



**REGION 11  
CHICAGO EMS SYSTEM  
SKILLS**

Title: Pleural (Needle) Decompression  
 Section: Trauma Management  
 Approved: EMS Medical Directors Consortium  
 Skill Level: ALS

|                    |                |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Name:              | Date:          |
| Resource Hospital: | Training Site: |
| Evaluator:         | Signature:     |

|   | Points Possible | Points Awarded |
|---|-----------------|----------------|
| Actual Time Started:  |                 |                |
| <b>Selects, checks, and assembles equipment</b>   |                 |                |
| Adult: 14 gauge x 3.25" over the needle catheter or Air Release System (ARS)<br>Pediatric: 16-18 gauge 1.5-2 inch over the needle catheter                              | 1               |                |
| Alcohol prep pad  | 1               |                |
| <b>States Indications for Procedure</b>   |                 |                |
| <b><i>Thoracic trauma AND</i></b>   |                 |                |
| <b>1. Traumatic Arrest OR</b>   | 1               |                |
| <b>2. Signs of Tension Pneumothorax (all of the following)</b>  | 1               |                |
| • Hypotension (SBP < 90 mmHg) AND   | 1               |                |
| • Respiratory distress or respiratory failure AND   | 1               |                |
| • Absent or diminished breath sounds on the affected side   | 1               |                |
| <b>Suspected tension pneumothorax in non-traumatic cardiac arrest (PEA arrest with subcutaneous emphysema)</b>  | 1               |                |
| <b>States Contraindications for Procedure</b>   |                 |                |
| Isolated decreased breath sounds without hypotension and respiratory distress   | 1               |                |
| <b>Performs Procedure</b>   |                 |                |
| Apply PPE: gloves   | 1               |                |
| Palpate the chest locating the second intercostal space on the midclavicular line (between the 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> ribs) on the same side as the injury | 1               |                |
| Properly cleanse the insertion site with alcohol prep pad   | 1               |                |
| Insert the needle at a 90 degree angle to the chest wall, just over the top of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> rib in the midclavicular line  | 1               |                |
| Listen for rush of air  | 1               |                |
| Remove needle leaving only the catheter in place  | 1               |                |
| Dispose of the needle in the proper container   | 1               |                |
| Reassess for improvement in patient condition   | 1               |                |
| Actual Time Ended: _____  | Total           | / 18           |

**Critical Criteria:**

- Failure to take or verbalize personal protective equipment
- Failure to correctly locate the site for insertion
- Failure to assess the need for needle decompression (suspected tension pneumothorax)
- Failure to manage the patient as a minimally competent Paramedic
- Exhibits inappropriate affect with patient or other personnel
- Uses or orders a dangerous or inappropriate intervention
- Failure to achieve a score of 14 or greater

**Successful**       **Unsuccessful**