Glossary

Abandonment
Leaving a patient after care has been initiated and before the patient has been transferred to someone with equal or greater medical training.

Abdomen
The portion of the trunk located between the chest and the pelvis; the upper portion of the abdominopelvic cavity.

Abdominal breathing
Breathing using only the diaphragm; characterized by weak and rapid respirations with little or no chest movement. There may be slight movement of the abdomen. Also called diaphragmatic breathing.

Abdominal cavity
The space bounded by the abdominal walls, diaphragm, and pelvis and containing most of the organs of digestion, the spleen, the kidneys, and the adrenal glands.

Abdominal quadrants
Four divisions of the abdomen determined by drawing imaginary vertical and horizontal lines through the umbilicus. The quadrants are the right upper and lower quadrant, and the left upper and lower quadrant.

Abdominal thrusts
Manual thrusts delivered to the midline of the abdomen just above the navel. Abdominal thrusts create pressure to expel an upper airway obstruction.

Abrasion
Loss of skin as a result of a body part being rubbed or scraped across a rough or hard surface.

Acetone breath
A sweet breath with a fruit-like odor. This is a sign of a possible diabetic coma.

Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)
The syndrome of opportunistic infections that occur as the final stage of infection by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Acute
Having rapid onset of severe symptoms and then diminishing after a short period of time.
**Acute abdomen**
The sudden onset of abdominal pain, caused by disease or trauma, which irritates the lining or viscera of the abdominal cavity and requires immediate medical or surgical treatment.

**Acute myocardial infarction (AMI)**
See Myocardial infarction (MI).

**Advanced life support (ALS)**
The use of specialized equipment such as cardiac monitors, defibrillators, intravenous fluids, drug infusion, and endotracheal intubations to stabilize the patient.

**Afterbirth**
The placenta, membranes of the amniotic sac, part of the umbilical cord, and some tissues from the lining of the uterus that are delivered after the birth of a baby.

**Air embolism**
Obstruction of a blood vessel by an air bubble.

**Air sacs**
The microscopic parts of the lung where gas exchange takes place. The medical term is alveoli.

**Airway**
Natural passageway for air to and from the lungs. The term can also be used mean a device used to prevent or correct an obstructed airway.

**Airway adjunct**
A device that is placed in the patient’s mouth or nose to help maintain an open airway. Oral airway adjuncts may help to hold the tongue clear of the airway.

**Allergen**
Any substance that can cause an allergic reaction.

**Alveoli**
The air sacs of the lungs where the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide takes place.

**Amputation**
The surgical removal or traumatic separation of a body extremity.
Anaphylactic shock
Severe shock caused by an allergic reaction to food, medicine, plants, or insect bites; causing a drop in blood pressure, and the selling of the tissues lining the respiratory system interfering with respirations. Also called anaphylaxis.

Aneurysm
The localized abnormal dilation of a blood vessel.

Angina pectoris
Chest pain with squeezing or tightness in the chest caused by an inadequate flow of blood to the coronary arteries and sometimes radiating to one or both arms.

Angulation
The angle formed above and below a break in the bone. The fracture changes the straight line of a bone into an angle.

Anterior
The front surface of the body.

Antiseptic
A substance that will stop the growth of, or prevent, the activities of germs (microorganisms).

Anus
The distal or terminal ending of the gastrointestinal tract.

Aorta
The largest artery in the body. It transports blood from the left ventricle to begin systemic circulation.

Arm
The part of the upper extremity that extends from the shoulder to the hand.

Arrhythmia
A disruption in heart rate and rhythm.

Arterial bleeding
Serious bleeding from an artery in which blood frequently pulses or spurts from an open wound.

Arteriosclerosis
The hardening and thickening of the walls of the arteries.
Artery
Any blood vessel carrying blood away from the heart.

Articulate
To join together as a joint.

Ascites
The abnormal accumulation of serous fluid in the spaces between tissues and organs in the cavity of the abdomen—also known as hydroperitoneum.

Aseptic
Free of septic matter (dirt and debris).

Asphyxia
A lack of oxygen or excess of carbon dioxide in the body that is usually caused by interruption of respirations leading to unconsciousness.

