

National POLST

Guidance for Honoring a POLST During Severe Trauma

Severe trauma for the purposes of this guidance is defined as a blunt or penetrating physical injury to a person that occurs in sudden, unexpected and/or unanticipated situations, including, but not limited to motor vehicle collisions, firearms injuries, fires, or falls resulting in forceful injury; but excluding major disaster or mass casualty incidents where triage intervention is initiated.¹ The emergency response to individuals with severe trauma requires timely diagnosis and treatment to reduce or eliminate high risks of imminent death or permanent disability.

As in all other settings, POLST status should be determined as early as reasonably possible.

If, as the result of severe trauma, a person with a POLST experiences a cardiac or respiratory arrest, applicable POLST orders should be followed once treating providers have actual knowledge of them.

¹ Model uniform core criteria for mass casualty triage. *Disaster Med Public Health Prep.* 2011 Jun;5(2):125-8. doi: 10.1001/dmp.2011.41.