stethoscope - A listening device, especially to the lungs, heart, and abdomen; may be used together with a BP cuff to measure blood pressure.

Stillbirth - Fetal death; death of a fetus after 20 weeks gestation or of a fetus weighing more than 350 grams.

Stimulant - A substance that affects the central nervous system and speeds up physical and mental activity.

Stoma - A surgical opening in the body; a stoma may be created in the neck following surgery on the trachea to allow the patient to breathe.

Strain - The excessive stretching and tearing of muscles or tendons; a pulled or torn muscle.

Stress - The body's normal response to any situation that changes a person's existing mental, physical, or emotional balance.

Stretcher - Equipment used for patient transport in a supine position.

Stridor - An abnormal, high-pitched breath sound caused by a blockage in the throat or larynx; usually heard on inhalation.

Stroke - A condition where the blood supply to part of the brain is interrupted or reduced.

Subconjunctival Hemorrhage - Broken blood vessels in the eyes.

Subcutaneous Emphysema - A rare condition in which air gets into tissues under the skin that covers the chest wall or neck; may occur as a result of wounds to those areas.

Substance Abuse - The deliberate, persistent, excessive use of a substance without regard to health concerns or accepted medical practices.

Substance Misuse - The use of a substance for unintended purposes or intended purposes but in improper amounts or doses.

Sucking Chest Wound - A chest wound in which an object, such as a knife or bullet, penetrates the chest wall and lung, allowing air to pass freely in and out of the chest cavity; breathing causes a sucking sound

Suctioning - The process of removing foreign matter, such as blood, other liquids, or food particles, using a mechanical or manual suctioning device.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest - A condition where the heart's pumping action stops abruptly, usually due to abnormal heart rhythms called arrhythmias.

Sudden Death - An unexpected, natural death; usually used to describe a death from a sudden cardiac event.

Suicide - An intentional act to end one's own life.

Sundowning - A symptom of Alzheimer's disease in which the person becomes increasingly restless or confused as late afternoon or evening approaches.

Superficial Burn - A burn injury involving only the top layer of skin, characterized by red, dry skin; also referred to as a 1st degree burn.

Supine - The body position lying flat on the back; used when the patient has suspected head, neck, or spinal injuries.

Surrogate Decision Maker - A third party with the legal right to make decisions for another person regarding medical and health issues through a durable power of attorney for health care.

Swathe - A cloth wrapped around a patient to securely hold the arm against the patient's chest, to add stability; also called a binder.

Symptoms - What the patient reports experiencing, such as pain, nausea, headache, or shortness of breath.

Syncope - The loss of consciousness; also known as fainting.

Synergistic Effect - The outcome created when two or more drugs are combined; the effects of each may enhance those of the other.

Systolic Blood Pressure - The force exerted against the arteries when the heart is contracting.

T

Tendon - A fibrous band that attaches muscle to bone.

Tension Pneumothorax - A life-threatening injury in which the lung is completely collapsed and air is trapped in the pleural space.

Tertiary Effects - The results of individuals being thrown by the blast wind caused by explosive and incendiary devices; can involve any body part.

Tetanus - An acute infectious disease caused by a bacterium that produces a powerful poison; can occur in puncture wounds, such as human and animal bites; also called lockjaw.

Thoracic - Relating to the thorax, or chest area where vital functions like breathing and circulation happen.

Thrombus - A blood clot that forms in a blood vessel and remains there, slowing the flow of blood and depriving tissues of normal blood flow and oxygen.

Throwing Assist - A method of rescuing someone in the water by throwing the person a rotating object, with or without a line attached.

Tidal Volume - The normal amount of air breathed at rest.

Tissue - A collection of similar cells acting together to perform specific body functions.

Tolerance - A condition in which the effects of a substance on the body decrease as a result of continued use.

Tonic Phase - The second phase of a generalized seizure, during which the patient becomes unconscious and muscles become rigid.

Tourniquet - A tight, wide band placed around an arm or a leg to constrict blood vessels to stop blood flow to a wound.

Toxemia - An abnormal condition associated with the presence of toxic substances in the blood.

Toxicity - The degree to which a substance is poisonous or toxic.

Toxicology - The study of the adverse effects of chemical, physical, or biological agents on the body.

Toxin - A poisonous substance produced by microorganisms that can cause certain diseases but is also capable of inducing neutralizing antibodies or antitoxins.

Traction Splint - A splint with a mechanical device that applies traction to realign the bones.

Transdermal Medication Patch - A patch on the skin that delivers medication; commonly contains nitroglycerin, nicotine, or other medications; should be removed before defibrillation.

Transferring - The responsibility of transporting a patient to an ambulance, as well as transferring information about the patient and incident to more advanced medical personnel who take over care.

Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA) - A condition that produces stroke-like symptoms but causes no permanent damage; may be a precursor to a stroke.

