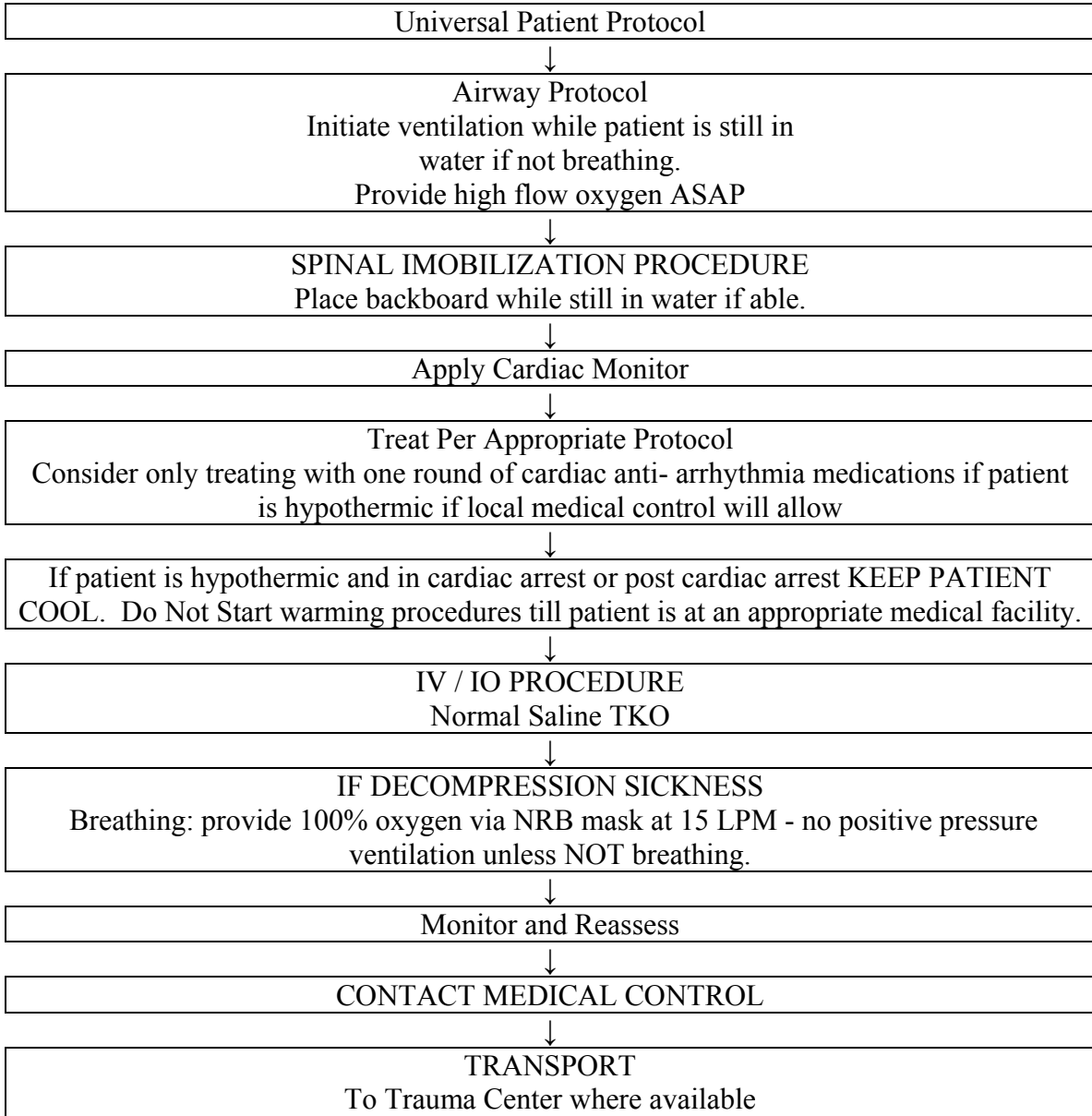


**STATE OF OHIO
DROWNING / NEAR DROWNING PROTOCOL**



HISTORY	SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS	DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submersion in water regardless of depth • Possible trauma i.e.; fall, diving board • Duration of immersion • Temperature of water • Contaminated water? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Period of unconsciousness • Unresponsive • Mental Status change • Decreased or absent vital signs • Vomiting • Coughing • Aspiration? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma • Pre-existing medical conditions? • Barotraumas (diving) • Decompression sickness • Duration of dives(s) • Out of air rapid ascent?

Key Points

- Cold water drowning is submersion in water less than 70 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Almost every open body of water in Ohio is considered cold water year round.
- Exam: Trauma Survey, Head, Neck, Chest, Abdomen, Pelvis, Back, Extremities, Skin, Neuro
- Drowning is defined as suffocation from submersion in water
- Two causes- “Dry drowning” is aspiration that leads to laryngospasm that closes the glottis.
“Wet drowning” is submersion with aspiration and flooding of the lungs.
- Both causes lead to profound hypoxia and death.
- Pulmonary edema can develop within 24-48 hours after submersion.
- All victims should be transported for evaluation due to potential for worsening over the next several hours. Do not delay transport to appropriate Trauma receiving facility.
- Drowning is a leading cause of death among would-be rescuers – consider Risk/Benefit of the rescue.
- Allow appropriately trained and certified rescuers to remove victims from areas of danger
- With pressure injuries (decompression/ barotraumas), consider transport to appropriate hyperbaric chamber facility.
- All hypothermic / hypothermic / near drowning patients should have resuscitation performed until care is transferred, or if there are other signs of obvious death, purification, traumatic injury incompatible with life.
- A drowning patient is in cardiac arrest after the submersion.
- Consider a c-spine injury in all drowning cases. Always immobilize a drowning patient.
- Patients with low core temperatures will not respond to ALS drug interventions.
- DO NOT perform the Heimlich maneuver to remove water from the lungs prior to resuscitation.

Revised: 6/16/11
JA Carney