

# Tourniquet Use

## INDICATIONS

- A. A tourniquet should be used to control hemorrhagic wounds that have not responded adequately to direct pressure or in situations of significant extremity bleeding with the need for additional interventions (example: significant extremity bleeding with airway compromise. A tourniquet should be used to quickly control bleeding, freeing up Personnel to concentrate on airway issues.)

## PRECAUTIONS

- A. Use BSI
- B. A tourniquet applied incorrectly can increase blood loss and lead to death.
- C. Applying a tourniquet can cause nerve and tissue damage whether applied correctly or not. Proper patient selection is of the utmost importance.
- D. Damage is unlikely if the tourniquet is removed within 2 hours. Low risk to tissue is acceptable over death secondary to hypovolemic shock.
- E. Tourniquets should never be covered up by patient clothing or packaging.

## TECHNIQUE

- A. Attempt to control hemorrhage with direct pressure or pressure dressing.
- B. If unable to control hemorrhage using the above means, apply a tourniquet, using the procedure below, and minding the above considerations
  - a. Select commercially manufactured tourniquet, blood pressure cuff, or improvised “Spanish Windlass” is applied to the extremity proximal to the wound, preferably on single-bone structures (humerus and femur) above wound. Do not place over joints.
  - b. Tighten tourniquet until bleeding stops.
  - c. The time and date of application (“TK 20:30” indicates that the tourniquet was placed at 8:30 pm) should be written on a piece of tape and secured to the tourniquet or written directly on the patient’s skin next to the tourniquet with a permanent marker.
  - d. The tourniquet should be left uncovered so that the site can be monitored for recurrent hemorrhage.
  - e. Keep tourniquet on throughout transport – a correctly applied tourniquet should only be removed by the receiving hospital.
  - f. Continue to monitor patient vitals and wound
  - g. Ensure receiving personnel are aware of tourniquet placement.