

# Monterey County EMS System Policy



Policy Number: 4510  
Effective Date: 7/1/2024  
Review Date: 6/30/2027

## TOURNIQUET

### I. PURPOSE

- A. To specify the indications for the use of tourniquets.

### II. POLICY

- A. Tourniquets may be used for significant active bleeding in an extremity according to the indications listed below.
- B. Monterey County EMS Service providers may stock only commercially-manufactured tourniquets. Tourniquets may be improvised for use when the number of patients or extent of injuries deplete the stock of tourniquets available at the scene.
- C. Tourniquet use is approved for paramedics, EMTs, EMRs, and trained public safety personnel.

### III. INDICATIONS

- A. A tourniquet should be used in the following situations:
  - 1. In the presence of significant active bleeding
    - a) When direct pressure is unable to control the bleeding.
    - b) In the presence of impaled/penetrating objects when direct pressure is unable to be used to control bleeding.
    - c) When direct pressure has the potential to cause further injury to a mangled extremity.
  - 2. In the presence of multiple patients and the time needed to control bleeding through direct pressure would potentially interfere with other lifesaving activities.
  - 3. In the tactical environment when scene safety is a concern. In this situation a tourniquet may be used as the initial method to control active bleeding.

### IV. PROCEDURE

- A. Follow the manufacturer's guidelines for application.
- B. Do not apply a tourniquet over a joint.
- C. Do not apply a tourniquet over a fracture or suspected fracture.
- D. Apply the tourniquet at least 2-3 inches proximal to the injury/bleeding site.
- E. Tighten the tourniquet enough to stop the bleeding or until a distal pulse cannot be felt.
- F. Reassess for bleeding.

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1. If bleeding from the wound starts after the tourniquet has been placed, attempt to control the bleeding with direct pressure to the wound or tighten the tourniquet until the bleeding stops.
- G. A second tourniquet may be utilized if bleeding is unable to be controlled with the first tourniquet. The second tourniquet should be placed next to and proximal to the first tourniquet. Do not remove the first tourniquet after applying the second tourniquet.
- H. Do not remove the tourniquet once it is in place, except by physician's order.
1. If an improvised tourniquet prevents placement of a commercial tourniquet due to its location, it may be removed prior to placement of the commercial tourniquet.
- I. Consider medication for pain management.
- J. Remove any jewelry, clothing, etc. from the affected extremity.
- K. During transfer of patient care to another provider, clearly identify the presence of and location(s) of any tourniquet(s).

### V. NOTES

- A. If it is necessary to improvise a tourniquet, the improvised tourniquet should be at least 2 inches in width. Elastic-type materials that stretch should be avoided.
- B. Poorly applied or unnecessary tourniquets applied by bystanders or lesser-trained personnel may be removed by EMS personnel. If there is uncontrolled bleeding, a new tourniquet should be applied.

**END OF POLICY**

  
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