



## Press Release

For Immediate Release  
Thursday January 22, 2009

Contact: [CDC Injury Center](#)  
(770) 488-4902

### CDC and National Expert Panel Promote Revised Field Triage Guidelines of Trauma Patients

*Will Help Save Lives by Getting the Right Patient, to the Right Place, at the Right Time*

Guidelines published in today's MMWR [Reports and Recommendations](#) are aimed at ensuring that trauma patients with more severe injuries are taken to trauma centers designed to handle such injuries. The recommendations designed to standardize decision-making at the injury scene also offer guidance on new technologies such as vehicle crash notification systems, which alert emergency services that a crash has occurred and automatically summon assistance.

The guidelines in the publication of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were developed by CDC and key experts in trauma care.

The report provides the rationale and development process for the revised 2006 Field Triage Decision Scheme: the National Trauma Triage Protocol for emergency medical service (EMS) providers. It was compiled by key trauma care experts to provide broader access of the information for emergency care services. The goal is to guide the nation's 800,000 EMS providers in making crucial field triage transport decisions.

Previous CDC-funded research has shown that decisions made at the scene of the injury are vital. The risk of death of a severely injured person is 25 percent lower if the patient receives care at a Level 1 trauma center, which has additional resources specifically designed for care of severe trauma.

"Quality and timely care at an injury scene by EMS providers are integral to determining the severity of injury, initiating medical management, and identifying the most appropriate facility to which the patient should be transported," said [Richard C. Hunt](#), M.D., director of CDC's Division of Injury Response, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control and an author of the report. "The Decision Scheme provides a safety net that the public won't see. But we know it can help improve the chances of survival for severely injured patients."

Other key revisions include:

- Recommendations for the right place and right time to best use crucial emergency care resources
- Vehicle crash damage criteria which can help determine which patients may require care at a trauma center



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

SAFER • HEALTHIER • PEOPLE™



The Decision Scheme was developed in collaboration with the [American College of Surgeons-Committee on Trauma](#) with support from the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\)](#). It was reviewed by the 36-member National Expert Panel on Field Triage, which included representatives from EMS, emergency medicine, trauma surgery, the automotive industry, public health, and several federal agencies.

The Decision Scheme has been endorsed by many professional organizations and associations. It was included in the 2006 versions of the American College of Surgeons' Resources for the Optimal Care of the Injured Patient, and the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians' Prehospital Trauma Care Life Support manual for EMS practitioners.

The revised guidelines are in line with the [2006 Institute of Medicine report on the state of emergency care](#). The report envisioned a highly coordinated emergency services system that assures that each patient receives the most appropriate care, at the optimal location, with the minimum delay.

With additional funding from NHTSA, CDC is developing a companion educational initiative for local EMS medical directors, state EMS directors, public health officials, and EMS providers. Educational materials will be tailored to meet the needs of their communities and include: a user's guide, poster and pocket card of the Decision Scheme, a slide presentation for use in trainings, and the *MMWR* article that includes continuing education opportunities.

Information and free downloads are available from CDC at [www.cdc.gov/FieldTriage](http://www.cdc.gov/FieldTriage). For a complete copy of the *MMWR* report, please visit [www.cdc.gov/mmwr](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr). For more information about CDC's work in injury and violence prevention, please link to: [www.cdc.gov/injury](http://www.cdc.gov/injury).

###

[U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION**

**SAFER • HEALTHIER • PEOPLE™**