



**INLAND COUNTIES  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL AGENCY  
POLICY AND PROTOCOL MANUAL**

**Reference No. 13050**  
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**SMOKE INHALATION/CO EXPOSURE/SUSPECTED CYANIDE TOXICITY**

**I. PURPOSE**

To identify and treat smoke inhalation and suspected cyanide toxicity.

**II. FIELD ASSESSMENT/TREATMENT INDICATORS**

- Indicators
  - Exposure to fire and smoke particularly in an enclosed-space structure fires.
  - Hydrogen cyanide concentration measured in the air does not accurately correlate to patient's level of exposure and toxicity. Consider possibility of Carbon Monoxide (CO) and cyanide exposure/toxicity in any patient (or unprotected EMS field personnel) with smoke inhalation.
- Cyanide Toxicity
  - Initial signs and symptoms are non-specific and may include; headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, confusion, and syncope.
  - Worsening signs and symptoms may include; altered level of consciousness (ALOC), hypotension, shortness of breath, seizures, cardiac dysrhythmias, and cardiac arrest.
  - The "bitter almond" smell on the breath of a cyanide-poisoned patient is neither sensitive nor specific and should not be considered in making the assessment.
- CO Poisoning
  - Initial signs and symptoms are non-specific and may include; flu like symptoms, dizziness, severe headache, nausea, sleepiness, weakness and disorientation.
  - Worsening signs and symptoms may include; blurred vision, shortness of breath, and altered level of consciousness.

**III. BLS INTERVENTIONS**

- Remove patient from exposure area.
- Administer 100% oxygen via non rebreather mask.

**IV. ALS INTERVENTIONS**

- Monitor pulse oximetry (SpO<sub>2</sub>) though values may be unreliable in patients suffering from smoke inhalation.
- Place on cardiac monitor and obtain a 12-lead ECG.
- IV access, consider fluid bolus of 300 cc NS.
- Use BVM with airway adjuncts as needed. Consider advanced airway if indicated.

- For treatment of bronchospasm as indicated by wheezing, refer to ICEMA Reference #14010 - Respiratory Emergencies - Adult.
- Ensure rapid transport to closest receiving emergency department.

**V. REFERENCE**

<u>Number</u>	<u>Name</u>
14010	Respiratory Emergencies - Adult