

Draft - Minimum Guidelines and Scope of Practice for Wilderness First Responder (WFR)

Submersion - Drowning

- Initiate appropriate treatment
 - Respiratory support
 - Spine injury potential
 - Hypothermia
- Prevention: recognize high risk conditions and prevention strategies with an emphasis on personal safety when traveling or planning rescue
- Decide on need and urgency of evacuation. High risk problems include loss of consciousness or persistent respiratory distress.

Backcountry Medical Problems

A WFR needs to be familiar with a range of medical problems (flu-like, respiratory, diabetes, cardiac, altered mental status, urinary tract infection (UTI), vaginitis, testicular pain) which can present in remote circumstances. However, the scope of practice for a WFR remains prevent, identify, initiate reasonable and prudent field management and identify red flag signs and symptoms necessitating evacuation for potentially life-threatening problems including changes in level of consciousness, chest pain, shortness of breath and abdominal pain.

Flu-like illness, N/V/D, Fever, Cough/URI

- Recognize signs and symptoms of Flu-like illness
- Initiate appropriate treatment
 - Treat symptomatically. Focus on hydration.
- Prevention: Understand the role of camp hygiene (handwashing, kitchen sanitation food preparation and water disinfection)
- Decide on need and urgency of evacuation. Identify red flag evacuation criteria:
 - Vomiting and diarrhea (Evacuation: blood, fever, tenderness, dehydration)
 - Fever (Evacuation: abnormal mental state, headache, persistent high fever)
 - Cough/URI (Evacuation: respiratory distress, fever, coughing up colored phlegm)

Abdominal Pain

- Recognize signs and symptoms
- Initiate appropriate treatment
- Decide on need and urgency of evacuation. Identify red flag evacuation criteria:
 - Abdominal pain: (persistent local tenderness, fever, persistent vomiting, getting worse over 12 hrs, any noticeable blood in stool, urine, or vomit, signs and symptoms pregnancy, peritoneal signs)

Allergy

- Recognize signs and symptoms of local and mild allergic reactions
- Initiate appropriate treatment
 - Treat local reactions with cool compresses, topical corticosteroid
 - Treat mild allergic reactions with oral antihistamine

Anaphylaxis

- Recognize s/s of anaphylaxis
 - Treat anaphylaxis with epinephrine oral antihistamine and evacuation.
- Decide on need and urgency of evacuation

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OUTWARD BOUND



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Genito-Urinary

- Recognize signs and symptoms of vaginitis (in females), UTI, and testicular pain (in males).
- Initiate appropriate treatment
 - Treat vaginitis symptomatically with OTC medications
 - Treat UTI with hydration
- Decide on need and urgency of evacuation. Consider effectiveness of treatment.
- Prevention: Identify predisposing conditions and prevention strategies

Dental

- Recognize signs and symptoms lost crown/fillings, broken teeth, avulsed teeth and dental infections.
- Initiate appropriate treatment
 - Dental hygiene
 - Covering lost fillings, broken crowns
 - Attempt to preserve avulsed teeth
- Decide on need and urgency of evacuation. Decisions are usually made on patient comfort.

Diabetes

- Recognize signs and symptoms of hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia
- Initiate appropriate treatment
 - Treat all diabetic emergencies with a change in LOC/LOR with oral sugar while maintaining a patent airway and until a blood sugar has been determined.
- Decide on need and urgency of evacuation. High risk problems include:
 - Any person who is unable to maintain blood sugar within their normal range.
 - Any person with altered mental status that does not respond to administration of glucose.
 - Any diabetic with an underlying infection and a fever

Eyes and Ears

- Recognize signs and symptoms of eye problems
- Initiate appropriate treatment
 - Irrigation and gentle removal for objects in eye
 - Cool compresses and dark glasses for snowblindness
 - Craft improvised sunglasses for traumatic eye injury or snowblindness.
 - Evacuate visual problems more than blurring, persistent irritation.
- Recognize objects in the ear, ear canal infections and changes in ability to hear.
- Decide on need and urgency of evacuation.

Poison Ivy, Oak, Sumac

- Recognize signs and symptoms of urushiol reactions
- Initiate appropriate treatment
 - Symptomatic treatment.

Sunburn

- Initiate appropriate treatment
 - Treat as a superficial burn
- Prevention: Understand the role of UV barriers; sunscreen and clothing.

