

CRUSH INJURIES

“Crush injury” occurs when a portion of the body is crushed under heavy weight. The crushing force causes extensive bruising of the area, and there may be complications including fractures or ruptured organs. When the crushed area is limited, such as a hand or foot, the injury is considered serious, but is not usually life-threatening. However, a major crush injury may cause severe shock or **crush syndrome**, both of which are life threatening.

Severe shock can develop after a casualty is released from the weight that caused the crush injury. When the crushing force is removed, fluids from the crushed tissues leak into surrounding tissues – this causes shock.

When muscle is crushed, it releases the contents of muscle cells into the blood. If the injury is large, it can cause kidney failure. This is **crush syndrome**, also called post-traumatic acute renal (kidney) failure.

First Aid for Crush Injuries

Give first aid for wounds and fractures to stop bleeding and relieve pain. Stabilize other conditions while waiting for transportation to medical help.

1. Move the casualty as little as possible and do what you can to minimize pain.
2. Give first aid for shock right away – even if there are no signs, shock will probably develop.
3. Give ongoing casualty care and transport to medical help as soon as possible.