Aspiration
Breathing in foreign matter such as food, drink, or vomitus into the airway or lungs.

Asthma
An acute spasm of the smaller air passages marked by labored breathing and wheezing.

Asystole
When the heart has ceased generating electrical impulses.

Atherosclerosis
Thickening of the arterial walls caused by fatty deposits within them: the arteries lose the ability to dilate and maintain a safe blood pressure.

Atrium
Either of the two upper chambers of the heart.

Auscultation
Listening to sounds with a stethoscope.

Automated external defibrillator (AED)
Portable battery-powered devices that recognize ventricular fibrillation and give voice prompts when a countershock is indicated. The AED delivers an electric shock to patients with ventricular tachycardia or ventricular fibrillation.

AVPU
A scale to measure a patient’s level of consciousness.
Avulsion
An injury in which a piece of tissue is either torn completely loose from all of its attachments or is left hanging as a flap.

Axial skeleton
The skeleton of the trunk and head.
Bag-Valve-Mask (BVM)
A ventilation device that consists of a bag, one-way valve, and a face mask that delivers room air or supplemental oxygen.

Bandage
A strip of fabric used to cover a wound, hold a dressing in place, immobilize an injured part, or apply pressure.

Basic life support (BLS)
Emergency lifesaving procedures performed without advanced emergency procedures to stabilize patients who have experienced a sudden illness or injury.

Behavioral emergencies
Situations in which a person exhibits abnormal behavior that is unacceptable or cannot be tolerated by the patient, family, friends, or the community.

Bilateral
Relating to, or affecting the right and left sides of the body.

Bile
A secretion of the liver that aids in the emulsification and absorption of fats.

Biological death
When the victim's lung and heart activity has stopped and his/her brain cells die. Lethal changes usually begin to take place in the brain within 4 to 6 minutes after breathing stops. This process may be delayed by cold temperatures.

Birth canal
The vagina and the lower part of the uterus.

Bladder
A membranous sac or receptacle for a secretion and commonly used to designate the urinary bladder.

Blood pressure
The pressure exerted by the blood upon the walls of the arteries and veins.

Body substance isolation (BSI)
An infection control concept that treats all bodily fluids as potentially infectious.

Bowel
The intestine.
**Brachial artery pressure point**
The pressure point located in the inside upper arm between the elbow and the shoulder.

**Brachial pulse**
The pulse in the inside of the upper arm between the elbow and shoulder-used for caching a pulse on infants.

**Breastbone**
The sternum.

**Breech birth**
When the baby appears buttocks or both legs first during birth. Also called breech presentation.

**Bronchi**
The two main branches of the trachea that lead into the right and left lungs. Within in the lungs they branch into smaller airways.

**Bronchitis**
Inflammation of the airways in the lungs.

**Bruise**
An injury transmitted through unbroken skin to underlying tissue causing rupture of the small blood vessels and escape of blood in the surrounding tissue with resulting discoloration. Also known as a **contusion**.

**Burns**
See superficial burns, partial-thickness burns, and full-thickness burns.
**Capillary**
Any of the smallest blood vessels connecting arterioles with venules and forming networks throughout the body. This is where oxygen is delivered to the tissues.

**Capillary bleeding**
Bleeding from the capillaries in which blood oozes from the open wound.

**Capillary refill**
The ability of the circulatory system to restore blood to the capillary blood vessels after it has been squeezed out by the examiner.

**Carbon dioxide (CO₂)**
A gas exchanged from the alveoli during respirations and exhaled during breathing.

**Cardiac**
Pertaining to the heart.

**Cardiac arrest**
Sudden cessation of the heart muscle to pump blood effectively.

**Cardiogenic shock**
Shock resulting from failure of the heart to pump an adequate amount of blood as a result of heart disease and especially heart attack.

**Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)**
Heart-lung resuscitation where there is a combined effort to artificially restores or maintains respiration and circulation in a pulseless, non-breathing patient.

**Carotid artery**
The principal arteries of the neck that supply blood the face, head, and brain.

**Carotid pulse**
A pulse that is felt on either side of the neck where the carotid artery is close to the skin.

**Cartilage**
A tough, elastic form of connective tissue that covers the ends of most bones to form joints: also found in some specific areas such as the nose and ears.

