



## **ITLS and PHTLS: A Comparison**

International Trauma Life Support (ITLS) is synonymous with training EMS personnel to provide optimal care for the injured in the prehospital setting. A variety of training packages are available to suit the requirements of all levels and background of pre-hospital emergency personnel internationally, including ITLS Basic, Advanced, ACCESS, and Pediatric courses.

### ***Program Comparison***

#### **ITLS**

- Endorsed by the American College of Emergency Physicians
- Endorsed by the National Association of EMS Physicians
- Contains core content and allows for customization to address students' educational needs
- Mandates involvement of course medical director and strongly encourages on-site medical director involvement
- Emphasizes team work – from scene to surgery
- Pediatric BTLT provides in-depth assessment and management tools for the injured pediatric patient
- ACCESS provides knowledge and skills regarding extrication using hand tools to access trauma patients
- Provides a well structured assessment and priority plan, identifying and addressing immediate life threatening conditions and critical interventions that is practical and easy to follow by all levels of EMS personnel. The identification of "Load and Go" conditions ensures valuable time is not wasted at the scene.
- Key messages in each chapter are clearly highlighted in easily identified boxes called PEARLS.
- Management skills chapters follow the topic chapter to reinforce learning.
- In addition to the core trauma knowledge base, chapters on Trauma in Pregnancy, Patients under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs, Blood and Body Substance Precautions, Trauma in the Elderly and Trauma Cardiopulmonary Arrest are included.
- Nine appendices featuring optional skills including sections on radio communications, documentation, the role of the medical helicopter, trauma care in the cold, drowning, barotrauma and decompression injury, trauma scoring, injury prevention, and multi-casualty incidents complement the main text forming additional useful resources.
- CD ROM includes scenario based practice questions, additional trauma photos, interactive activities, and video clips.
- Patient assessment system was used as the foundation methodology of the National Standard Curriculum being taught in paramedic and EMT programs

## **PHTLS**

- Provides a single training package for all levels of prehospital trauma care providers
- Endorsed by the American College of Surgeons.
- Utilizes primary and secondary survey of ATLS; however, limited scene intervention and the critical trauma patient is less well defined in the scheme of patient assessment.
- Discourages references to mnemonics
- Utilizes tables without summary points
- Contains excessive pathophysiology sections
- Does not include supplemental skills chapters except for airway and spinal trauma
- Features chapters on injury prevention, triage transport, trauma systems, and golden principles of pre-hospital trauma care. However; there is no chapter on substance abuse.
- Describes the patient care beyond the golden period only in appendix
- The companion CD-ROM shows video footage of 20 skills performed in real time, additional information, and 50 multiple choice review questions
- Describes “face to face” orotracheal intubation and blind nasotracheal intubation which are rarely used with success
- Has less emphasis on the decision when to utilize special extrication
- In shock, PASG is still advocated without discussion of increased intrathoracic or intracranial pressure
- In IV fluid resuscitation, utilizes “middle of the road approach” without endorsing the detrimental effects of massive fluid resuscitation
- Head trauma discussion is not detailed

## ***Text Comparison***

### **ITLS**

- Basic manual for EMTs and first responders
- Advanced manual for advanced EMS providers, nurses and physicians
- Specialized texts for Pediatric BTLS and ACCESS
- Custom edition of a stand-alone military edition text, edited by a military surgeon. The scenarios are military based and cater to military personnel

### **PHTLS**

- One text for both basic and advanced providers
- Text includes a chapter on Pediatric Trauma but no stand-alone text
- The military edition is identical to the civilian manual apart from the illustrations and pictures which are military