

ITLS & PHTLS: A Comparison

International Trauma Life Support (ITLS) is a global organization dedicated to preventing death and disability from trauma through education and emergency care. ITLS educates emergency personnel to provide optimal care for the trauma patient. A variety of comprehensive education programs are available to meet the requirements of all levels and backgrounds of pre-hospital emergency personnel internationally, including ITLS Basic, Advanced, Pediatric, Military, and Access courses.

ITLS's tradition of excellence is reflected in its diverse means of dissemination of knowledge and skills. Course Smart eTextbooks are an exciting new choice for learners. Nook and Kindle versions of ITLS are available through Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com and other retail outlets.

ITLS also offers eTrauma, an online version of the didactic portion of the Provider course that provides an invaluable option for the busy clinician. Upon completion of eTrauma, the learner receives 8 hours of CECBEMS credit. The learner may then choose to gain ITLS certification by successfully completing an ITLS Completer Course that features 8 hours of hands-on skill station demonstration, practice, and testing plus the written exam.

Course Comparison	ITLS	PHTLS
Endorsed by the American College of Emergency Physicians	●	
Objectively measures assessment and management skills for the care of the critical, multi-trauma patient	●	
Contains core and supplemental content, and allows for customization to address students' educational needs	●	
Mandates involvement of the course medical director and strongly encourages on-site medical director presence	●	
Emphasizes teamwork - from scene to surgery	●	



Improving Trauma Care Worldwide

Provides a well-structured assessment and priority plan. The Primary Survey consists of Scene Survey, General Impression <i>which includes identification and initial management of significant external bleeding</i> , Initial Assessment, and a Focused or Rapid Trauma Survey, designed to identify and address immediate life-threatening conditions and indicate critical interventions that are practical and easy to follow by all levels of EMS personnel. The identification of "Load and Go" conditions ensures valuable time is not wasted at the scene.	●	
The ITLS patient assessment algorithm was used as the foundation methodology of the National Standard Curriculum (US - DOT) being taught in paramedic and EMT programs.	●	
Outlines key terms with objectives of each chapter which are explained on appropriate pages.	●	
Identifies key messages in each chapter that are clearly highlighted in easily identified boxes called PEARLS.	●	
Follows each core chapter with a patient management skills chapter to reinforce learning.	●	
Supplements the core trauma knowledge base with supporting chapters on Trauma in Pregnancy, The Impaired Patient, Standard Precautions, Trauma in the Elderly, and Trauma Cardiopulmonary Arrest.	●	
Offers new Resource Central solution (available via bradybooks.com) for interactive learning exercises on topics discussed. Students will find quizzes, additional web links, games, videos and more to supplement classroom learning. It features supplemental material on Optional Skills, Documentation, Communications with the Receiving Hospital, Role of the Medical Helicopter, Trauma Care in the Cold, Drowning, Barotrauma and Decompression injury, Trauma Scoring in the Pre-hospital Care Setting, Injury Prevention, Multi-casualty Incidents, Tactical EMS, and Overview of ITLS Access. It also offers instructors a full complement of online supplemental teaching materials such as test banks and image banks.	●	

Offers a dedicated Pediatric course and text that provides in-depth assessment and management tools for the injured pediatric patient.	●	
Offers a specialized Access course and text that provides knowledge and skills for extrication using hand tools to access trauma patients entrapped in motor vehicle collisions.	●	
Provides a single training package for all levels of prehospital trauma care providers in 7th edition.		●
Endorsed by the American College of Surgeons with incorporated 2008 ATLS changes.		●
Introduction chapter contains history of PHTLS: Past, Present and Future, and advice on reading EMS literature.		●
Updated definitions and statistics in appropriate chapters.		●
Expanded prolonged transport considerations with most chapters.		●
Discourages references to mnemonics.		●
New chapter scenarios and scenario solutions at the end.		●
Newly added bullet point summary sections included at end of each chapter.		●
Contains lengthy anatomy, physiology, and pathophysiology sections.		●
Includes supportive skills chapters for airway, shock, spinal trauma, and thoracic trauma.		●
Expanded chapter on scene assessment, including START triage, SALT triage.		●
Uses Primary Survey of ATLS (A-B-C-D-E), but not including a "Rapid Trauma Survey" characteristic of ITLS and the US National Standard Curriculum, relying instead on information concerning the kinematics of the injury to glean possible causes of respiratory compromise, shock and altered mental status. Secondary Survey is performed en route (if at all) in patients with indication of life-threatening injuries.		●
Stresses kinematics as a key component in identifying possible injuries, rather than a detailed search (Rapid Trauma Survey).		●

Updated sections in Injury Prevention and Kinematics and Specific Injuries including facial trauma, soft tissue neck trauma, and compartment syndrome; new chapters on Burn and Environmental Trauma.		●
Chapter on substance abuse and the Impaired Patient	●	
Skills video in DVD format.		●
Has less emphasis on the decision when to utilize special extrication.		●
Continues to advocate PASG in shock in selected situations.		●
Revised IV fluid resuscitation in shock.		●
Improved traumatic brain injury content.		●
Special Considerations include chapters on Environmental Trauma, Civilian Tactical EMS, and Wilderness Trauma.		●
A separate division introduced with chapters on Disaster Management, Explosions and Weapons of Mass Destruction, which were in special considerations in the 6th Edition.		●

Text Comparison	ITLS	PHTLS
Based on evidence and best practices- position paper referenced	●	●
Course focused text	●	
"What's New" section outlining updates and additions to the previous edition. These include: explanation of the Golden Period, update on blast injury, minor changes to assessment sequence to make it more practical, and introducing the "Fix-It" Concept. In specific chapters, the use of finger-stick lactate level and pre-hospital abdominal ultrasound are mentioned. Capnography is stressed as the standard for confirming and monitoring the position of the endotracheal tube, and the usefulness of ELM is introduced. A lateral approach for decompression of the chest is introduced. The discussion of hemorrhagic shock	●	

has been updated with the experience of the military during the recent conflicts and description of the use of capnography to monitor shock was also added. The use of tourniquets and hemostatic agents has been added and insertion of an IO needle using the EZ-IO system is described in detail.		
One manual for both basic and advanced EMS providers.	●	●
Specialized texts for Pediatric ITLS and Access	●	
Custom stand-alone military edition text, edited by a military surgeon with input and review received from members of the international community. The scenarios are military based and focus on the unique characteristics of the military environment.	●	
A new chapter added to the text - The Science and Art of Pre-hospital care: Principles, Preferences and Critical Thinking.		●
Pediatric trauma appears as a chapter only in the text.		●
6th Edition Military version revised to reflect specific traumatic situations faced by military pre-hospital providers.		●

Summary

These two most internationally recognized pre-hospital trauma training programs have launched their 7th Edition texts, used for training. ITLS training is available in over 80 chapters and training centres around the world and PHTLS in 52 countries worldwide. Both have recognized the need for e-learning dedicated to busy clinicians and e-learning modules were launched with the previous 6th Edition texts. ITLS has successfully updated the eTrauma content in line with the updates in the 7th Edition.

ITLS is the smart choice for trauma training because it is practical, dynamic, flexible, team centered, challenging, and grounded in emergency medicine. It also provides training at every level for emergency care providers from all walks of life internationally.