**Central nervous system (CNS)**
The brain and spinal cord, with their nerves, and end organs that control voluntary and involuntary acts.
Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF)
The fluid that surrounds the brain and spinal cord.

Cerebrovascular accident (CVA)
See stroke.

Cervical collar
A neck brace that partially stabilizes the neck following injury.

Cervical spine
That portion of the spinal column consisting of the seven vertebrae located in the neck.

Chest compressions
Manual chest-pressing method that mimics the squeezing and relaxation cycles that a normal heart goes through, administered to a person in cardiac arrest; also called external chest compressions and closed-chest cardiac massage.

Chest-thrust maneuver
A series of manual thrusts to the chest to relieve upper airway obstructions; used in the treatment of infants, pregnant women, or morbidly obese choking patients.

Chief complaint
The patient’s response to questions such as “What happened? Or What’s wrong?”

Child
Anyone between 1 year of age and the onset of puberty (12-14 years).

Chronic obstructed pulmonary disease (COPD)
A slow process of destruction of the airways, alveoli, and pulmonary blood vessels caused by chronic bronchial obstruction (emphysema).

Circulatory system
The heart and blood vessels, which together are responsible for the continuous flow of blood throughout the body.

Clavicle
The collarbone.

Clinical death
When the victim is breathing and heart action ceases.

Closed fracture
A fracture in which the overlaying skin has not been damaged.
**Closed head injury**  
A head injury marked by bleeding and swelling within the skull.

**Closed wound**  
Injury in which soft-tissue damage occurs beneath the skin but there is no break in the surface of the skin.

**Collarbone**  
The clavicle.

**Coma**  
A state of unconsciousness from which the patient cannot be aroused.

**Concussion**  
A jarring injury to the brain resulting in disturbance of cerebral function and sometimes marked by permanent damage.

**Congestive heart failure (CHF)**  
Heart disease, characterized by breathlessness, fluid retention in the lungs and generalized swelling of the body.

**Contractions**  
Muscular movements of the uterus that push the fetus out of the mother.

**Contusion**  
See bruise.

**Convulsion**  
An abnormal violent and involuntary contraction or series of contractions of the muscles.

**Core temperature**  
The body temperature taken at the rectum.

**Cornea**  
The clear, transparent anterior portion of the fibrous coat of the eye.

**Coronary arteries**  
The blood vessels that supply oxygenated blood directly to the heart muscle.

**Compression Site**  
For adults and children, the center of the chest in line with the imaginary nipple line. For infants, the center of the chest just below the imaginary nipple line.
**Cranium**
The portion of the skull that encloses the brain.

**Cravat**
A triangular swath of cloth that is used to secure a dressing or splint.

**Critical incident stress debriefing (CSID)**
A system of psychological support designed to reduce stress on emergency personnel after a major stress-producing incident.

**Croup**
Inflammation and narrowing of the air passages, usually in young children, causing a barking cough and high pitched respirations.

**Crowning**
When the first presentation of the baby (usually the head) is visible at the vaginal opening.

**Cyanosis**
Bluish or purplish discoloration of the skin and mucous membranes due to deficient oxygenation of the blood.
**Decompression sickness**
A condition seen in divers in which gas, especially nitrogen, forms bubbles in blood vessels obstructing them. Also called the bends.

**Defibrillation**
Delivery of an electric current through a patients chest to stop all electrical activity on the heart muscle.

**Delirium tremens (DTs)**
A severe complication of alcohol withdrawal that can occur from 1-7 days after the last drink. It is characterized by restlessness, fever, sweating, confusion, disorientation, agitation, hallucinations and convulsions and may be fatal if not treated.

**Dermis**
The inner (second)layer of the skin found beneath the epidermis. It is rich in nerves and capillaries.

**Detailed survey**
An assessment of the head, neck, chest, abdomen, pelvis, extremities, and posterior body to detect signs and symptoms of injury.

**Diabetes**
A disease in which the body is unable to transport glucose to the cells because of not enough or no insulin production.

**Diabetic coma**
A state of unconsciousness that occurs when the brain is unable to get glucose from the blood due to not enough insulin.

