Emergency Department Thoracotomy Guidelines

**Vital signs at scene**
(BP detected, palpable pulse)

**OR**

**Signs of Life, (SOL), at scene**
(spontaneous respirations, organized, narrow complex cardiac activity, pupillary reactivity, or extremity movement)

Yes (+) Vital signs

Primary Survey

NO vital signs

(+Vital signs)

Check for (SOL) or evidence of cardiac kinetic activity by U/S

ABSENT

Blunt trauma?

YES

Intubate/confirm ETT placement
Bilateral chest tubes
Large bore I.V., 2.0 L fluid
(NO chest compressions!)

NO Vital signs

Penetrating thoracic injury with organized rhythm or (SOL) within 5 minutes of arrival?

ED Thoracotomy (EDT)

Yes

Cardiac activity?

No

Penetrating thoracic injury with organized rhythm or (SOL) within 5 minutes of arrival?

Tamponade?

No

Control hemx, relieve tamponade, X-clamp aorta

Cardiac activity?

Yes

Hemorrhage or tamponade

YES

Resuscitate Hang blood X-clamp aorta To O.R. Activate TEP?

NO

PRONOUNCE

NO

Tamponade?

YES

Cardiac activity?

***If the designated Trauma Team Leader (TTL) participates in the performance of the EDT, a new TTL should be immediately assigned. Simultaneous with the performance of an EDT, an airway will be established, ETCO2 checked, peripheral access obtained, an OG tube passed, & right chest tube placed***
REFERENCES