Motion sickness

- Initiate appropriate treatment
- Prevention: Understand predisposing environmental conditions and prevention strategies

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Toxins

Poisoning

- Understand general principles of ingested, inhaled and absorbed poison management and CO poisoning
- Prevention: label substances, identify plants, avoid stoves, lanterns and other CO sources in poorly ventilated spaces.
- Initiate appropriate treatment:
 - Ingested Poisons: if poison is non-corrosive, non-petroleum based and the patient is fully responsive induce vomiting. Otherwise dilute with water (If normal LOR, patient can swallow).
 - Inhaled Poisons: (commonly CO, occasionally other gasses e.g. volcanic fumes) Scene safety. Remove from exposure. administer O₂, if available.
 - Absorbed Poisons: remove contaminated clothing. Flush area with water and wash with soap.
- Decide on need and urgency of evacuation. High risk problems include altered LOC/LOR or signs of respiratory distress.

Snake bite

- Initiate appropriate treatment
 - Immobilize the limb
 - Compression wraps, which are controversial, according to local guidelines.
 - Avoid unproven or discredited treatments that may harm (ice, incision and suction, electricity, tourniquets, compression, meat tenderizer, etc)
 - Transport to a physician/hospital
 - Monitor for signs and symptoms of envenomation
- Decide on need and urgency of evacuation. High risk problems include any s/s of envenomation.
- Prevention: identify common human behaviors that are factors in snakebite incidents.

Arthropods (insects, arachnids e.g. scorpions, spiders)

- Initiate Appropriate treatment
 - Symptomatic treatment including wound care.
 - Tick removal
- Evacuate symptomatic scorpion stings to medical care and possible antivenin administration
- Decide on need and urgency of evacuation: Evacuate if rash, fever, headache appear secondary to a bite.
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- Prevention: Understand the role of clothing, netting, repellents, insecticides in prevention of disease transmission.

Medical Legal

- Understand the following legal concepts as they apply to wilderness medicine
 - Duty to Act and Good Samaritan Laws
 - Scope of practice and standards of practice
 - Consent and confidentiality
 - Understand the concepts of certification, licensure, and protocols
- Understand the legal implications of a non-licensed provider possessing and administering medications.
- Understand the function of written medical protocols and guidance from a medical advisor.
- Medication Administration
 - Understand the legal aspects of medication administration by laypeople in a remote context.
 - Understand the concepts of right drug, reason, route, dose, and patient.
 - A WFR should not be making decisions on whether a patient should or should not take their personal prescription medications (unless it's an obvious situation of abuse or harm). A WFR may assist trip participants in the administration of prescription medications and may offer OTC medications for adults to make their own decision according to the package label.
 - The possession and administration of epinephrine by laypeople is a complex issue. Support for laypeople using epinephrine for anaphylaxis amongst jurisdictions, including from country to country, varies considerably. It is important to encourage students to become familiar with any specific

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regulations in this regard and to know implications. Organizations should be strongly encouraged to seek advice from a lawyer and/or guidance from a person acting as a medical advisor before deciding to initiate a policy that includes the emergency use of injectable epinephrine

Elective Topics

Electives are skills and knowledge within the WFR Scope of practice, that can be included or excluded at the discretion of the provider and course sponsor to meet specific needs of the student and the context in which they will use their WFR

SAR Fundamentals

- Understand fundamental concepts of search and rescue, ICS, and evacuation plans

SCUBA Diving Injury

- Know the physiology of SCUBA and breathing a gas under pressure.
- Know how and why pulmonary over pressure problems and decompression sickness occur
- Recognize the common signs and symptoms including joint pain, paresthesias, limb or facial weakness or any evidence of critical system problems following SCUBA diving
- Initiate treat to include:
 - Stabilization of critical system problems
 - Provide supplement high flow oxygen when available
 - Contact DAN if possible (Divers Alert Network: 919-684-9111)
- Decide on the need and urgency of evacuation:

Mental Health

- Recognize a possible mental health issue.
- Recognize signs of stress in participants and colleagues.
- Perform a complete patient assessment to rule out/not miss physical causes
- Decide on need and urgency of evacuation. High risk problems include inability to manage the mental health problem in the field and if the patient appears to be a danger to self or others.

Toxins: Marine

- Initiate appropriate treatment
 - Treat Nematocysts (jelly fish, corals, anemones)
 - Saltwater rinse to remove loose nematocysts, soak in alcohol or vinegar (first test a small area of the sting for adverse effects), scrape off remaining nematocysts.
 - Treat Marine Spine Injury:
 - Soak in hot water until pain relieved or 30-90 minutes, standard wound care.
 - Evac to supportive care
 - If pain persists, the rash worsens, a feeling of overall illness develops, a red streak develops between swollen lymph nodes and the sting, or if either area becomes red, warm and tender.