**Diaphragm**
A muscular dome that separates the chest from the abdominal cavity. Contraction of the diaphragm and the chest wall muscles draws air into the lungs; relaxation expels air from the lungs.

**Diaphragmatic breathing**
See abdominal breathing.

**Diastolic blood pressure**
The pressure exerted on the blood vessels when the heart is relaxed and refilling with blood.
Digestive system
The gastrointestinal tract (stomach and intestines), mouth, salivary glands, pharynx. Esophagus, liver, gallbladder, pancreas, rectum, and anus, which together are responsible for the absorption of nutrients and the elimination of solid waste from the body.

Dilation
To get larger.

Direct pressure
Applying pressure directly over the wound site to stem the flow of bleeding.

Dislocation
The displacement of a bone end that forms part of a joint.

Distal
Farther away from the torso. Opposite of proximal.

Distended
Inflated, stretched, or swollen.

Do Not Resuscitate Order (DNR)
A binding physician/patient directive for the withholding of resuscitative measures for the terminally ill.

Dressing
Any material (preferably sterile) used to cover a wound that will help control bleeding and help prevent additional contamination.

Dyspnea
Difficulty or pain during respirations.
**Edema**
Swelling caused by accumulation of fluids in tissues.

**Electrical burns**
Burns caused by contact with high or low voltage electricity. Electrical wounds have an entrance and an exit wound.

**Embolism**
A thrombus or clot of blood and plaque that has ruptured from the wall of an artery.

**Emergency care**
The pre-hospital assessment and basic care provided for the sick or injured patient. The care is started at the emergency scene and is continued through transport and transfer at the medical facility.

**Emergency Medical Services System (EMS System)**
Services provided to a victim for care at the scene, during transport to a medical facility, and arrival into an emergency department.

**Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)**
A person trained and certified to provide basic life support and certain noninvasive prehospital procedures.

**Emesis**
Vomiting.

**Emphysema**
A condition of the lungs that is marked by distension and eventual rupture of the alveoli with progressive loss of pulmonary elasticity that is accompanied by shortness of breath with or without a cough, and may lead to impairment of cardiac function.

**Epidermis**
The outer layer of skin.

**Epiglottis**
A leaf-shaped structure that prevents food and foreign matter from entering the trachea and the lungs.
**Epiglottitis**
A severe inflammation and swelling of the epiglottis; and may be life threatening if untreated.

**Epilepsy**
Any of the various disorders marked by abnormal electrical discharges in the brain and typically manifested by sudden brief episode of altered or diminished consciousness, involuntary movements or convulsions.

**Esophagus**
The tube through which food and liquids pass. It starts in the throat and ends at the stomach.

**Evisceration**
An intestine or other internal organ protruding through an open wound in the abdomen.

**Exhalation**
Breathing out. Also called expiration.

**Expressed consent**
Consent given by adults who are of legal age mentally competent to make rational decision in regard to their medical well-being.

**Extremities**
The arms and legs.

**Extrication**
Removal from a difficult situation or position; removal of a patient from an auto accident or other place of entrapment.
Face mask
A clear plastic mask used or ventilating a non-breathing victim that covers the mouth and nose.

Fainting
See psychogenic shock.

Femoral artery
The major artery supplying the leg with oxygenated blood.

Femoral artery pressure point
Located in the groin where the femoral artery is close to the skin. Can be used to help control bleeding from the leg.

Femur
The large bone of the thigh.

Fetus
The developing baby in the uterus or womb.

Fibula
The outer and smaller bone of the lower leg.

Finger sweeps
A procedure used to clear the mouth of any visible airway obstructions in patients that are unconscious.

First-degree burns
See superficial burns.

First responder
A person who has received training in pre-hospital emergency care.

Flail chest
A condition that occurs when three or more consecutive ribs are broken in two or more places and the chest wall lying between the fractures becomes free-floating.

Focused Survey
The interview and physical examination performed after the initial survey. This is done to detect problems that may become life-threatening if left untreated.

Foot bones
The metatarsals.
**Forearm bones**
The ulna and the radius.

