### Submersion/Drowning

**History**
- Age
- Duration of submersion
- Water temperature
- Type of water (salt, fresh, pool, etc.)
- SCUBA Diving
- Trauma possible? (Diving into pool)

**Signs and Symptoms**
- Airway – Clear vs. Foam vs. water/vomit
- Spontaneous Breathing
- AMS
- Cold/Shivering
- Motor neuro exam/priapism
- Bradycardia

**Differential**
- Hypothermia
- Hypoglycemia
- CNS dysfunction
- Seizure
- Head injury
- Spinal cord injury

**Pearls**
- Divers Alert Network 24-hour emergency phone number is (919) 684-9111.
- Check for pulselessness for 30-45 seconds to avoid unnecessary chest compressions.
- Defer ACLS medications until patient is warmed. Patients with hypothermia may have good neurologic outcome despite prolonged resuscitation; resuscitative efforts should continue until the patient is rewarmed.
- If V-Fib or pulseless V-Tach is present, shock x1, and defer further shocks due to concerns for hypothermia.
- Extremes of age, malnutrition, alcohol, and other drug use are contributing factors to hypothermia.
- It is important to have baseline blood glucose. If the patient is or becomes altered, check blood glucose and treat accordingly.
- Patients with prolonged hypoglycemia often become hypothermic; blood glucose analysis is essential.
- If a temperature is unable to be measured, treat the patient based on the suspected temperature.
- Warm packs can be placed in the armpit and groin areas. Care should be taken not to place directly on skin.

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**San Mateo County Emergency Medical Services**

**Submersion/Drowning**

For any submersion injury, including drowning and dive (decompression) emergencies

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**Effective April 2023**

**SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**

**Treatment Protocol R09**

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