Clinical Practice Procedures:
Airway management/Rapid sequence induction

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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To ensure a consistent procedural approach to Rapid sequence induction.</td>
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<td>Scope</td>
<td>Applies to all QAS clinical staff.</td>
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Rapid sequence induction (RSI) is the administration of an induction agent followed by a rapid acting neuromuscular blocking agent to induce unconsciousness and motor paralysis to facilitate endotracheal intubation.

There is a growing body of evidence (particularly in trauma) that pre-hospital RSI can be performed safely and with no greater complication rates to that experienced in the emergency department.[1,2] This is particularly so when there is a clear operational framework in place to guide the procedure.

QAS RSI team consists of 3 members:

**RSI supervisor**
Assumes overall responsibility for patient management during RSI. Typically this role is performed by the CCP from the High Acuity Response Unit. The RSI supervisor is responsible for the instigation of the failed intubation algorithm if required.

**Airway clinician**
Manages the patient’s airway and performs the intubation. This role is typically performed by a CCP. However, in a predicted difficult intubation for anatomical or pathophysiological reasons, the most experienced operator should perform this role.

**Circulation clinician**
Responsible for placing monitoring equipment and administering any drugs. This role is typically performed by an ACP.

**Indications**
- Neuroprotection for head injury
- Anticipated clinical course requiring anaesthetic
- Global management of the multiple injured patient
- Airway/ventilation compromise (actual/potential)
- Humanitarian reasons

**Contraindications**
- Nil specific

**Complications**
- Unrecognised oesophageal intubation
- Malposition
- Aspiration
- Hypoxia
- Laryngospasm
- Oropharyngeal trauma
- Vagal stimulation
Procedure – Oropharyngeal airway insertion

**Adult**

1. Assign RSI roles
2. Complete RSI checklist (see opposite)
3. Complete RSI brief
4. Administer induction agent/s and relaxant
5. Provide MILS (open c-collar) if appropriate
6. Place OPA +/- NPA(s)
7. Ventilate patient with BVM until relaxation achieved
8. Perform laryngoscopy
9. Suction as required
10. Consider laryngeal manipulation to optimise visualisation of the larynx.
11. Insert intubating catheter (bougie) ETT ≥ 6.0 mm only
12. Whilst maintaining visualisation of the larynx, request the airway assistant to place appropriately sized ETT over the intubating catheter
13. Hold ETT and gently remove bougie and laryngoscope.
14. Using a Leur-Lok™ tip syringe, inflate the ETT cuff with sufficient air to provide an effective seal.
15. Connect resuscitation bag and commence ventilation.
16. Confirm correct tracheal placement by observing an appropriate continuous EtCO₂ waveform (minimum of 6 ventilations of moderate tidal volume required for confirmation).
17. Secure ETT (cloth tie/commercial ETT holder/tape) as appropriate.
18. Consider insertion of bite block.
19. Administer post intubation sedation as required (titrated aliquots of morphine/fentanyl and/or midazolam).
20. Consider OG tube insertion.
**Note:** Officers are only to perform procedures for which they have received specific training and authorisation by the QAS.

**Failed intubation attempt**

**Able to ventilate?**

- **Y**
  - **Reattempt intubation once oxygenation is optimised**
    - ensure optimal positioning
    - consider laryngeal manipulation
  - **N**
    - **Perform brief laryngoscopy attempt to determine if laryngeal view is favourable for primary intubation**

  - **Y**
    - **Able to ventilate?**
      - **Y**
        - Place LMA
      - **N**
        - **Laryngeal view favourable?**
          - **Y**
            - **Able to ventilate?**
              - **Y**
                - **Manage as per relevant CPG**
              - **N**
                - Perform surgical airway
          - **N**
            - **Perform surgical airway**

- **N**
  - **Senior clinician takes over airway**

- **Perform:**
  - 2 person BVM
  - insert OPA & 2 NPAs
Additional information

- Pre-hospital RSI should be performed in the back of an Ambulance with the patient on the stretcher when possible. Advantages of this location include:
  - Scene safety
  - Cleaner environment for equipment
  - Better access to equipment and monitoring
  - Adequate access to the patient and the patient’s airway.
  - The most appropriate position is with the stretcher part way out of the ambulance with the intubator kneeling at the patient’s head
  - More appropriate lighting, including protection from direct sunlight
  - Protection from the elements (e.g. rain, wind)
  - Access to better suction

- Pre-hospital RSI is to be performed with a bougie at all times. This facilitates the likelihood of a successful first-pass intubation through practice standardisation, as well as improving familiarity with the device in preparation for more difficult airways.

- The team performing the RSI and intubation must have a thorough understanding of the failed intubation drill. In the event of a failed intubation, the most experienced operator assumes control of the airway.

- If there is an absence of EtCO2 sensing or inappropriate EtCO2 waveform/measurement the ETT must be immediately removed and the failed airway algorithm is to be commenced.

- If intubation is unable to be achieved within 30 seconds OR two (2) attempts the failed airway algorithm is to be commenced.

- If, on patient assessment, the airway appears particularly difficult, or there are patient factors that suggest the intubation will be very high risk (e.g. significant haemodynamic instability, hypoxia), the most experienced clinician should undertake the first attempt. In such circumstances consideration should be given to delaying intubating until arrival at the hospital.

- Paediatric patients may prove difficult to intubate in the pre-hospital setting. Challenging airway anatomy and infrequency of intubating opportunities are thought to be the main factors accounting for the lower success rate in paediatric ETT insertion.[2] Specialised training in paediatric airways is important to acquire and maintain skills in this population.