



Checklist for On-Site Examination of the Lumbar and Thoracic Spine

Primary Survey

- ☐ Check surroundings and environment.
- ☐ Gain history from bystanders if you did not witness.
- ☐ Note position of body.
- ☐ Consciousness
- ☐ Airway, breathing, and circulation
- ☐ Check for severe bleeding.
- ☐ Check for movement of the extremities.

Secondary Survey (Examine in the Position Found)

- ☐ If athlete is unconscious, manage as a serious spinal injury.

If conscious, examine the following:

- ☐ Presence and location of back pain
- ☐ Sensations of numbness, tingling, or burning
- ☐ Difficulty in moving extremities

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

- ☐ Sensory testing over L2-S1 dermatomes
- ☐ Motor testing for dorsiflexion, big toe dorsiflexion, plantar flexion
- ☐ Palpation for tenderness and deformity

If signs are positive, assume serious spine injury.

If signs are negative:

- ☐ Perform active ROM of lower extremities.
- ☐ Examine for sensory changes with motion.

If signs are positive, assume serious spine injury.

If negative:

- ☐ Allow athlete to sit, then stand, then move off-site for further examination.
- ☐ Continue to monitor vitals.
- ☐ Continue to check sensory and motor function in extremities.