



# International Trauma Life Support

## *Becoming an ITLS Chapter Or Training Centre*

ITLS was founded in the early 1980's as Basic Trauma Life Support. From its early roots as a local and regional trauma education course for EMS professionals, BTLS grew to have over 75 chapters around the world. In 2005, BTLS became ITLS to better reflect the scope of the organization.

The first ITLS course was developed in 1982 by John E. Campbell, MD, FACEP, of the Alabama Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians. The course was based on the need for a quality, skill-oriented, continuing education program for emergency medical services (EMS) providers. Since its inception, ITLS has undergone tremendous growth and has become the internationally accepted standard education program for pre-hospital trauma care.

ITLS has expanded beyond its initial course and now offers several types of educational programs:

**ITLS Basic** - Designed for the EMT-Basic and First Responder, this hands-on training course offers basic EMS providers complete training in the skills necessary for rapid assessment, resuscitation, stabilization and transportation of the trauma patient. The course provides education in the initial evaluation and stabilization of the trauma patient.

**ITLS Advanced** - This comprehensive course covers the skills necessary for rapid assessment, resuscitation, stabilization, and transportation of the trauma patient for advanced EMT, paramedic and trauma nurse. The course teaches the correct sequence of evaluation and the techniques of critical intervention, resuscitation and packaging a patient.

**ITLS Combined** – Many ITLS courses choose to train both Advanced and Basic level providers. In these courses, the Basic level providers partake of all didactic session, and observe the advanced skill stations.

**Provider Recertification** - This course provides continuing education in ITLS for the experienced provider who has already completed the Basic or Advanced Course. Sample course agendas are available from the International Office.

**ITLS Bridge Course** - Designed for the instructor who has successfully completed an ATLS or PHTLS course to transition him or her to the ITLS program. The course typically runs 8 hours and a sample course agenda is available from the International Office. Following completion of an ITLS Bridge course, a candidate must be monitored teaching an ITLS provider course to complete the steps to become a ITLS instructor.

**ITLS Access** - This course provides EMS crews and first responders with training to utilize the tools commonly carried on an ambulance or first responder unit to reach entrapped patients and begin stabilization and extrication.

**Pediatric ITLS** - Pediatric ITLS concentrates on the care of injured children. The course is designed to train EMS and nursing personnel in the proper assessment, stabilization, and packaging of a pediatric trauma patient. The course covers communication techniques with pediatric patients and parents.

**ITLS Instructor Courses** - Instructor courses are offered for both ITLS Advanced and ITLS Basic courses. Other methods of achieving instructor status are used for Pediatric ITLS and ITLS Access courses. To become an instructor, students must have successfully completed the provider level course and meet other chapter requirements.

## I. ITLS Structure

ITLS is a United States not-for-profit corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service code. The ITLS headquarters is located in Downers Grove, Illinois.

ITLS is governed by a Board of Directors. Board members are elected at the organization's annual meeting held in conjunction with the ITLS International Trauma Conference. Board members are elected for rotating terms of three years. Each ITLS chapter is allocated a

number of voting delegates based on the number of ITLS students trained in their chapter during the preceding two year period as defined in the ITLS bylaws.

## **II. Relationship to ACEP**

The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) recognizes the importance of quality pre-hospital care and is dedicated to a leadership role in improving the standards and training of EMS providers. EMS providers, emergency nurses, and emergency physicians are members of the same team. If EMS providers are well trained and receive quality medical direction, the patients for whom they care will likely have a better chance of recovery.

No group is in a better position to understand the needs and circumstances of EMS providers than the emergency physicians with whom they work. ITLS is endorsed and supported in its educational efforts by National ACEP and individual ACEP chapters. National ACEP maintains a close liaison with ITLS and has an appointed seat to the Board of Directors. Many chapters of ACEP serve as ITLS chapters and directly oversee the teaching of certified ITLS courses within their respective states.

## **III. International Conference**

Each year ITLS conducts its International Trauma Conference which includes the annual meeting of the organization. The conference provides excellent educational programs in addition to the business sessions. Opportunity is provided to review the instructional materials, review the results of the teaching of ITLS internationally, receive committee reports, and gain general consensus regarding specific items taught within the program.

Representatives from each chapter attend, as well other EMS providers and invited persons.

## **IV. Chapters**

### **1) Organization**

ITLS is organized as a system of chapters and training centres around the world. To be certified, ITLS courses must be coordinated or approved by ITLS chapters, training centres or the International office.

In the United States, ITLS chapters are administered and conducted in numerous states, often through the state chapter of ACEP, in conjunction with a regional or state emergency medical services (EMS) agency. ITLS chapters may also be managed by hospital or healthcare systems, pre-hospital agencies, or other EMS-related organizations.

