

Important Notes about Non-breathing Spinal Injury Rescues With V-Block Spineboards

July 6, 2007



The present videos show jaw-thrust as the method of opening the airway of a spinal injured patient with no obvious signs of adequate breathing. New videos are in the works.

Lifeguards are expected to employ the new ILCOR 2005 CPR Guidelines in their CPR response as covered in the AER 2007 training sessions. Head-tilt-chin-lift is the preferred method to open the airway for all non-breathing patients.

The following points should aid the Lifeguard in regards to spinal injury rescue:

1. In water non-breathing, spinal injury rescues, only the short strap on the head blocks is utilized to speed removal.
 - a. The transport strap would be utilized if the patient starts breathing normally.
2. If breathing is still absent once the patient is on the deck, remove one (1) side of the short strap. The guard at the head uses the head-tilt-chin-lift to open the airway; continue with the CPR sequence.
 - a. Leaving the short strap in place with the head-tilt-chin-lift, may make it difficult to properly open the airway and may cause the head to “snap” back in a ballistic movement.
3. If the patient vomits, quickly place the short strap back in place and roll the board as usual and return the board flat after the vomiting has been dealt with.
 - a. If the patient is breathing normally at this point continue assessment; any unnecessary movement of the patient should be avoided.
 - b. If there are no obvious signs of breathing, go back to step 2 and continue with the CPR sequence.

