

## Cold Emergencies (Adult and Pediatric)

### CFR and All Provider Levels

1. ABCs and vital signs
2. Airway management and appropriate oxygen therapy
3. Move the patient to a warmer environment, if possible
4. If the patient is conscious and able to drink without assistance, provide warm beverages if available
5. Special Considerations:
  - 5.1 Localized Cold Injury:
    - Remove clothing and jewelry from affected area(s)
    - Protect affected area(s) from pressure, trauma, and friction; wrap area in dry, bulky dressings. If affected, wrap digits individually
  - 5.2 Generalized Hypothermia:
    - When evaluating a patient with generalized hypothermia, assess central pulses for one minute if not immediately palpable and perform resuscitation if indicated
    - Dry the patient and gently remove any wet clothing and jewelry
    - If available, place heat packs in the patient's groin area, lateral chest and neck
    - Wrap the patient in dry blankets

### CFR STOP

#### EMT

6. If the patient has altered mental status:
  - 6.1 Obtain blood glucose level and treat as needed
  - 6.2 Request ALS assistance
7. Transport

### EMT STOP

#### Paramedic

8. Perform advanced airway management as needed
9. Begin cardiac monitoring
10. Perform, record and evaluate EKG rhythm
11. Obtain intravascular access
12. Administer crystalloid fluids (warmed, if available) 20 ml/kg IV (maximum 2 L)

### Paramedic STOP

#### Medical Control Options

**Key Points / Considerations**

- Generalized Hypothermia
  - Vital signs may be extremely depressed and difficult to obtain
  - Patients with hypothermic immersion may remain viable with prolonged exposures
  - Head coverings effectively reduce heat loss
  - Rough handling may precipitate cardiac dysrhythmias and/or cardiac arrest
  - Use caution with heat packs to prevent burns, particularly with unconscious patients
- Localized Hypothermia
  - Do NOT rub affected area(s) or break blisters