### **3) Alternatives to Chapter Designation**

Organizations may choose or be required to apply for training centre rather than chapter status. There are two alternative routes to offer certified ITLS courses: courses conducted outside of a chapter, and ITLS training centre. Courses conducted outside a chapter are approved in advance on a course-by-course basis by the International office. These courses may be held in areas that are in the process of developing an ITLS chapter or training centre.

Designation as an ITLS training centre is available as an alternative for organizations that do not qualify or do not choose to become an ITLS chapter. These are usually intended for EMS agencies or proprietary organizations who solely wish to train their own personnel in ITLS, organizations who do not wish to assume the administrative responsibilities of an ITLS chapter, or organizations that plan to train a small number of ITLS students each year.

## **V. Requirements to Become an ITLS Chapter**

ITLS recognizes its chapters by granting a charter to an applicant organization. The ITLS Board of Directors has taken the position that ITLS chapters should be not-for-profit (voluntary) organizations or governmental agencies. ITLS chapters are not franchises and ITLS may approve more than one chapter in any one geographic area.

An application to become an ITLS chapter will not be considered until the following have been completed:

### **1) ITLS Chapter Application**

An ITLS chapter application (completed in English) must be submitted to the International office. The application requests specific information regarding the applicant organization and individuals seeking the charter; the history, if any, with ITLS courses in the geographic area; the organization's and individuals' past experience with ITLS; plans for conducting ITLS courses; the projection of ITLS students to be trained each year; and involvement with EMS providers and medical direction in the area.

A letter of support from the applicant organization must accompany the application.

## **2) Initial ITLS Course(s)**

Following review of the application, ITLS may elect to schedule an initial ITLS course(s) for the area. ITLS will appoint the faculty who will teach the initial course(s). If the applicant wishes to request certain ITLS faculty, they may do so but final approval of faculty rests with ITLS. This facilitates continuity among chapters. It also ensures that questions from an educational and organizational perspective can be addressed. ITLS will designate one faculty member as the official representative of the organization. All information regarding the initial course must be approved by the International office.

The applicant organization is responsible for the travel expenses of the ITLS-appointed representative(s) to be present and teach or assist in teaching the initial course.

- **Advance Notice**

The applicant organization must request its initial ITLS course to the ITLS office at least three months (90 days) in advance of the proposed course date.

- **Bridge Course**

At the initial provider course, personnel will be trained in the concepts of trauma care in accordance with ITLS guidelines. At the same time, a “bridge” program may be offered to PHTLS or ATLS instructors to facilitate reciprocal certification. An ITLS Bridge course typically runs for 4 – 8 hours and will transition PHTLS or ATLS instructors as ITLS instructors.

## **3) Developing a Core ITLS Faculty**

The applicant organization must work with local representatives in conducting the initial course. Ideally, EMS-related personnel who are well experienced in trauma care and teaching should be invited to take the initial course. This will result in the certification of an initial group of faculty who can promote the course and potentially develop as the core of ITLS instructors for the chapter.

Following the initial course, ITLS may or may not require an additional course(s) with designated faculty and direction prior to proceeding with the chapter application process.

## **4) ITLS Advisory Committee**

In order to ensure that representatives of all interested groups are involved in the efforts to become a recognized ITLS Chapter, the applicant organization must establish an ITLS Chapter Advisory Committee. The Committee provides input into the process of becoming a

Chapter and provides the mechanism through which personnel have a voice in ITLS-related matters.

### **5) Administrative Structure**

The applicant organization must develop a proposed administrative structure for the ITLS chapter. This information will be included in the final charter document and must contain

- Mission statement of the chapter
- Agreement that the chapter will abide by the ITLS bylaws and policies
- Designation and signatures of the Chapter Medical Director, Chapter Coordinator, ITLS Executive Director, and the Chair of the ITLS Board of Directors

The ITLS Chapter Advisory Committee must also be involved in the review of a Chapter Policy and Procedure Manual. Samples of other chapters' manuals are available through the ITLS office.

### **6) ITLS Policy and Procedure Manual**

Each applicant chapter must develop an ITLS policy and procedure manual that outlines the duties and responsibilities of the administrative leaders and faculty in its organization. The procedure manual must also contain all operating procedures for conducting ITLS in that chapter. The procedure manual must be approved by the ITLS Global Development Committee before a site visit will be scheduled (see below). While the applicant chapter may wish to produce a procedure manual written in a language other than English, a copy provided to ITLS for review must be written in English.

### **7) Letter of Support**

Each applicant must provide a letter of support from its sponsoring organization. The letter of support must be on official letterhead and must be signed by an authorized official of the organization.

