



COMBAT MEDIC/CORPSMAN
TACTICAL COMBAT CASUALTY CARE

MODULE 12:
HYPOTHERMIA
PREVENTION AND
TREATMENT
SKILL INSTRUCTIONS

24 JAN 21



**Committee on
Tactical Combat
Casualty Care
(CoTCCC)**

HYPOTHERMIA PREVENTION AND TREATMENT INSTRUCTION

TASK:	Prevent and/or treat hypothermia
CONDITION:	Given a Tactical Field Care scenario where the trauma casualty has signs and symptoms of hypothermia or is at risk of hypothermia
STANDARD:	Prevent and/or treat hypothermia following all steps and meeting performance measures without causing further harm to the casualty
EQUIPMENT:	Active warming devices (commercially available) and/or passive warming materials (e.g., poncho, wool blanket, dry wrap, Mylar or space blanket)

PERFORMANCE MEASURES: step-by-step instructions

NOTE: Aggressive steps should be taken early to prevent further loss of body heat and, when possible, actively warm (by adding external heat) trauma and burn casualties.

NOTE: Consider body substance isolation.

NOTE: If a Combat Lifesaver is available, direct them to assist.

NOTE: Ensure hemostasis, assess, and treat for hemorrhagic shock (see Shock Recognition and Management Instructions).

- 01** Minimize casualty's exposure to cold ground, wind, and cool ambient air temperatures as soon as possible.
- 02** Place insulation material between the casualty and any cold surface (ground, vehicle, etc.) as soon as possible.
- 03** Keep dry clothing and protective gear on or with the casualty, if feasible; expose the casualty only to the extent necessary for assessment and treatment.
- 04** Remove any wet clothes and replace them with dry clothes/other dry materials, if possible.
- 05** If using a hypothermia kit, remove the vapor barrier shell, open completely, and place the casualty centered on the shell.
- 06** If a commercially available vapor barrier shell is not available, place the casualty centered on an impermeable vapor barrier (space blanket, survival blanket, plastic tarp, poncho liner, waterproof sleeping bag shell, body bag, etc.)
- 07** If an active warming device is available, open the active warming device package, remove the device, and expose to air (per manufacturer's guidance).
- 08** Apply the active warming device on the casualty's anterior torso and under the arms in the axillae.
CAUTION: Do not place the active warming device directly on the skin to prevent burns.
- 09** If an active warming device is not available, wrap passive warming materials (blanket, etc.) under and around the casualty, including the head.
CAUTION: Passive hypothermia prevention does not reverse the hypothermic process.
- 10** Wrap the entire vapor barrier shell (or other improvised impermeable vapor barrier materials) completely around the casualty, including the head and secure using tape if necessary.
NOTE: Do not cover up the casualty's face.
NOTE: As soon as possible, upgrade any improvised vapor barrier to a well-insulated enclosure system as additional materials become available.
NOTE: As a planning factor, pre-stage an insulated hypothermia enclosure system with external active heating for transition from non-insulated hypothermia enclosure systems.
- 11** Protect the casualty from further exposure to wind and precipitation while awaiting evacuation.
- 12** Monitor the casualty closely for life-threatening conditions.
- 13** Document all findings and treatments on a DD Form 1380 TCCC Casualty Card and attach it to the casualty.

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