**Fracture**
Any break in a bone.

**Frostbite**
Partial or complete freezing of the skin and deeper tissues caused by exposure to the cold.

**Frostnip**
Superficial frostbite.

**Full-thickness burns**
Burns that extend through the skin and into or beyond the underlying tissues; the most serious class of burns. Also called third degree burns.
**Gag reflex**
Strong involuntary effort to vomit caused by something being placed or caught in the throat.

**Gastric distention**
Inflation of the stomach caused when excessive pressures are used during artificial ventilation and air enters the stomach rather than the lungs. Also called gastric inflation.

**Golden hour**
A concept of emergency patient care that attempts to place a trauma patient into a definitive medical care within 1 hour of injury.

**Good Samaritan laws**
Laws that encourage individuals to voluntarily help an injured or suddenly ill person by minimizing the liability for any errors or omission in rendering good-faith emergency care.

**Grand mal seizure**
Seizures that produce shaking movement and involve the entire body. Also called generalized seizures.
**Hallucinogen**
A chemical or substance that causes a person to see visions or hear sounds that are not real.

**Hand bones**
The bones of the palm of the hand, known as the metacarpals.

**Head-tilt/chin lift**
Opening the airway by tilting the patient’s head backward and lifting the chin forward. Used when no neck injury is suspected.

**Heat cramps**
A condition that is marked by sudden cramps in skeletal muscles resulting from prolonged work or exercise in the heated environment.

**Heat exhaustion**
A form of shock that occurs when the body loses too much water and electrolytes through severe sweating in the heated environment.

**Heat stroke**
A condition of rapidly rising internal body temperature that occurs when the body’s mechanisms for the release of heat are overwhelmed and may result in death if untreated.

**Hematoma**
The collection of blood under the skin or in damaged tissues as a result of an injured or broken blood vessel.

**Hemorrhage**
Excessive internal or external bleeding.

**Hemorrhagic shock**
Shock caused by excessive internal or external bleeding.

**Hip**
The joint made between the pelvis and the thigh bone (femur).

**Hives**
Red itchy possibly raised blotches on the skin that often result from allergic reaction.

**Humerus**
The bone of the upper-arm.
**Hyperglycemia**  
High blood sugar.

**Hypertension**  
High blood pressure.

**Hyperventilation**  
Excessive rate and depth of respiration leading to abnormal loss of CO\(_2\) from the blood.

**Hypoglycemia**  
Low blood sugar.

**Hypotension**  
Low blood pressure.

**Hypothermia**  
Subnormal temperature of the body core; defined as under 36.6°C.

**Hypoxia**  
An insufficiency of oxygen to the body tissues.
**Immobile**  
To reduce or prevent movement of a limb, usually by splinting.

**Impaled object**  
Any object such as a knife, splinter of wood, or glass that penetrates the skin and remains in the body.

**Implied consent**  
Consent to receive emergency care that is assumed because the individual is unconscious, underage, or badly injured or ill that he or she cannot respond or respond appropriately.

**Infant**  
Anyone from birth to 1 year of age.

**Infectious disease**  
Any disease caused by the growth of pathogenic microorganisms which may be spread from person to person.

**Inferior**  
That portion of the body or body part that lies nearer the feet than the head.

**Inflammation**  
The pain, heat, redness, and swelling of tissues as they react to infection, irritation, or injury.

**Initial survey**  
The first element in assessment of a patient; steps taken for the purpose of discovering and dealing with any life-threatening problems. Also called an initial assessment.

**Insulin**  
A hormone produced in the pancreas or taken as a medication by diabetics that transports glucose to the cells of the body.

**Insulin shock**  
Condition that occurs in a diabetic who has either taken too much insulin or not eaten enough food.

**Intravenous (IV) fluid**  
Fluids other than blood or blood products infused into the vascular system to maintain an adequate circulatory blood volume.

**Interposed ventilation**  
The artificial ventilation provided during CPR.
**Iris**
The colored portion of the eye. It adjusts the size of the pupil.
**Jaundice**
The yellowing of the skin, usually associated with liver or bile apparatus injury or disease.

**Jaw-thrust technique**
Opening the airway by bringing the patient’s jaw forward without extending. Used when victims have a suspected spinal injury and are unconscious.