### **8) Site Visit**

After the chapter applicant has completed the above requirements, the final step before Board approval of its application is a site visit by one or more ITLS representatives. The representative(s) will usually be a member of the Board of Directors or its designee. The purpose of the site visit is to observe an ITLS course(s) and evaluate the administrative operations of the applicant chapter. The applicant may request that the reviewer serve as

faculty for an ITLS course when appropriate. The site visit may be waived by the ITLS Executive Director or Chairman of the Board under special circumstances.

The chapter applicant will be required to sign an agreement with ITLS covering the terms and conditions of the visit. In addition, ITLS will provide its “Guidelines for Hosts” to assist with the applicant’s preparation for the meeting.

#### **10) Board Consideration**

After a successful site visit, the ITLS Global Development Committee may recommend approval of the chapter applicant to the ITLS Board of Directors. Whether an ITLS charter for a chapter is granted is the sole decision of the ITLS Board.

## **VI. CHAPTER ORGANIZATION**

The educational and business management of ITLS within a given chapter is based on two broad groups: the faculty and providers, and the administrative leaders and course coordinators:

***International Faculty*** - The international faculty (also known as “delegates”) are appointed by the Chapter Medical Director and/or the Chapter ITLS Advisory Committee. The International Faculty attend the annual International conference, participate in the assessment of the program, the formative process of continuing course revision, and the management of ITLS. The length of term of the International Faculty is determined by the Chapter. They are oriented to their position by the Chapter Medical Director and/or Chapter Coordinator.

***Affiliate Faculty*** - Affiliate Faculty are appointed by the Chapter Medical Director and/or the Chapter ITLS Advisory Committee. Their duties are to monitor the quality of ITLS courses within the chapter, monitor new instructors, and teach instructor and provider courses. The length of term of the Affiliate Faculty is determined by the Chapter Medical Director and/or the Chapter ITLS Advisory Committee. The Affiliate Faculty must maintain current ITLS Instructor certification and complete a Chapter ITLS Advisory Committee approved Affiliate Faculty Training Program. Requirements for continuation of Affiliate Faculty designation are determined by the Chapter Medical Director and/or the Chapter ITLS Advisory Committee.

**Instructor** - ITLS Instructor status is granted upon successful completion of an approved ITLS Instructor Course. Invitation to attend an Instructor course is extended by the Chapter and is based upon performance in an ITLS Provider Course as well as other criteria as established by the Chapter ITLS Advisory Committee. Requirements for continuation of ITLS Instructor certification are determined by the Chapter Medical Director and/or the Chapter ITLS Advisory Committee.

**Provider** - ITLS Provider status is achieved by successful completion of an approved ITLS Provider Course. The length of certification is usually two or three years, and is determined by the Chapter. Recertification is achieved through the same mechanism as initial certification or by completing a specific recertification course in some chapters.

**Chapter ITLS Advisory Committee** - The Chapter ITLS Advisory Committee is comprised of broad-based representatives from the chapter. The role of the Committee is to advise the Chapter Medical Director and Chapter Coordinator on matters concerning the Chapter ITLS Program (such as development and maintenance of a current ITLS Procedure Manual, disciplinary issues, disseminating information at the local level, etc.) Members of the ITLS Advisory Committee are determined at the local Chapter level but must ensure that broad-based representation is attained.

**Chapter Medical Director** - This position is filled only by a physician licensed to practice medicine within the chapter where the ITLS program resides. The Chapter Medical Director is selected based upon recommendation of the Chapter ITLS Advisory Committee and/or the sponsoring state chapter to the Board of Directors of ITLS International. The term of office is determined by the chapter. The Chapter Medical Director is ultimately responsible for the management of the ITLS program within the chapter, in both educational and business-related matters. He or she must ensure that: 1) ITLS policy is communicated within the chapter, 2) quality ITLS courses are taught and administered within the chapter, and 3) that the program is taught consistent with the EMS laws of the chapter.

**Chapter Coordinator** - The Chapter Coordinator must possess and maintain ITLS Affiliate Faculty status or be the administrative designate of the ITLS chapter. The Chapter Coordinator must be willing to play a dynamic role within the Chapter ITLS program. The person selected for this position and his/her term of office are determined by the chapter. Duties of this position include the proliferation of the ITLS program throughout the chapter, organization of chapter finances and records, and other duties that may be assigned by the chapter.

**Course Medical Director** - The Course Director must be a physician licensed to practice medicine within the chapter where the course is conducted. This person must be familiar with EMS systems and pre-hospital care. He or she should be an ITLS Instructor or should serve as Co-Director for one course with a physician ITLS Instructor prior to assuming this role on their own. The Course Director must be familiar with the program and its components, especially patient assessment and management techniques that are contained in the ITLS teaching materials. The Course Director must ensure that the course is consistent with ITLS standards.

