



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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EMERGENCY MEDICAL
SERVICES PROGRAM

Protocol No. E3
Reviewed 01/07

Emergency Medical Services Program

Approved

Medical Director

Subject: NEAR DROWNING

I. BLS Treatment Protocol:

- A. Treat life threats. (See Policy 4000)
- B. Spinal precautions as indicated.
- C. Prepare for transport / transfer of care.

II. ALS Treatment Protocol:

- A. Treat life threats. (See Policy 4000)
- B. Treat dysrhythmias as indicated.
- C. Transport.
- D. Contact Base Station.

Note:

Near drowning patients are at high risk for experiencing secondary drowning several hours after the initial event. Secondary drowning occurs when the lungs suffer delayed pulmonary edema after being exposed to water.

Severe respiratory distress can also occur due to damage to the alveoli, as well as secondary to infection. Adult Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS) and pneumonia can both occur following the inhalation of water into the lungs. Make every effort to transport these patients to the hospital for further evaluation.