**Joint**
The place where two bones come in contact with each other.

**Jugular veins**
The large blood vessels (veins) in the neck carry oxygen-depleted blood back to the heart.
**Kidney**
An organ that produces urine and performs other functions related to the urinary system. There are two kidneys located at the back of the abdominal cavity, one on each side of the spinal column.

**Kneecap**
The patella.
**Labor**
The stages of the delivery of the baby that begin with contractions of the uterus and end with the expulsion of the placenta.

**Laceration**
An irregular cut or tear through the skin.

**Larynx**
A structure composed of cartilage in the neck that guards the entrance to the windpipe and functions as the organ of voice, also called voice box.

**Lateral**
To the side, away from the midline of the body.

**Ligament**
Fibrous tissue that connects bone to bone.

**Liver**
The second largest organ in the body, having many functions. It is located in the upper-right abdominal region beneath the diaphragm.

**Logrolling**
A technique used to move a patient onto a long backboard or to roll a patient to assess the back for life threatening injuries; moving the patient as one piece.

**Lumbar spine**
The lower part of the back formed by the lowest five nonfused vertebrae.

**Lungs**
The organs that supply the body with oxygen and eliminate carbon dioxide from the blood.
**Mandible**
The lower jaw.

**Manual suction device**
Hand powered devices used for clearing the upper airway of mucus, blood or vomitus.

**Mechanisms of injury**
Forces causing an injury. It is characterized by the type of force, its intensity and direction, and the body part it affects.

**Medial**
Toward the midline of the body.

**Meninges**
Meninges (singular is meninx) is the collective term for the three membranes covering the brain and spinal cord. The Meninges are composed of the dura mater (outer), the arachnoid (middle), and the pia meter (inner).

**Midline**
An imaginary vertical line drawn from the mid-forehead through the nose and the navel to the floor.

**Minor's consent (see Implied consent)**

**Miscarriage**
Delivery of the fetus before it is mature enough to survive outside the womb (about 20 weeks), from either natural (spontaneous abortion) or induced causes.

**Multiple-casualty incident (mass-casualty incident)**
Accidents or situations involving more patients than you can handle with the initial resources available.

**Myocardial infarction (MI)**
A heart attack; the condition in which a portion of the myocardium dies as a result of oxygen starvation.

**Myocardium**
The muscle that makes up the walls of the heart.
**Narcotic**
A class of drugs that affects the central nervous system to relieve pain. Illicit use provides an intense state of relaxation.

**Negligence**
Deviation from the accepted standard of care resulting in further injury to the patient.

**Nervous system**
The brain, spinal cord, and nerves.

**Neurogenic shock**
Caused when the nervous system fails to control the diameter of the blood vessels. The vessels remain widely dilated, providing too great a volume to be filled by available blood.

**Nitroglycerin**
A medication used to treat angina pectoris; it reduces blood volume to the heart. Usually comes as an oral inhalant.
**Occlusion**
Blockage. A blocked artery is said to be occluded.

**Occlusive dressing**
An airtight dressing or bandage for a wound.

**Open fracture**
Any fracture in which the overlying skin has been damaged, formerly called compound fracture.

**Open wound**
Injury that breaks the skin or mucous membrane.

**Oral airway**
An airway adjunct that is inserted into the mouth to keep the tongue from blocking the upper airway. It is also called an oropharyngeal or nasopharyngeal airway.

**Oxygen (O₂)**
A colorless, odorless gas that is essential for life.
**Packaging**
Part of the preparation for removing a victim from an accident scene. It may involve applying splints and dressings, immobilizing the neck and spine, and stabilizing impaled objects.

**Palpate, Palpation**
To examine by touch.

**Pancreas**
The gland in the upper-back portion of the abdominal cavity behind the stomach. It produces insulin and digestive juices.

**Paradoxical motion**
When a loose segment of an injured chest wall moves in the opposite direction to the rest of the wall during breathing movements. This is associated with a flailed chest.

**Paralysis**
Inability of a conscious person to move voluntarily.

**Partial-thickness burns**
Burns in which the outer layers of skin are burned through and the second layer is damaged; these burns are characterized by blister formation. Also called second-degree burns.

