

Emergency Care Scenarios

Please read the following scenarios and, for each, answer the eight general questions listed on the next page. Use additional paper, as necessary.

1. A frantic person approaches you as you come in from sweep at dusk. Her friend, who was skiing an intermediate nordic trail, is missing. A search and rescue is organized; you have two sectors to cover with another patroller. You are given a pack containing two blankets, splints, matches, and a radio. Two hours into the search you find the person lying semi-prone, left side down. Her left arm is straight out about 20 centimeters from her body. You begin your assessment. The patient is responsive only to pain. You discover an obvious deformity in the middle of her left humerus. The patient has a weak, slow pulse and shallow respirations. Your assessment further reveals frostbite on the hands, toes, and nose. You radio for a snowmobile, which will take 30 minutes to arrive.
2. You are called to respond to a traffic accident in the parking lot. When you arrive on the scene, you discover a skier lying next to a car. You identify yourself as a patroller and begin your assessment by asking the skier what happened. The skier tells you that he was changing a flat tire, when he saw an oncoming car getting too close. He tried to jump aside to avoid injury but the car struck him on his left side. He appears frightened and complains of extreme pain in the upper left leg. He is lying on his back. His left leg is slightly shortened and externally rotated, while the right knee is flexed approximately 15 centimeters off the ground. As time passes, you notice the patient becoming restless, breathing faster, and complaining of thirst. The patient responds normally to conversation.
3. A 22-year-old man is skiing down a groomed run at high speed when he loses control, falls, and crashes into the trees at the side of the trail. When you arrive, you note that both skis are off, the skier is sitting with his back against a tree, and a branch is impaled in his right chest. The skier's initial vital signs indicate a pulse of 120 and respirations of 24. He is coughing weakly when you arrive. Upon exposing the right chest, you find that the branch goes into the chest wall and blood is bubbling around it. Your assessment also reveals an obvious deformity in the middle of the right radius. As time passes, the frequency and forcefulness of the patient's coughing increases. After approximately 20 minutes, the patient is coughing blood and having difficulty breathing. His pulse is 180 and respirations are 40.
4. An 18-year-old man (Skier A) is skiing with reckless disregard for the safety of others. While skiing too fast through a crowded trail junction, he collides with another skier (B) who is literally sent flying off the trail into the trees and rocks at the trail's perimeter. You arrive moments after the accident.

You begin your assessment with Skier B. He is responsive to questioning and other verbal stimuli but is slow, dazed, and not alert. He has no memory of what happened and thinks he may have been unconscious for a while. He knows his name and where he is but is uncertain about the date and time. After 10 minutes, he exhibits a deteriorating level of consciousness and becomes less responsive to verbal stimuli. He complains of pain in the pelvic region and screams when the pelvic bone is palpated. He also complains of tenderness at the back of his head, a headache, dizziness, "seeing stars," and memory loss. His initial vitals are a pulse of 95 and respirations of 20. After 15 minutes, his vitals are a pulse of 115 and respirations of 24.

Skier A is aggressive, irritable, and appears confused. Your assessment reveals a medical-alert tag stating that he suffers from Type 1 diabetes. You learn that he took his regular insulin injection that morning, followed by a light breakfast. He skipped lunch; it is now 2 p.m. You also find an obvious, angulated boot-top deformity on the left leg.

As you work on this problem, Skier A's vitals remain at a pulse of 95 with normal respirations.

General Questions

1. What problems does your overall assessment indicate?
2. What factors cause you to reach this conclusion? Include all evidence you have gathered from the dispatch and approach, mechanism of injury, primary and secondary assessment, and all other sources.
3. Are universal precautions appropriate in this circumstance? If so, describe which precautions you would take and why.
4. Is oxygen administration appropriate? If so, describe how to administer oxygen, the equipment you would use, and what flow and concentration you would give.
5. Explain the emergency care steps you would take and the order in which you would take them for this situation.
6. What common problems and complications might develop?
7. Describe the transportation decisions you would make.
8. What documentation is needed for this situation and why?

