



North Central Regional Trauma Advisory Council



Preventing Hypothermia in Trauma Patients

Did you know that 57% of trauma patients arrive at the hospital **too cold**? Hypothermia is a major complication for these patients. **Mortality** has been reported to range between 40-100% when trauma patient core temperature falls below 90°F (32.2°C)

Factors that place trauma patients at higher risk for body heat loss:

- Laying on cold, wet ground
- Wet clothing (blood, rain, sweat)
- Thermoregulatory deficiencies related to current illness/ injury
- Thermoregulatory deficiencies related to pre-existing conditions
- Inability to shiver due to lack of energy/shock
- Exposure to elements during assessment and care
- Cool IV fluids

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Interventions EMS can do to help limit the risk of hypothermia:

- Move the patient from the cold ground or place a blanket under them if unable to move right away
- Remove any wet or damp clothing
- Limit exposure to elements after examinations and interventions – cover them back up!!
- Heat the patient compartment of the ambulance.
- IV fluids warmed to 100-108°F (37.8-42.2°C)

Should I take a temperature? If you have time and resources to take a temperature, go for it but pre-hospital temp readings tend to be inaccurate. It is more important to focus on managing the ABCs and taking the steps above to preserve body heat.