The role of the Course Director is to appropriately integrate the material contained in the ITLS course into the local pre-hospital and emergency department systems. An ITLS Instructor physician is best prepared to present the material effectively in the manner in which it was designed. The Course Director must take overall responsibility for the quality of the course.

He or she must also see that the schedule allows adequate time for lectures and skill stations, including ensuring that lecturers stay within the given time frame. If an instructor is not present at the allotted time, the Course Director should be prepared to present the information. If questions arise concerning grading, the vote of the majority of the faculty will prevail. The Course Director will vote only in the case of a tie.

To be certified, an ITLS course must be taught by registered ITLS instructors under the sponsorship of ITLS. The course does not certify future performance nor does it confer license of any kind upon successful completion.

ITLS strongly recommends on-site involvement of physician instructors in ITLS courses to integrate material into the local emergency medical service systems, as well as to provide medical oversight.

Each course must have a medical director who is available for consultation during the course. The course medical director acknowledges accountability by being familiar with all course content and ensuring the course is taught per guidelines of the chapter's policy and procedures and ITLS.

When the course medical director is not on-site, each course must have a designated affiliate faculty who is on-site and accepts responsibility for overall quality assurance.

The participation of both the course medical director and affiliate faculty provide the necessary quality assurance, overall responsibility, and assures adherence to ITLS standards.

Teamwork and communication are the keys to a successful ITLS course. The Course Medical Director and Course Coordinator must have a smooth working relationship and open communications for a successful course.

Course Directors are approved by the Chapter Medical Director. Regular review of the courses that are conducted under the auspices of the appointed Course Directors must be conducted by the Chapter Medical Director. The Chapter Medical Director has the responsibility of relieving a Course Director of this title if he or she fails to present courses that are consistent with ITLS standards, or where management of the course impedes student education or the reputation of the Chapter ITLS Program.

**Course Coordinator** - The ITLS Course Coordinator must be an experienced educator who has extensive knowledge of the program. He or she must have previously assisted in the coordination of an ITLS Course prior to independently conducting an ITLS Course.

This position requires a high degree of organization and motivation since there is a considerable amount of work to be completed over several months. Teamwork and communication are the keys to a successful ITLS course. The Course Coordinator and Course Medical Director must have a smooth working relationship and open communication, for it is their teamwork that determines the successful outcome. Three months are needed for the development of a course from beginning to end, with the last two weeks being the most intense.

The Chapter Medical Director has the responsibility of relieving a Course Coordinator of this title if he or she fails to present courses that are consistent with ITLS standards, or where management of the course impedes student education or the reputation of the Chapter ITLS program.

## **IX. ITLS Chapter Responsibilities**

Following is a list of some of the on-going responsibilities of designated ITLS chapters. The list is not all-inclusive and may include other chapter-specific responsibilities.

- Promotion and coordination of ITLS courses including assisting other organizations such as training facilities to conduct ITLS courses
- Collection of data, including the number of providers and various faculty members
- Collection of fees due to ITLS
- Dissemination of information from the ITLS International Office to the constituents of the chapter
- Provide information to the ITLS office on ITLS activities and new concepts developed within the chapter
- Provide quality assurance for ITLS courses that are conducted within the chapter
- Provide local financial management for ITLS chapter programs
- Provide positive public relations for ITLS activities conducted within the chapter
- Select delegates to represent the chapter at the ITLS International Congress

## **X. ITLS International Responsibilities Relating to the Chapters**

Following is a list of on-going activities and services that ITLS provides its chapters. The list is not intended to be all-inclusive.

- Disseminating of current information to chapters regarding changes in protocols, changes in ITLS teaching materials, and updates in revision to ITLS policies and procedures
- Providing resources to new chapters in both manpower and/or organizational materials to assist them in developing ITLS programs
- Providing a clearinghouse for ITLS committee recommendations to the chapters
- Providing quality assurance at an international level by enforcing the guidelines and standards recommended by the ITLS International Board and Committees
- Arranging the annual International Congress for constituents from all chapters to be represented
- Preparing financial reports
- Publishing a ITLS newsletter and maintaining a web site designed to disseminate information to the chapters
- Distributing ITLS instructional materials and novelties

- Distributing all ITLS certification cards and certificates, and maintaining course roster information

For additional information, contact:

**ITLS**

3000 Woodcreek Drive, Suite 200

Downers Grove, IL 60515

888-495-ITLS or 630-495-6442

630-495-6402 FAX

[www.itrauma.org](http://www.itrauma.org)

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