

TOURNIQUET

INDICATIONS: A tourniquet should be used to control potentially fatal hemorrhagic wounds only after other means of stopping blood loss have failed.

PRECAUTIONS:

- ✓ Use BSI.
- ✓ A tourniquet applied incorrectly can increase blood loss and lead to death.
- ✓ Applying a tourniquet can cause nerve and tissue damage whether applied correctly or not. Proper patient selection is imperative.
- ✓ Damage is unlikely if the tourniquet is removed within an hour. Low risk to tissue is acceptable over death secondary to hypovolemic shock.
- ✓ A commercially made tourniquet is the only acceptable tourniquet to be used; improvised tourniquets are not as effective and may cause more harms.

TECHNIQUE:

1. Attempt to control hemorrhage using direct pressure, elevation, and indirect pressure over pressure points prior to considering the application of a tourniquet.
2. If unable to control hemorrhage, apply a tourniquet, using the procedure below. Taking into consideration the previously listed precautions.
 - I. Tourniquet application is a standing order.
 - II. Apply tourniquet proximal to the wound and not across any joints.
 - III. Tighten tourniquet until bleeding stops.
 - ✓ Applying tourniquet loosely will only increase blood loss by inhibiting venous return.
 - ✓ Cut away any clothing so that the tourniquet is clearly visible. The tourniquet should NEVER be covered by clothing or bandages.

- IV. The time and date of application should be written on the patient's skin next to the tourniquet with a permanent marker.
3. Keep tourniquet on throughout hospital transport. A correctly applied tourniquet should only be removed by the receiving hospital.