



American College of  
Emergency Physicians®

ADVANCING EMERGENCY CARE 

# POLICY STATEMENT

Approved April 2020

## *Role of the Emergency Physician in the Care of Trauma Patients*

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The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) believes that emergency physicians play a central role in the care of injured patients within the health care system. The treatment of trauma patients is a key component of emergency medicine training and practice. Across the spectrum of trauma, the majority of injured patients will receive care primarily from an emergency physician.

ACEP believes that patients presenting for care in an emergency department are best served by receiving care from board-eligible or board-certified emergency physicians, either individually or as a member of a multi-disciplinary trauma team. Emergency physicians play an instrumental role in the management of severely injured trauma patients, particularly in the aspects of assessment, resuscitation, airway management, point-of-care ultrasound, and bedside procedures. Care of these patients is best achieved when individual roles and responsibilities are standardized and understood by all members of the team involved in protocolized trauma care.

ACEP acknowledges the role of trauma surgeons as the providers of definitive care for the most critically injured patients and the importance of close collaboration between emergency physicians and trauma physicians in developing safe systems of care. ACEP strongly supports the implementation of pre-arranged transfer protocols to maintain a link between facilities without access to trauma surgeons with those institutions that maintain trauma services.

ACEP supports efforts to ensure that there are evidence-based national standards of trauma practice and the promulgation of those standards in the creation of safe trauma systems. Emergency physicians, given their central role in the care of these patients, must play an important role in the development and validation of these standards.