Clinical Practice Procedures: Trauma/Cervical collar

Policy code	CPP_TR_CC_0221
Date	February, 2021
Purpose	To ensure a consistent procedural approach to the cervical collar.
Scope	Applies to Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) clinical staff.
Health care setting	Pre-hospital assessment and treatment.
Population	Applies to all ages unless stated otherwise.
Source of funding	Internal – 100%
Author	Clinical Quality & Patient Safety Unit, QAS
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Information security	UNCLASSIFIED – Queensland Government Information Security Classification Framework.
URL	https://ambulance.qld.gov.au/clinical.html

Cervical collar

A **cervical collar** is an orthopaedic device used to physically and consciously acknowledge the potential for c-spine injury. Although available devices may limit movement within the c-spine, no device has been shown to immobilise it completely.
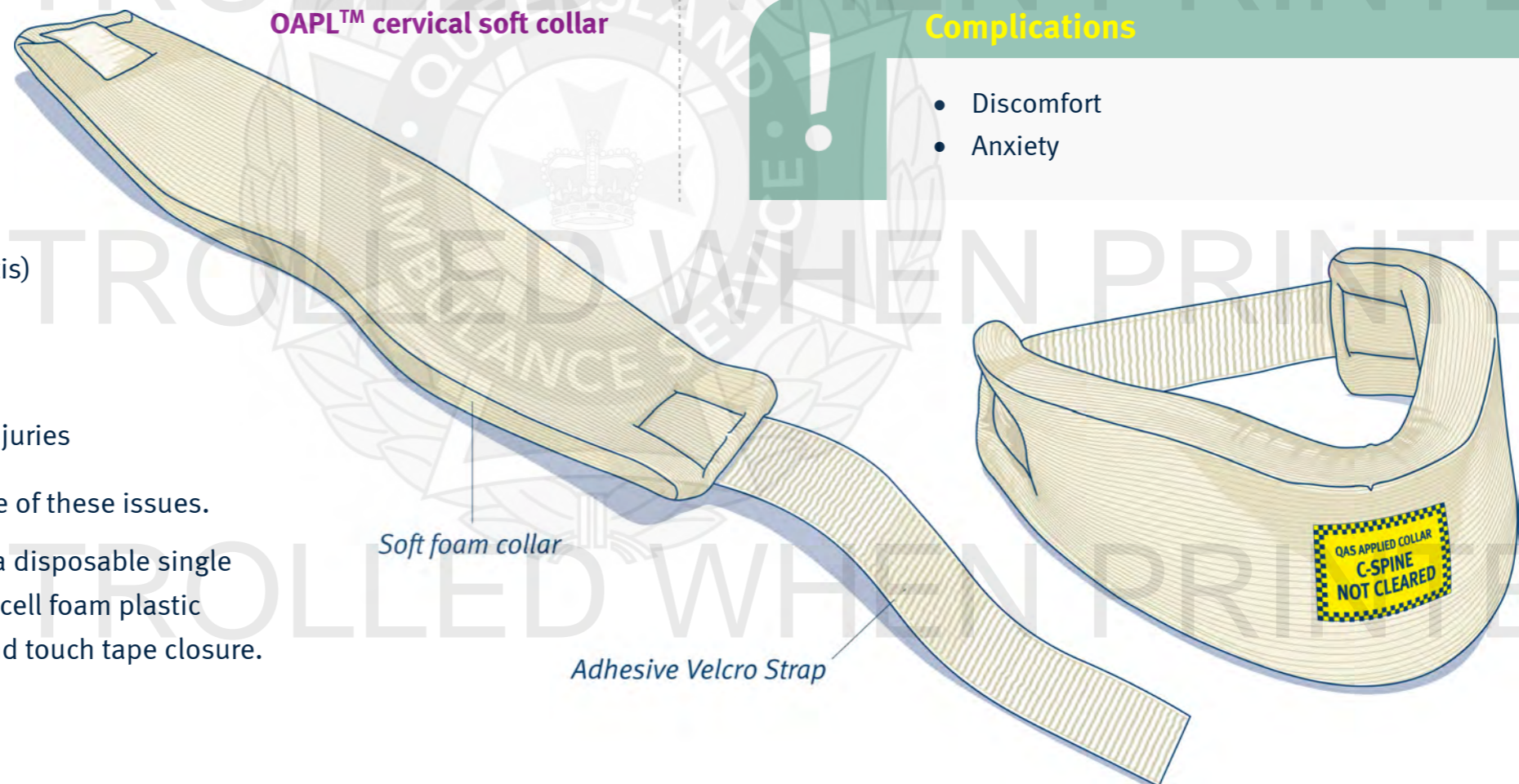
There is a lack of evidence for the efficacy of spinal immobilisation in the prevention of spinal cord injury (SCI).[1] The findings of a recent review on the use of soft collars suggests their use in patients at risk of SCI is unlikely to increase the risk for secondary spinal injuries.[2] There is evidence however that rigid collars can lead to significant complications and morbidity when used to imobilise the c-spine.[3,4,5] These complications and difficulties with rigid cervical collars include:

- patient discomfort

- pressure areas

- increased intracranial pressure

- causing/worsening SCI (e.g. in ankylosing spondylitis)

- impaired ventilation

- aspiration risk

- masking of neck/occipital injuries

Soft cervical collars mitigate some of these issues.