**Pathogens**
Microorganisms that are capable of causing disease in humans.

**Patient assessment**
The systematic gathering of information through interview and physical examination to determine the nature of a patient’s injury or illness.

**Pelvic cavity**
The lower anterior body cavity surrounded by pelvis bones.

**Penetrating wound**
A wound entering the interior of an organ or cavity.

**Perfusion**
The constant flow of blood through the capillaries.

**Perforating wound**
A puncture wound having an entrance and an exit wound.
Perineum
The region of the body located between the genitalia and the anus.

Peritoneum
The membrane that lines the abdominal cavity.

Petit mal
A minor epileptic attack in which there is a sudden cessation of activity for a few seconds to a few minutes noted by a momentary loss of awareness. No fall or major convulsive seizures occur.

Phalanges
The bones of the fingers and the toes.

Pharynx
The throat.

Placenta
Life-support system of the baby during its time inside the mother (commonly called the afterbirth).

Plasma
The liquid part of the blood. (It is the blood minus the blood cells and other structures.)

Pleura
A double-membrane sac. The other layer lines the chest wall and the inner layer covers the outside of the lungs.

Pleural cavities
The right and left portions of the chest cavity (thorax) that contain the lungs and the pleura membranes.

Posterior
The back surface of the body.

Pneumothorax
A collection of air or gas in the chest cavity. The gas enters as a result of a puncture to the chest wall or the pleura covering the lung.

Pocket face mask
A mechanical device used to administer mouth-to-mask rescue breathing.
Pre-eclampsia
A complication of pregnancy. The early stages of toxemia of pregnancy. Characterized by swelling of the face, hands, and feet and elevation of the blood pressure.

Premature infant
Babies who deliver before 37 weeks of gestation or who weigh less than 5½ pounds at birth.

Prolapsed cord
A delivery in which the umbilical cord appears before the baby does; the baby’s head may compress the cord and cut off all circulation to the baby.

Prone
Lying face down.

Psychogenic shock
Commonly known as fainting; caused by a temporary reduction in blood supply to the brain.

Pulmonary resuscitation
Providing breaths to a victim in an attempt to artificially restore lung function.

Pulse
The wave of pressure that is created by the heart as it contracts and forces blood out of the heart and into the major arteries.

Puncture wound
A wound resulting from a bullet, knife, or any other pointed object.
Radial pulse
The wrist pulse.

Radius
The bone on the thumb side of the forearm.

Recovery position
A side lying position that helps an unconscious patient maintain an open airway.

Rectum
The lower portion of the large intestine, ending with the anus.

Red blood cells (RBCs)
The circulating blood cells that carry oxygen to the tissues and return carbon dioxide to the lungs.

Rescue Breathing
Artificial means of breathing for a patient.

Respiratory arrest
The stoppage of respirations.

Respiratory shock
Too little oxygen in the blood due to lung failure. Also called lung shock.

Respiratory system
All body structures that contribute to normal breathing.

Resuscitation
The effort to restore or provide normal heart and/or lung function artificially.
**Scapula**
The shoulder blade.

**Second-degree burn**
See partial-thickness burn.

**Seizures**
Sudden episodes of uncontrolled electrical activity in the brain.

**Septic shock**
Poisons cause the blood vessels to dilate producing too great a volume to be filled by the body’s blood. Also called bloodstream shock.

**Shock**
A state of collapse of the cardiovascular system; the state of inadequate delivery of oxygen to the organs of the body.

**Sign**
Any observed evidence of injury or illness.

**Sling**
A large triangular bandage or other cloth device that is applied as a soft splint to immobilize possible fractures and dislocations of the shoulder and upper extremity.

**Spinal cavity**
The area within the spinal column that contains the spinal cord and its coverings; the meninges.

**Spleen**
Located in the upper abdominal cavity, behind the stomach, the spleen stores blood and destroys old blood cells.

**Splint**
A device used to immobilize a fracture.

**Sprain**
A joint injury in which the joint is partially or temporarily dislocated and some of the supporting ligaments are either stretched or torn.

**Standard of care**
The manner in which an individual must act or behave when giving care.
START
A system of casualty sorting using simple triage and rapid treatment.

