

# EMERGENCY ACTION CARD

## Increased Airway Pressure

v1.1

Using these steps should identify any cause of increased airway pressure. Avoid spending excessive time on one aspect until you have run through the entire EAC

### START: IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY DRIVER, STOP SAFELY

#### 1 Adequate oxygen delivery

- Follow Key Basic Plan
- Confirm increased airway pressure by switching to hand ventilation (<3 breaths)

#### 2 Airway

- ETT/trache: confirm position/patency and exclude leak
- Check capnography trace
- Consider whether you need to isolate equipment (Box B)

#### 3 Breathing

- Check chest symmetry, breath sounds, RR, SpO<sub>2</sub>, measured VT<sub>exp</sub>
- Review airway pressure using ventilator and/or Mapleson C system
- Consider potential causes (Box C) and actions:
  - Suction, bronchodilator, diuretic
- Give additional muscle relaxation
- Does expiratory flow trace return to zero (i.e. is gas trapping occurring)?

#### 4 Circulation

- Check rate, rhythm, perfusion
- Re-check BP
- If circulation unstable, consider if it is due to gas trapping

#### 5 Drugs

- Optimise sedation and analgesia

#### 6 Next steps

- Consider lung ultrasound
- Consider arterial blood gas

#### Box A: CRITICAL CHANGES

- If problem worsens significantly, or a new problem arises, go back to **START** of Key Basic Plan
- If Transfer Practitioner or Transfer Doctor transfer, contact Remote Duty Consultant
- Consider contacting Leadership SPOC for support, if required

#### Box B: ISOLATE EQUIPMENT

- Ventilate lungs using Mapleson C system connected DIRECTLY to ETT or tracheostomy tube connector
- **DO NOT** use the HME filter, angle piece or catheter mount
- If increased pressure manually confirmed, re-connect ventilator
- If increased pressure **NOT** manually confirmed, assume problem with ventilator/circuit/HMEF/catheter mount: **check and replace**

#### Box C: POTENTIAL CAUSES

- Inadequate neuromuscular blockade
- Consider potential causes:
  - Bronchospasm (→ EAC)
  - Pneumothorax
  - Bronchial intubation
  - Sputum plugging
  - Anaphylaxis (→ EAC)
  - Laryngospasm and stridor (→ EAC)
  - Pulmonary oedema
  - Foreign body