Clinical Practice Procedures:
Trauma/Cervical collar

Disclaimer and copyright
©2016 Queensland Government

All rights reserved. Without limiting the reservation of copyright, no person shall reproduce, store in a retrieval system or transmit in any form, or by any means, part or the whole of the Queensland Ambulance Service (‘QAS’) Clinical practice manual (‘CPM’) without the prior written permission of the Commissioner.

The QAS accepts no responsibility for any modification, redistribution or use of the CPM or any part thereof. The CPM is expressly intended for use by QAS paramedics when performing duties and delivering ambulance services for, and on behalf of, the QAS.

Under no circumstances will the QAS, its employees or agents, be liable for any loss, injury, claim, liability or damages of any kind resulting from the unauthorised use of, or reliance upon the CPM or its contents.

While effort has been made to contact all copyright owners this has not always been possible. The QAS would welcome notification from any copyright holder who has been omitted or incorrectly acknowledged.

All feedback and suggestions are welcome, please forward to:
Clinical.Guidelines@ambulance.qld.gov.au

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>April, 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To ensure a consistent procedural approach to the Cervical collar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>Applies to all QAS clinical staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Clinical Quality &amp; Patient Safety Unit, QAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review date</td>
<td>April, 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/.
A **cervical collar** is an orthopaedic device used to physically and consciously acknowledge the potential for c-spine injury. Although available devices may limit movement within the c-spine, no device has been shown to immobilise it completely.

There is a lack of evidence for the efficacy of spinal immobilisation in the prevention of spinal cord injury (SCI).\[^1\] There is evidence however that rigid collars can lead to significant complications and morbidity when used to immobilise the c-spine.\[^2,3,4\] These complications and difficulties with rigid cervical collars include:

- patient discomfort
- pressure areas
- increased intracranial pressure
- causing/worsening SCI (e.g. in ankylosing spondylitis)
- impaired ventilation
- aspiration risk
- masking of neck/occipital injuries

Soft cervical collars mitigate some of these issues.

The OAPL™ cervical soft collar is a disposable single use device made from soft, open-cell foam plastic with a cotton stockinette cover and touch tape closure.
1. Gently align the patient’s head to a neutral anatomical position or position of greatest comfort.

2. Measure the distance between the base of the chin and the suprasternal notch.

3. Select the appropriate size collar by comparing the patient’s neck measurement to the width of soft collar’s chin support.

4. Slide the collar under the patient’s neck (right to left) until the adhesive Velcro strap is clearly visible.

**Additional information**
- The c-collar is an integral component of the approach to spinal care.
- The ends of a correctly sized OAPL™ soft collar should meet or slightly overlap at the back of the patient’s neck.
- The QAS supplies OAPL™ soft collars in the following sizes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extra-small</td>
<td>65 mm</td>
<td>480 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>90 mm</td>
<td>480 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>100 mm</td>
<td>535 mm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>