

# HYPOTHERMIA PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

**NOTE:** Aggressive steps should be taken early to prevent further loss of body heat and, when possible, actively warm (by adding external heat) trauma and burn casualties.



**CONSIDER** body substance isolation.

**NOTE:** If a Combat Lifesaver is available, direct them to assist.

**NOTE:** Ensure hemostasis, assess, and treat for hemorrhagic shock.

**01 MINIMIZE** the casualty's exposure to the elements.

**02 PLACE** insulation material between casualty and cold surface as soon as possible.

**03 KEEP DRY CLOTHING** and protective gear on or with the casualty.

**04 REMOVE WET CLOTHES** and replace with dry clothes/materials, if possible.



**05** *If using a hypothermia kit, REMOVE* the vapor barrier shell, open completely, and **PLACE** the casualty centered on the shell.

**06** *If commercial vapor barrier shell is not available, PLACE* the casualty centered on an impermeable vapor barrier (space blanket, survival blanket, plastic tarp, waterproof sleeping bag shell, body bag, etc.).

**07** *If an active warming device is available, open* the active warming device package, **REMOVE** the device, and **EXPOSE** to air (per manufacturer's guidance).

**08** **APPLY** the active warming device on the casualty's anterior torso and under the arms in the axillae. **CAUTION:** Do not place the active warming device directly on the skin to prevent burns.

**09** If an active warming device is not available, **WRAP** passive warming materials (blanket, etc.) under and around the casualty, including the head.

**CAUTION:** Passive hypothermia prevention does not reverse the hypothermic process.

**10** **WRAP** the entire vapor barrier shell (or other improvised impermeable vapor barrier materials) completely around the casualty, including the head and secure using tape if necessary.

**11** **PROTECT** the casualty from further exposure to wind and precipitation while awaiting evacuation.

**12** **MONITOR** the casualty closely for life-threatening conditions.

**13** **DOCUMENT** all findings and treatments on a DD Form 1380 TCCC Casualty Card and attach to the casualty.



**STEP 10 NOTE:** Do not cover up the casualty's face.

**STEP 10 NOTE:** As soon as possible, upgrade any improvised vapor barrier to a well-insulated enclosure system as additional materials become available.

**STEP 10 NOTE:** As a planning factor, pre-stage an insulated hypothermia enclosure system with external active heating for transition from non-insulated hypothermia enclosure systems.