

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
A Division of the Fresno County Department of Public Health

Manual:	Emergency Medical Services Administrative Policies and Procedures	Policy Number: 510.30 Page: 1 of 2
Subject:	Basic Life Support (BLS) Protocols NEAR-DROWNING	
References:	California Administrative Code, Title 22, Division 9, Chapter 2	Effective: 11/15/83

I. TREATMENT

A. Non-Arrest

1. ABCs

2. Oxygen

Low flow 6 L by nasal cannula. High flow 15 liters/minute non-rebreathing mask if patient is unstable. If assistance needed, 100% via BVM or oxygen powered breathing device.

NOTE: Do not use oxygen powered breathing device on patient's 12 years or less.

3. Spine immobilization if history of diving or head trauma.

4. Remove wet clothing, and apply dry blankets.

5. Transport Code 3 if deteriorating respiratory or mental status, unmanageable airway or concurrent major trauma.

6. Code 2 transport indicated for awake and alert patients – monitor respiratory status closely.

II. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

A. Assessment – Vital signs, lung sounds, Glasgow Coma Scale, assess possibility of spine trauma. These items are a minimum – full assessment is always indicated if the situation permits. Resuscitate all victims with an unknown down time.

B. Minimize scene time, particularly if respiratory or mental status is deteriorating, unmanageable airway, or concurrent major trauma.

Approved By: EMS Division Manager	Daniel J. Lynch (Signature on File at EMS Agency)	Revision: 04/19/2005
EMS Medical Director	Jim Andrews, M.D. (Signature on File at EMS Agency)	

Subject:	Basic Life Support (BLS) Protocols – Near-Drowning	Policy Number: 510.30
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C. History

1. Time of submersion, water temperature, and water quality.
2. Trauma? (Diving, skiing, boating)

D. Physical Exam

1. Mental Status (Glasgow Coma Scale)
2. Quality of respiration's, cyanosis?
3. Signs of trauma?
4. Resuscitate all cold water victims (water temperature less than 70°F) with less than one hour submersion.
5. Resuscitate all warm water victims (water temperature greater than 70°F) submerged less than 30 minutes.
6. Resuscitate all victims with unknown time of submersion regardless of water temperature.

NOTE: All unheated bodies of water should be considered as cold water.