Trauma Alert Criteria - An assessment system used by EMS providers to rapidly identify those patients determined to have sustained severe injuries that warrant immediate evacuation for specialized medical treatment; based on several factors including status of airway, breathing, and circulation; Glasgow Coma Scale score; certain types of injuries present; and the patient's age.

Trauma Dressing - A dressing used to cover very large wounds and multiple wounds in one body area; also called a universal dressing.

Trauma System - definitive care facilities offering services within a region or community in various areas of medical expertise to care for injured individuals

Traumatic Asphyxia - Severe lack of oxygen due to trauma, usually caused by a thoracic injury.

Triage - A method of sorting patients into categories based on the urgency of their need for care.

Triage Tags - A system of identifying patients during an MCI; different colored tags signify different levels of urgency for care.

Triangular Bandage - A triangle-shaped bandage that can be rolled or folded to hold a dressing or splint in place; can also be used as a sling to support an injured shoulder, arm, or hand.

Trimester - A three-month period; there are three trimesters in a normal pregnancy.

Tripod Position - A position of comfort that a person may assume automatically when breathing becomes difficult; in a sitting position, the person leans slightly forward with outstretched arms, and hands resting on knees or an adjacent surface for support to aid breathing.

Tuberculosis (TB) - A bacterial infection that usually attacks the lungs.

Twisting Force - A force that causes injury when one part of the body remains still while the rest of the body is twisted or turns away from it.

Two-Person Seat Carry - A non-emergency method of carrying a patient by creating a "seat" with the arms of two responders

Type 1 Diabetes - A type of diabetes in which the pancreas does not produce insulin; formerly known as insulin-dependent diabetes or juvenile diabetes.

Type 2 Diabetes - A type of diabetes in which insufficient insulin is produced or the insulin is not used efficiently; formerly known as non-insulin-dependent diabetes or adult-onset diabetes.

U

Umbilical Cord - A flexible structure that attaches the placenta to the fetus, allowing for the passage of blood, nutrients, and waste.

Universal Precautions - A set of precautions designed to prevent transmission of HIV, hepatitis B virus (HBV), and other bloodborne pathogens when providing care; considers blood and certain body fluids of all patients potentially infectious.

Uterus - A pear-shaped organ in a woman's pelvis in which an embryo forms and develops into a baby; also called the womb.

V

Vacuum Splint - A splint that can be molded to the shape of the injured area by extracting air from the splint.

Vagina - Tract leading from the uterus to the outside of the body; often referred to during labor as the birth canal.

Vector-borne transmission - Transmission of a pathogen that occurs when an infectious source, such as an animal or insect bite or sting, penetrates the body's skin

Vehicle Stabilization - Steps taken to stabilize a motor vehicle in place so that it cannot move and cause further harm to patients or responders.

Veins - Blood vessels that carry oxygen-poor blood from all parts of the body to the heart.

Venous Bleeding - Dark red, steady flow of blood indicating a severed or punctured vein.

Ventilation - The exchange of air between the lungs and the atmosphere; allows for an exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the lungs.

Ventricular Fibrillation (V-B) - A life-threatening heart rhythm in which the heart is in a state of totally disorganized electrical activity

Ventricular Tachycardia (V-Tach) - A life-threatening heart rhythm in which there is very rapid contraction of the ventricles

Vial Of Life - A community service program that provides EMS personnel and other responders with vital health and medical information (including any advance directives) when a person, who suffers a medical emergency at home, is unable to speak; consists of a label affixed to the outside of the refrigerator to alert responders and a labeled vial or container that has pertinent medical information, a list of medications, health conditions and other pertinent medical information regarding the occupant(s).

Virus - A common type of pathogen that depends on other organisms to live and reproduce; can be difficult to kill.

Visual Warning Devices - Warning lights in an emergency vehicle that, used together with audible warning devices, alert other drivers of the vehicle's approach.

Vital Organs - Those organs whose functions are essential to life, including the brain, heart and lungs.

Vital Signs - Key indicators of health, such as blood pressure, pulse, respiration rate, oxygen saturation, and body temperature.

Voluntary Muscles - Muscles that attach to bones; also called skeletal muscles.

W

Wading Assist - A method of rescuing someone in the water by wading out to the person in distress.

Walking Assist - A method of assisting a patient to walk by supporting one of the patient's arms over the responder's shoulder (or each of the patient's arms over the shoulder of one responder on each side).

Walking Wounded (Green) - A triage category of those involved in an MCI who are able to walk by themselves to a designated area to await care.

Warm Zone - Also called the contamination reduction zone; the area immediately outside the hot zone.

Wheezing - A high-pitched whistling sound heard during inhalation but heard most loudly on exhalation; an abnormal breath sound that can often be heard without a stethoscope.

Withdrawal - The condition of mental and physical discomfort produced when a person stops using or abusing a substance to which the person is addicted.

WMDS - Weapons of mass destruction.

Work Practice Controls - Control measures that reduce the likelihood of exposure by changing the way a task is carried out.

Wound - An injury to the soft tissues.

X

Y

Z