



Checklist for On-Site Examination of Cervical and Upper Thoracic Spine

Primary Survey

As you approach:

- ☐ Check surroundings and environment.
- ☐ Gain history of event from bystanders if you did not witness.
- ☐ Note position of head and neck.

Necessary checks:

- ☐ Consciousness
- ☐ Airway, breathing, and circulation
- ☐ Severe bleeding

Secondary Survey (evaluate athlete in the position found)

If athlete is unconscious, assume a serious spinal injury. If conscious, examine the following:

- ☐ Presence of neck pain
- ☐ Sensations of numbness, tingling, or burning
- ☐ Difficulty with breathing
- ☐ Difficulty in moving extremities

If any of these are positive, assume a serious spine injury. If neck pain only:

- ☐ Palpate for tenderness and deformity.
- ☐ Check for grip and dorsiflexion strength.

If signs are positive, assume a serious neck injury.

If signs are negative:

- ☐ Examine slow active ROM of cervical spine.
- ☐ Examine for sensory changes with motion.

If positive, assume a serious neck injury. If negative, move off-site for further examination.

Throughout primary and secondary surveys:

- ☐ Continue to monitor vitals and check sensory and motor function in extremities.