Sterile
Free from living microorganisms.

Sternum
The breastbone.

Stethoscope
An instrument used to amplify body sounds.

Stoma
A surgical opening in the neck through which the patient breaths.

Strain
Injuries to muscles caused by overexertion.

Stroke
The result of blockage or damage to an artery supplying oxygenated blood to the brain. Headache, convulsion, paralysis (often to one side only), impaired vision, impaired speech, unequal pupil size, and many other signs and symptoms are possible. This is a cerebrovascular accident or CVA.

Subcutaneous
Beneath the skin. The fats and connective tissues found immediately below the dermis.

Substernal notch
The area of the lower breastbone to which the ribs attach.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
Sudden death of an apparently healthy child under 1 year, usually at sleep, which an autopsy cannot find an apparent cause of death.

Sucking chest wound
An open chest wound into which air is sucked through the wound into the chest cavity each time a breath is taken.

Superficial burns
Burns in which only the outer part of the skin has been injured; characterized as reddened and painful. An example is sunburn. Also called first-degree burns.
Superior
Toward the head; lying higher in the body.

Supine
Lying flat on the back.

Sympathetic eye movement
As one eye moves, the other eye will carry out the same movement.

Symptom
Evidence of injury or illness told to you by the victim.

Systemic
Referring to the entire body.

Systolic blood pressure
The measurement of pressure in mm of Hg exerted against the arterial walls during the contraction of the heart.
**Tarsal**
The ankle bones.

**Tendon**
Fibrous tissue that connects muscle to bone.

**Thermal burns**
Burns caused by heat; the most common type of burn.

**Thigh bone**
The femur.

**Third-degree burns**
See full-thickness burns.

**Thoracic cavity**
The space lying above the diaphragm and enclosed within the walls of the thorax. It protects the heart and lungs.

**Thorax**
The chest.

**Tourniquet**
A bandage technique used for bleeding control that constricts all blood flow to and from the extremity.

**Trachea**
The windpipe.

**Traction splint**
A splint that holds a lower extremity fracture in alignment by applying a constant, steady pull on the extremity.

**Trauma**
Pressure wound or injury, either physical or psychological.

**Triage**
A method of sorting patients according to the severity of their injuries; used to determine priorities for treatment and transport.
**Ulna**
The bone on the little-finger side of the forearm.

**Umbilical cord**
Placenta cord arising from the navel that connects the fetus with the placenta and contains the two umbilical arteries and the umbilical vein.

**Umbilicus**
The navel.

**Universal precautions**
Procedures for infection control that treat blood and certain bodily fluids as capable of transmitting bloodborne pathogens.

**Upper**
Drugs that stimulate the central nervous system. These include amphetamines and cocaine.

**Uterus (womb)**
An organ that holds and nourishes the developing fetus.
**Vagina**
The birth canal.

**Vascular**
Referring to the blood vessels.

**Vein**
Any blood vessel that returns blood to the heart.

**Venae cavae**
The superior and inferior vena cava. These two major veins that return blood from the body into the right atrium.

**Venous bleeding**
External bleeding from a vein, characterized by a steady flow; the bleeding may be profuse and life-threatening if not controlled.

**Ventilation**
The movement of air in and out of the lungs.

**Ventricles**
One of the two lower chambers of the heart.

**Ventricular fibrillation**
Very rapid uncoordinated fluttering contractions of the ventricles of the heart due to chaotic electrical impulses on the muscle preventing blood from being ejected to the body. Abbreviated VF, or V-fib.

**Vertebra**
The 33 bones of the spinal column.

**Vital signs**
Signs of life; specifically: the pulse rate, respiratory rate, body temperature, and often blood pressure of a person.

**Vitreous humor**
Transparent, jelly-like substance that fills the posterior cavity of the eye.
**Wheeze**
To breathe with difficult usually with a whistling sound; often associated with asthma when air is trapped in the alveoli and cannot be expired easily.

**White blood cells (WBCs)**
The blood cells that destroy microorganisms and produce antibodies to help fight off infection.
**Xiphoid process**
The cartilage at the lower tip of the sternum.
Zygomatic bone
The cheek bone.