

7.07 TOURNIQUET

EMSAC JUNE 2026

BLS

INDICATION

- Life threatening extremity hemorrhage not controlled by direct pressure
- During a Mass Casualty Incident or entrapment, may consider tourniquet application in situations where direct pressure cannot be applied

PRECAUTION

- Avoid placement on limbs with AV fistulas, unless last resort to slow hemorrhage after failure with direct pressure. Tourniquets may permanently damage AV fistulas

EQUIPMENT

- Combat Application Tourniquet (CAT) or equivalent (e.g. emergency and military tourniquet, or special operations forces tactical tourniquet)

TECHNIQUE

1. Apply tourniquet 2-3 inches proximal to the active bleeding site directly to skin (not over joint)
2. Tighten band to manufacturer's specification and hemostasis achieved. ~~so that three fingers cannot slide between the band and limb~~
3. Check for bleeding and distal pulse. If bleeding is not controlled or distal pulse is present, tighten tourniquet. If bleeding is still not controlled, consider **second** tourniquet more proximal ~~and side by side~~ to the first
4. Reassess frequently for bleeding
5. Treat pain as indicated

Discontinuation

- ~~Tourniquet placed by EMS personnel: should remain in place until transfer of care to receiving hospital or Base Hospital approval~~
- ~~Tourniquet (improvised or commercial grade) placed by bystander or non-medical professional (e.g. law enforcement):~~
- If EMS Personnel assess a patient and in their judgement a tourniquet was inappropriately applied or no longer indicated, they may attempt removal:
 - Slowly loosen
 - Be prepared to re-tighten tourniquet, **apply more proximate tourniquet** or apply direct pressure if bleeding recurs
 - Perform serial reassessment

DOCUMENTATION

1. Directly on tourniquet strap note the time of application
2. If applicable, EMS Personnel responsible for procedure (eprocedures.09 and eprocedures.10)
3. Inform subsequent medical providers of tourniquet placement location and time of application
4. PCR documentation should include location, time, extremity and indication for application