

Section: Division of Nursing  
Approval: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* PROCEDURE \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

Index: 7010.013a  
Page: 1 of 2  
Issue Date: June 18, 1990  
Reviewed date: August 2007

HACKETTSTOWN REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

Originator: C. McDonald, RN, CEN  
Reviewed by: J. Keebler, RN

ED  
(Scope)

**TITLE: HELMET REMOVAL PROCEDURE**

---

**PURPOSE:** To outline the steps for removal of helmet(s) while maintaining vertebral column alignment and protection from movement.

**SUPPORTIVE DATA:** All conscious and unconscious trauma patients should be assumed to have potential unstable cervical spine injuries. Correct helmet removal may prevent initial cord injury if fractures are present, but not displaced, or prevent further cord damage that may already be present.

**CONTENT:**

**PROCEDURE STEPS:**

**KEY POINTS:**

1. Briefly explains to patient what to expect and why it is being done - direct patient to not move head/neck.
2. Leader states that a limited neuro exam (assessment of sensory and motor functions) will be performed; ask patient to wiggle toes and fingers and determines if sensation is present.
3. Leader positions self at the head of the patient and places hands on each side of helmet with the fingers on the patient's mandible.
4. Leader stabilizes helmet and mandible while assistant loosens or cuts chin strap.
5. Assistant cups mandible with thumb and index finger of one hand, holds occipital ridge with other hand, and applies in-line stabilization of the head and neck from below.
6. Leader, still at the head, spreads helmet laterally and gently removes it.
7. Leader resumes cervical stabilization by placing hands on either side of neck and both thumbs on mandible and fingers of both hands on occipital ridge.
9. Once immobilization is completed, leader performs a limited re-assessment of motor and sensory functions.

This is a two person procedure, with one person as leader. The leader is responsible for correctly stabilizing the patient's C-spine, removing the helmet, and directing the nurse who assists with this procedure.

Leader then gives stabilization responsibility to assistant.

Utilizing a "C" motion, lifting helmet toward leader's body and away from patient's head.

- DOCUMENTATION:
1. Document procedure.
  2. Document any change in procedure.
  3. Document patient's response to procedure.

Reference:  
The American Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine/ [www.sportmed.org](http://www.sportmed.org)  
[www.emsmagazine.com](http://www.emsmagazine.com)