

August 5, 2015

Statement to Accompany Executive Summary: Appropriate Care of the Spine-Injured Athlete

The NATA has received input from our membership and other organizations regarding the recent release of the Executive Summary from the Task Force on the Appropriate Prehospital Management of the Spine-Injured Athlete. The Task Force believes that the positions taken foster a "best practices" approach for our patients now and in the future. While we support the many locations that have already begun training initiatives for equipment removal, the Task Force does appreciate that the implementation of the positions nationally will take time and dedication. We believe that the input merits altering the wording to allow for greater flexibility.

To that end, the Task Force core writing group has proposed revising Recommendation #4 from reading "...equipment *should* be removed prior to transport" to "when appropriate, protective equipment *may* be removed prior to transport." The Task Force recognizes the variations in state emergency medical system protocols nationally, the availability of qualified EMS systems and hospital emergency departments locally, the differences in personnel and resources at various venues and levels of competition, and the uniqueness inherent in each situation and with each patient. These, along with medical-legal liability issues, lead us to conclude that it is prudent to state that health care providers make the decision regarding equipment removal on site based on the individual circumstances of the case.

Once the "Appropriate Prehospital Management of the Spine-Injured Athlete" statement is completed, reviewed, and approved by the professional organizations represented at the task force meeting, educational materials will be developed by NATA and other groups to assist those health care providers whose education and professional training may not include various components of the recommendations outlined in the consensus statement.

[View the Executive Summary in full along with the update here.](#) A list of frequently asked questions is currently in development. You may contact Katie Scott, MS, ATC, LAT, at katies@nata.org with any additional questions.

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