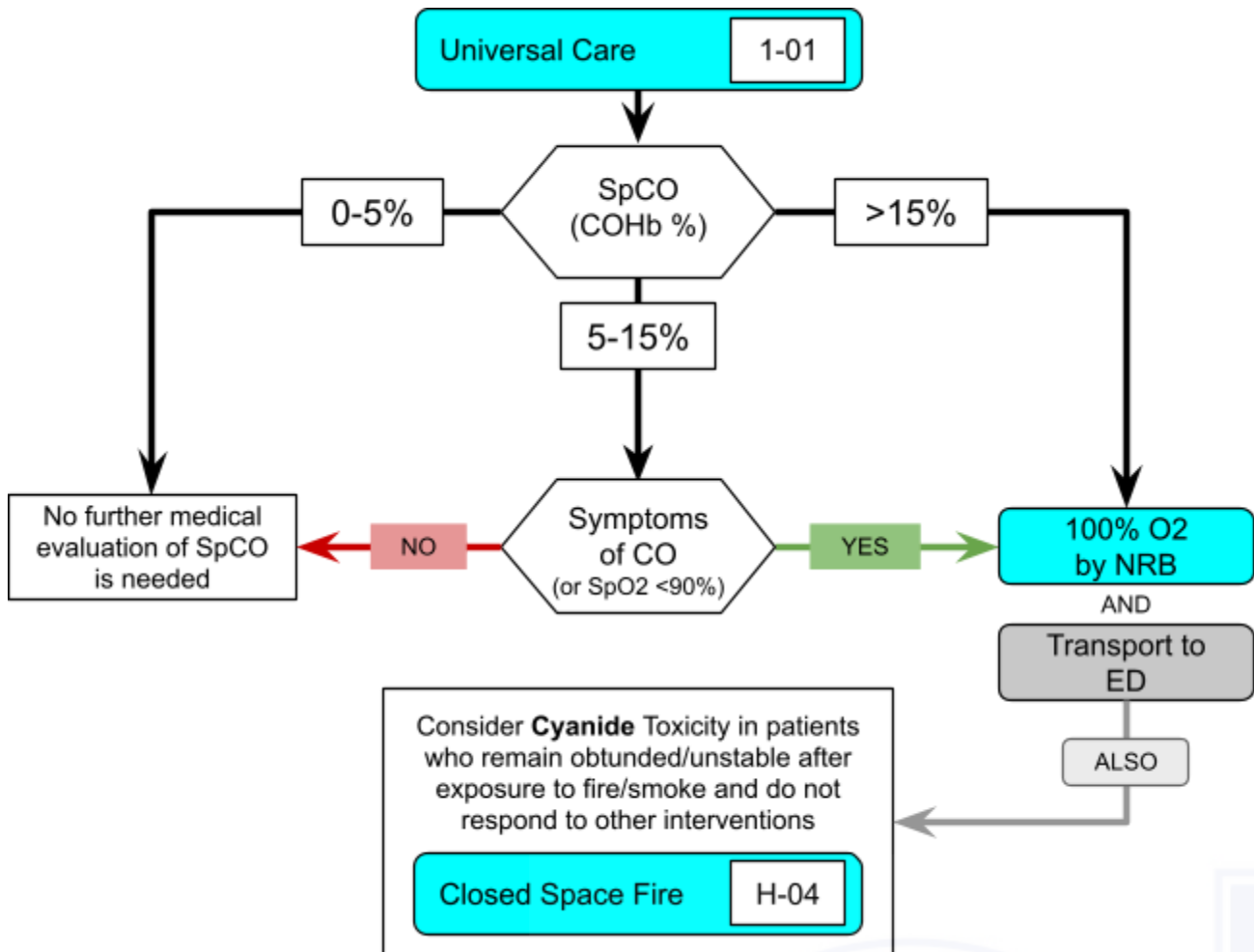


H-03
CARBON MONOXIDE
EXPOSURE

First Responder
EMT
AEMT
Paramedic

Description:

Colorless, odorless, tasteless, non-irritating gas formed by incomplete combustion of organic compounds (e.g closed space fire).



H-03
CARBON MONOXIDE
EXPOSURE



NOTES:

- Converts hemoglobin into carboxyhemoglobin, a non-oxygen carrying compound causing chemical asphyxiation.
- Pulse oximetry can indicate an incorrect (false high) oxygen saturation. PaO₂ should be obtained with a device that has the ability to read carboxyhemoglobin and methemoglobin.
- Symptoms:
 - Mild (5-15%) - headache, dizziness, nausea (i.e. “flu-like symptoms”)
 - Moderate (15-25%) - vision changes, vomiting, worse headache
 - Severe (>25%) - confusion/altered mental status (can lead to seizures, coma, cerebral edema, etc.)
- Altered mental status in the setting of smoke inhalation is probably due to mixed exposures including cyanide, carbon monoxide, and acid gasses as well as many other toxic products of combustion (see Closed Space Fire guideline [H-05]).