

TRAUMA

A thorough trauma history contains two basic components, the patient's complaints and the mechanism of injury. Evaluation of the patient's complaint is relatively straightforward but is better understood when details of the mechanism of injury have been gathered. An understanding of the mechanism of injury may assist in anticipating injury if not already obvious, especially if the patient is unconscious and cannot tell you of any complaints/pain. Getting the information about the mechanism of injury may also be of help when deciding on treatment and packaging plans.

STABBING

- What type of instrument was used?
- Did the instrument have a blunt or sharp end?
- At what angle did the instrument enter?
- What was the length of the "blade"?
- What was the depth of penetration?
(look at the weapon for blood stains that would indicate this)
- Is there evidence of your patient defending her/himself

VEHICLE vs. PEDESTRIAN

- What was the speed of the vehicle?
- Was patient moving or stationary?
- What part of body was hit first?
- Was patient thrown? If so:
 - How far were they thrown?
 - What did they strike?

GUNSHOT WOUNDS

- What was the caliber and type of firearm?
- What was the angle at which the firearm was pointed?
- What was the distance of the patient from the firearm at the time of discharge?
- Search for entrance and exit wounds
- Consider which organs may have been in the path of travel of the bullet or projectile

ASSAULT

- What type of instrument was used in the assault?
- What parts of patient's body was hit?
- How many times was patient hit?
- Did the patient try to defend him/herself?
 - If so be sure to look for injuries that reflect this.

FALL

- Why did the patient fall (dizziness, lost balance, etc.)?
- What was the distance of the fall?
- Did patient hit anything during the fall?
- What part of patient's body hit the ground first?
- What kind of surface did patient fall onto?
- Was there any loss of consciousness at any time?

BURNS

- What was the source of the burn?
- When did the burn occur?
- Was there an explosion?
- Was the patient exposed to toxic fumes/smoke?
 - *if so, for how long?*
- Was the patient in a closed space when the burn occurred?
- Were there any treatments provided prior to help arriving?