

	<b>COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO</b> EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AGENCY	Document #	8026.19
	<u>PROGRAM DOCUMENT:</u>  <b>Respiratory Distress</b>	Initial Date:	03/17/98
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Signature on File

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 EMS Medical Director

Signature on File

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 EMS Administrator

**Purpose:**

- A. To serve as the treatment standard for patients assessed to have shortness of breath and/or respiratory distress.
- B. This protocol does not require the diagnosis of a specific disease or etiology precipitating the respiratory distress. Treatment is assessment based.

**Authority:**

- A. California Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5
- B. California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 9

**Definitions:**

- A. Mild Distress- Patient is able to speak full sentences; patient may have an elevated pulse and blood pressure; patient may be diaphoretic and weak; mental status is unaffected; no cyanosis is present.
- B. Moderate Distress - Patient is able to speak a few words; patient may have an elevated pulse and blood pressure; patient may be diaphoretic and weak; mental status is unaffected; mild cyanosis of lips and digits may be present.
- C. Severe Distress - Patient is unable to speak; patient may have decreased/elevated pulse and/or decreased/elevated blood pressure; mental status is altered; more central and profound cyanosis is present.

**Caveats:**

- A. Patients may have several concurrent disease processes producing shortness of breath. Wheezing may occur in diseases other than asthma, and peripheral edema may occur in settings other than congestive heart failure (CHF).
- B. Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) is highly effective at improving respiratory distress and should be attempted if available in all patients with moderate and severe respiratory distress. In general, one provider should monitor and manipulate CPAP leaving the primary provider to focus on the overall condition of the patient.
- C. Do Not Administer NTG if patient is taking PDE-5 inhibitors within last 48hrs for Erectile Dysfunction or Pulmonary HTN:
  - Sildenafil (VIAGRA®, REVATIO)
  - Tadalafil (CIALIS®)
  - Vardenafil (LEVITRA®) or equivalent.

## Respiratory Distress

- Assess ABC's limit physical exertion, reduce anxiety
- Consider oxygen therapy per Respiratory Distress: Airway management PD # 8020
- Cardiac Monitor and SpO<sub>2</sub>, and ETCO<sub>2</sub> (continuous waveform) with advanced airways.
- Consider vascular access but do not delay airway management or treatment.
- Early contact with receiving hospital.

