

Southern Illinois Regional EMS System

DD-16 HELMET MANAGEMENT AND REMOVAL

System protocol for helmet removal will be in accordance with Basic Trauma Life Support standards and guidelines.

1. Football and Ice Hockey Helmets:
 - 1.1. These helmets should not be removed in the prehospital setting unless the patient is experiencing respiratory distress and airway is not accessible for immediate intervention. Athletic helmet design will generally allow easy airway access once the face guard is removed.
 - 1.2. The athlete is wearing shoulder pads that have their neck in a neutral position when on the backboard and the helmet is in place. If the helmet is removed, padding must be inserted under the head to keep the neck from extending.
 - 1.3. Do not cut shoulder straps/padding if not indicated for specific treatment.
2. Motorcycle Helmets:
 - 2.1. These helmets are often designed with a continuous solid face guard that will not allow access to the airway and are poorly fitted. Their larger size often produces significant neck flexion and does not allow for stabilization of the neck while on a backboard.
 - 2.2. Motorcycle helmets must be removed using proper technique. Refer to helmet removal technique.