



# Ontario Trauma Centres: Minimum Standards

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## About Critical Care Services Ontario

Established in 2005, Critical Care Services Ontario (CCSO) led the implementation of Ontario's first Critical Care Strategy and now centrally coordinates and develops integrated system solutions for critical care (Adult, Paediatric and Neonatal) and specialty programs aligned with critical care (Neurosurgery, Trauma and Burns, and the Life or Limb Policy). CCSO's work is the result of an ongoing collaboration between critical care providers, hospital administrators, partners from the Ministry of Health and other health system leaders.

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# Ontario Trauma Centres: Minimum Standards

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The Ontario Trauma Centres: Minimum Standards identify minimum standards for the identified designations of trauma centres. They define expectations for adult and paediatric level I, level II, and level III trauma centres regarding their system role, capacity, and capabilities. Understanding roles and capacity of these trauma centres will enable coordination of processes between hospitals, formalize roles and responsibilities, and develop and sustain trauma services within an inclusive Ontario Trauma System. The trauma centres are expected to maintain services as per the Ontario Trauma Centres: Minimum Standards.

This document contains thirteen (13) sections and identifies minimum standards for the identified designations of trauma centres. The sections are:

1. [Academic and Research](#)
2. [Leadership Roles](#)
3. [Emergency Preparedness](#)
4. [Performance Improvement and Patient Safety](#)
5. [System Leadership](#)
6. [Pre-Hospital: Protocols and Processes](#)
7. [Emergency Department: Processes](#)
8. [Emergency Department: Personnel](#)
9. [Emergency Department: Equipment](#)
10. [Trauma Surgery Capabilities](#)
11. [Non-Surgical Trauma Capabilities](#)
12. [Inpatient Trauma Services: Protocols and Services](#)
13. [Inpatient Trauma Services: Personnel](#)

The following tables show the minimum requirements for Trauma Centres needed in each of the categories for Ontario Trauma Centres.

# 1. Academic and Research

Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
a. University affiliation and academic leadership for the trauma training program (fellowship, postgraduate, undergraduate)	Mandatory	Recommended	Not required	Mandatory	Recommended
b. Trauma research program infrastructure	Mandatory	Recommended	Not required	Mandatory	Recommended
c. Initiation, participation, and dissemination of trauma research (publications)	Mandatory	Recommended	Not required	Mandatory	Recommended
d. Offer in-house Advanced Trauma Life Support® (ATLS®) or equivalent program	Mandatory	Recommended	Not required	Mandatory	Recommended
e. Offer in-house Trauma training courses or equivalent for nurses e.g., Trauma Nursing Core Course (TNCC), Emergency Practice Interventions and Care – Canada (EPICC), Advanced Trauma Care for Nurses (ATCN)	Mandatory	Recommended	Not required	Mandatory	Recommended

## 2. Leadership Roles

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Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
a. A leadership or central role in the provincial or regional trauma system (administrative, planning, clinical programs)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Not required	Mandatory	Mandatory

### 3. Emergency Preparedness

Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
a. Liaison role in emergency preparedness (planning, exercising, and education necessary to achieve a state of readiness for disasters and emergencies)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory

## 4. Performance Improvement and Patient Safety

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Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
a. Data submission to the Ontario Trauma Registry (OTR)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
b. Participation in Ontario Trauma Advisory Committee (OTAC) Performance Improvement Program (quarterly reports)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory

## 5. System Leadership

Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
a. Data analyst support consistent with hospital trauma volumes for mandatory provincial reporting to the Ontario Trauma Registry (OTR)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
b. Trauma program positions in place and staffed e.g. trauma medical director, trauma program coordinator, and trauma data analyst	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
c. Hospital Trauma committee and sub-committees with terms of reference	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
d. Medical Director for Trauma Services	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
e. Trauma program manager (or Coordinator)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
f. Financial support for leadership roles	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
g. Demonstrable quality Management activities (quality assurance, improvement initiatives, process and accountability)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory



Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
h. Dedicated initiatives for injury prevention (e.g. in-hospital education programs, collaboration with public health partners, communication of trauma data with regional partners to drive programming)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Recommended	Mandatory	Mandatory
i. At least 70% of Trauma Team Leaders (TTL), Emergency Physicians, and ICU Intensivist accepting direct trauma patient transfers complete Advanced Trauma Life Support® (ATLS®) or equivalent education	Mandatory	Mandatory	Recommended	Mandatory	Mandatory
j. At least 70% of the ED or ICU nurses receiving direct transfer of accountability (ToA) of trauma patients complete trauma training courses or equivalent e.g., Trauma Nursing Core Course (TNCC), Emergency Practice Interventions and Care – Canada (EPICC), Advanced Trauma Care for Nurses (ATCN)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Recommended	Mandatory	Mandatory

