

## Kittitas County Prehospital EMS Protocols

**SUBJECT:      DECOMPRESSION OF A PNEUMOTHORAX**

### **Suspected Tension Pneumothorax**

In the event of a suspected tension pneumothorax, and the patient is deteriorating rapidly, perform the following:

- A.      Prepare all necessary equipment.
- B.      Identify the second intercostal space at the mid-clavicular line or the fifth intercostal space at the mid-axillary line.
- C.      Cleanse and prep the site with Povidone-iodine.
- D.      Use a 12 ga catheter over-the-needle (16 ga for pediatric patients) device, attached to a one-way flutter valve, or an MPD-approved commercial device.
- E.      Insert the needle above the third rib, into the second intercostal space, until you hear a “pop.”
- F.      Advance the catheter an additional 1-2 cm, and withdraw the needle (or as recommended by the manufacturer, if using a commercial device).
- G.      Secure with tape and an occlusive dressing.
- H.      Continually monitor lung sounds and respiratory status.