

Southern Illinois Regional EMS System

DD-16 HELMET MANAGEMENT AND REMOVAL

Generally, helmets worn without shoulder pads or similar protective gear should be removed on scene prior to immobilization.

- Football and Other Sports Helmets:
 - 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
 - The athlete wearing shoulder pads will 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 account for the shoulder pads/athletic padding and keep the neck in a neutral position
 - Do not cut shoulder straps/padding if not indicated for specific treatment

- Motorcycle Helmets:
 - These helmets are often designed with a continuous solid face guard that will not allow access to the airway
 - Their larger size often produces significant neck flexion and does not allow for stabilization of the neck while on a backboard
 - Motorcycle helmets must be removed using proper technique
 - Refer to helmet removal procedure