## 6. Pre-Hospital: Protocols and Processes

Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
a. Field Trauma Triage protocol for recognition and transport of the major trauma patient to the appropriate level of care within the Regional Trauma Network (RTN)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory (Centre works with LTH to establish and adopt shared practice guidelines)	Mandatory	Mandatory
b. Protocols and processes between air (ORNGE) and land Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to ensure 24/7 access to Lead Trauma hospital for major trauma patients	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory (Local helipad access with ambulance transport protocol in place)	Mandatory	Mandatory

## 7. Emergency Department: Processes

Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
a. Criteria and process for Trauma Team Activation (TTA)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
b. Inter-facility trauma patient transfers organized through CritiCall Ontario	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
c. Protocols in place for recognition of major trauma patients, communication and transport to the appropriate level of care within the trauma system	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory

## 8. Emergency Department: Personnel

Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
a. ED Chief that is a specialist Emergency Physician	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory (certified CCFP-EM or FRCP Emergency Physician with expertise to provide optimal trauma care)	Mandatory	Mandatory

## 9. Emergency Department: Equipment

Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
a. Advanced airway capabilities for adults and children including the provision of surgical airway	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
b. Paediatric resuscitation equipment organized using a weight-based system	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
c. Central, peripheral, and intra-osseous vascular access capability	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
d. Chest tubes	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
e. Fracture stabilization & traction equipment	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
f. Monitors (transport, bedside, fetal)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
g. Pelvic binders	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
h. Portable or overhead x-ray equipment	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
i. Portable ultrasound machine and capable provider for Focused Abdominal Sonography in Trauma (FAST) examinations	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
j. Quantitative end tidal CO2 monitor	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
k. Rapid infusion warmer	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory

Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
l. Surgical equipment including airway and resuscitative thoracotomy trays	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
m. Trauma resuscitation room	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
n. Tourniquets	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
o. Universal precautions equipment	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
p. Vascular Doppler	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
q. Warming devices (e.g., Bair hugger, warm blankets)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory

## 10. Trauma Surgery Capabilities

Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
<b>24/7 capability to perform procedures within speciality domain</b>					
a. General (Trauma) surgery	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
b. Orthopedic Surgery	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
c. Neurosurgery	Mandatory	Mandatory	Not required	Mandatory	Mandatory
d. Plastic surgery (including initial burn management)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory (At a minimum, business hours access)	Mandatory	Mandatory
e. Spine surgery	Mandatory	Mandatory	Not required	Mandatory	Mandatory
f. Vascular (including Endovascular) surgery	Mandatory	Mandatory	Not required	Mandatory	Mandatory
g. Cardiac surgery	Mandatory	Mandatory	Not required	Mandatory	Mandatory
h. Thoracic surgery	Mandatory	Mandatory	Not required	Mandatory	Mandatory
i. Urology	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory (Minimum during business hours)	Mandatory	Mandatory
j. Obstetrics and Gynecology	Mandatory	Mandatory	Recommended	Mandatory	Mandatory
k. Paediatric Surgery	Mandatory	Mandatory	Not required	Mandatory	Mandatory
l. Ophthalmology	Mandatory	Mandatory	Not required	Mandatory	Mandatory
m. Otolaryngology	Mandatory	Mandatory	Recommended (During business hours)	Mandatory	Mandatory

Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
<b>24/7 capability to perform procedures within speciality domain</b>					
n. Dental and Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery	Recommended	Recommended	Not required	Recommended	Recommended
o. 24-hour hospital coverage by General Surgeon (attending within max 20 min)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
p. Initial resuscitation capabilities for major burn patients prior to transfer to a major burn centre	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory



# 11. Non-Surgical Trauma Capabilities

Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
<b>24/7 capability to access specialty services</b>					
a. Emergency	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
b. Radiology	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
c. Anesthesia (20 min response)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
d. Cardiology	Mandatory	Mandatory	Recommended	Mandatory	Mandatory
e. Gastroenterology	Mandatory	Mandatory	Not required	Mandatory	Mandatory
f. Neurology	Mandatory	Mandatory	Not required	Mandatory	Mandatory
g. Hematology-Transfusion Medicine	Mandatory	Mandatory	Not required	Mandatory	Mandatory
h. Infectious Diseases	Mandatory	Mandatory	Not required	Mandatory	Mandatory
i. Internal Medicine	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
j. Nephrology	Mandatory	Mandatory	Not required	Mandatory	Mandatory
k. Psychiatry	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
l. Psychology	Recommended	Recommended	Not required	Recommended	Recommended
m. Inpatient Rehabilitation Services	Mandatory	Mandatory	Not required	Mandatory	Mandatory
n. Child Life	Mandatory	Mandatory	Not required	Mandatory	Mandatory

Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
<b>24/7 capability to access specialty services</b>					
o. Social Work	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
p. Family Support and Spiritual Care	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory (on-site or protocol with LTH to connect patient with Family Support Programs and Spiritual Care)	Mandatory	Mandatory
q. Critical Care – Level 3 advanced ICU	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
r. Interventional radiology team available to respond within 30 min and to start interventional radiology with the patient within 60 min	Mandatory	Mandatory	Recommended	Mandatory	Mandatory
s. Ultrasonography	Mandatory	Mandatory	Recommended	Mandatory	Mandatory

## 12. Inpatient Trauma Services: Protocols and Services

Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
a. 24/7 On-Call Trauma Team Leader with multi-disciplinary Trauma Team response (max. 20 min response to bedside)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Not required	Mandatory	Mandatory
b. 24/7 On-Call General surgeon/Trauma surgeon (max. 20 min response to bedside)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
c. 24/7 In-house advanced airway intervention capability at all times	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
d. Other surgical consultations as required (max 30 min response)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Recommended	Mandatory	Mandatory
e. A surgeon-led inpatient trauma service with comprehensive multidisciplinary team (occupational therapy, physiotherapy, psychiatry, psychology and psychiatry, social work, chronic pain management, etc.) support	Mandatory	Mandatory	Not required	Mandatory	Mandatory
f. Clinical practice guidelines for trauma patient management	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
g. Protocols for 24-hour access to Child Protection Services	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
h. Blood bank and lab system available on-site 24-hours per day	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
i. Blood bank system capable of providing unmatched blood within 10 min	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory (rapid access to blood products)	Mandatory	Mandatory

Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
j. Massive transfusion protocol	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
k. Blood gas analysis	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
l. Blood bank and lab system accredited by Canadian Services and Labs	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
m. Organ and tissue donation and end of life care policies and procedures	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
n. Protocols for protection services availability for high profile trauma patients	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
o. Immediate plain film radiography (in-house tech)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
p. In-house CT tech	Mandatory	Mandatory	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended
q. CT adjacent to ED	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended
r. Radiology protocols for imaging trauma patients	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
s. Radiologist consultation (30 min response time)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
t. Provincial/Regional PACS or equivalent	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory (24-hour access to PACS)	Mandatory	Mandatory
u. Access to MRI (24/7 access)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Recommended	Mandatory	Mandatory
v. In-house 24-hour operating room nursing staff available (or on-call for paediatric lead trauma hospitals) for immediate surgery with the necessary equipment	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory

Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
w. 30-min call-back for operating room nursing staff for immediate surgery	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
x. Availability of protected OR time for urgent trauma cases	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
y. Demonstrated formalized operating room prioritization system	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
z. OR perfusion services and core re-warming capability	Mandatory	Mandatory	Recommended	Mandatory	Mandatory
aa. Trauma practice guidelines	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory (works with LTH in establishing and adopting shared trauma practice guidelines)	Mandatory	Mandatory
bb. Closed, intensivist run ICU model	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
cc. Transfer protocols to/from higher-level ICU	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
dd. No refusal policy for a major trauma patient	Mandatory	Mandatory	Recommended	Mandatory	Mandatory
ee. Guaranteed access to trauma beds	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
ff. Capacity for intermediate care with monitoring	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory

## 13. Inpatient Trauma Services: Personnel

Criteria	Level I Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Lead Trauma Hospital	Level III Trauma Centre	Level I Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital	Level II Paediatric Lead Trauma Hospital
a. Medical Director of Intensive Care	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
b. Dedicated multidisciplinary team (occupational therapy, physiotherapy, physiatry, psychology and psychiatry, social work, chronic pain management, etc.)	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory

# Acknowledgment

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The Ontario Trauma Centres: Minimum Standards define expectations for level I, level II, and level III trauma centres regarding their system role, capacity, and capabilities in the inclusive trauma system. These standards were developed by **System Capacity and Capabilities Working Group** in consultation with **Ontario Trauma Advisory Committee** and **Critical Care Services Ontario**.

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