

SPINAL INJURY

Awareness

Spinal injury may result from direct force, such a blow to the back, or indirect force, such as a neck injury following a severe blow to the head. Any spinal injury is a very serious and requires great care in handling. There is always the risk of further damage to spinal cord, which can result in loss of power and sensation to all parts of the body below the injury.

Assessment

- May have broken bones of the spine, or have damaged the spinal cord (a thick tract of nerves) is damaged, the person will experience lack of movement, muscle weakness, numbness or tingling.
- Pain and scared by the lack of movement.
- Maybe be face up or down, conscious or unconscious, breathing or not, on land or in the water.
- Deformity, redness, muscle tightness or laceration may be present at the site of the injury.
- May complain of visual problems and pain

Action

- Follow the DRABCD action plan.
- Prevent any twisting of the head or spine; but remember that nothing is more important than maintaining the airway and ensuring breathing.
- Extreme care must be taken and the person should only be moved by rescuers trained in spinal injury management. Immobilize the head and neck
- If the person is in the water. Immobilization best achieved by using the vice grip

Vice grip – face up the water

- Carefully position hands one on the person face & head,
- With the top arm place the forearm straight down the sternum
- The lower hand at the back of the head & that forearm straight down the spine
- press firmly with the hands & forearm, creates a vice grip

Vice grip – face down in deep water

- as above re placement of hands
- rescuer must go under the person to roll them face up
- CANNOT pass spinal person onto anno the bystander of rescuer once vice grip has been applied