



# Waterjet injury

## At Scene

The importance of the injury and the potential severity must be recognised immediately.

First aid measures should include controlling any bleeding by the application of pressure over the bleeding site and elevation of the injured limb where possible.

Arrangements should then be made for the immediate transfer of the patient to a hospital medical facility.

It is recommended that the hospital Accident and Emergency Department be contacted by telephone whilst the patient is in transit with the following details.

1. Time of the injury.
2. The nature of the material in the jet.

To reiterate to hospital Accident and Emergency staff that although the initial injury may appear to be minor, the potential for serious complications arising exists and these patients require referral to the duty Orthopaedic team for assessment.

### In Hospital

1. Assess the patient for any life-threatening injury and ensure that the airway, breathing and circulation are controlled and stable.
2. Control any external haemorrhage by the application of pressure.
3. Obtain the following details in the history:
  - Time of the incident.
  - Details of the contaminant.
4. Past medical history.
5. Any antibiotic allergies.
6. Date of last Tetanus injection

### Examination

1. General examination.
2. Examination of the injury site - note the size and site of the entry wound.
3. Check for local swelling.
4. Assess the range of movement. Assess nerve and tendon function.  
(NB Normal examination at this stage does not exclude serious and potentially limb threatening complications developing.)
5. Obtain x-rays of the injured area to check for presence of subcutaneous air.
6. Refer the patient for assessment by a senior Accident and Emergency doctor or the Orthopaedic team.
7. Refer the patient for assessment by a senior Accident and Emergency doctor or the Orthopaedic team.
8. The patient should be taken to theatre for exploration of the injured limb.
9. Prophylactic broad spectrum antibiotics will be required at the earliest possible stage.
10. Ensure that Tetanus prophylaxis is up to date.

