

INTERPRETATION OF STEP 3 OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON PREHOSPITAL TRAUMA TRIAGE (DESTINATION) PROCEDURE



Step 3 of the **State of Washington Prehospital Trauma Triage (Destination) Procedure** requires integration of the patient's clinical condition, with the potential for significant injury, based upon how the injury was caused, as well as additional factors that increase the likelihood of injury severity. This requires the EMS provider to apply judgment integrating the patient's clinical condition with the potential for significant injury, secondary to the mechanism, the environment, and other patient conditions which increase the likelihood of trauma.

For example, being in a bicycle accident by itself does not define significant trauma. A car rollover, historically, has been a major cause of injury, but, given improvements in vehicle safety, results in major trauma less often. A very cold day does not mandate transfer of a minor injury patient to a trauma center provided the patient has not suffered major environmental exposure. Extremes of age represents a statistical increased risk that an injury may be more serious, but, by themselves, do not define significant trauma.

EMS providers in the State of Washington strongly encourage the inclusion of "gut feeling of medic" in determining which patient qualifies as a Step 3 patient. Truly, for the purpose of the prehospital triage of Step 3 patients, the "gut feeling of the medic" which is slang for well-trained EMS provider judgment, is essential to the triage of all these patients.