The OAPL™ cervical soft collar is a disposable single use device made from soft, open-cell foam plastic with a cotton stockinette cover and touch tape closure.

Indications

- Suspicion of a cervical spine or SCI

Contraindications

- Surgical airway
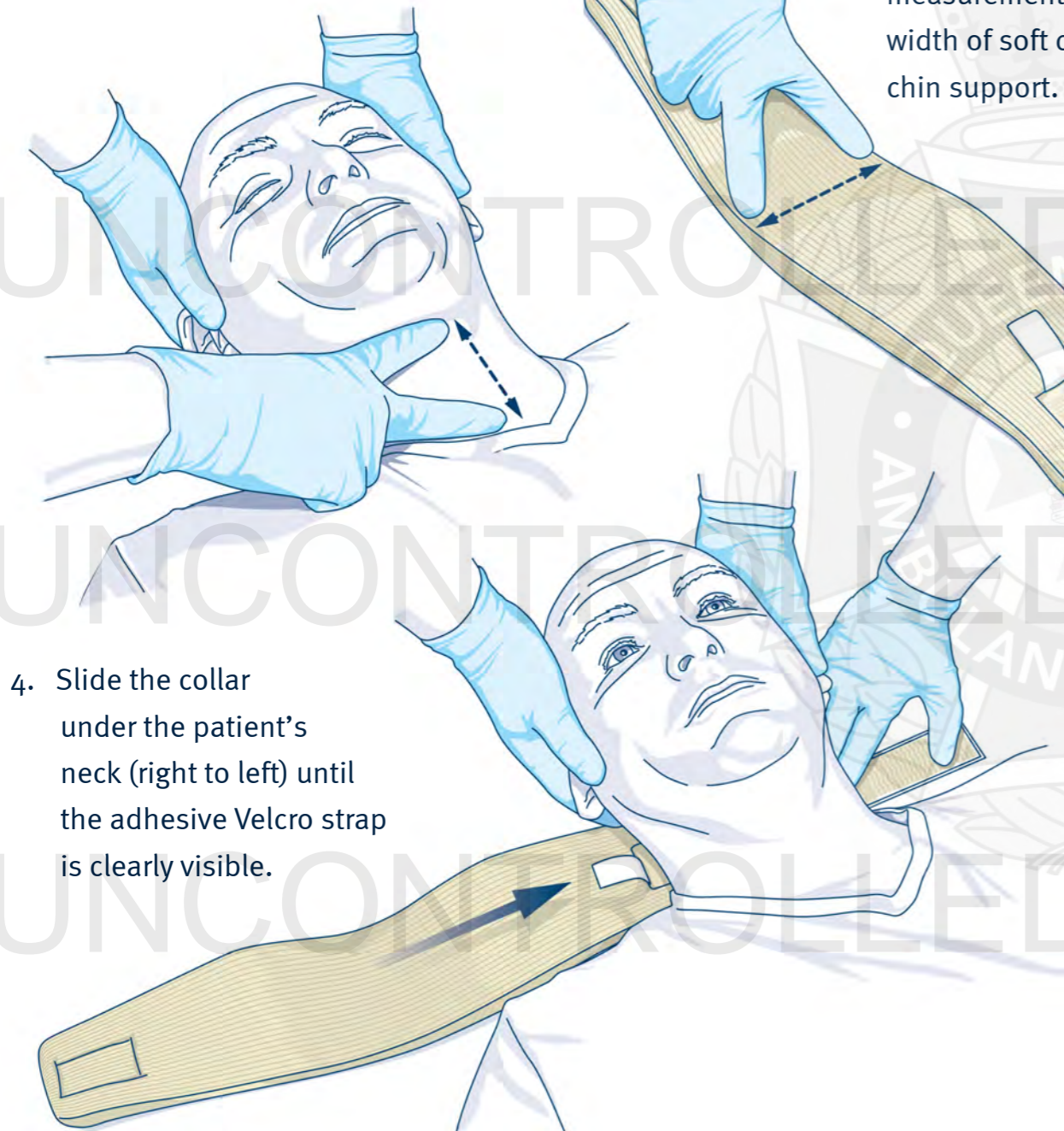- Penetrating neck trauma

Complications

- Discomfort
- Anxiety

OAPL™ cervical soft collar

Soft foam collar

Adhesive Velcro Strap

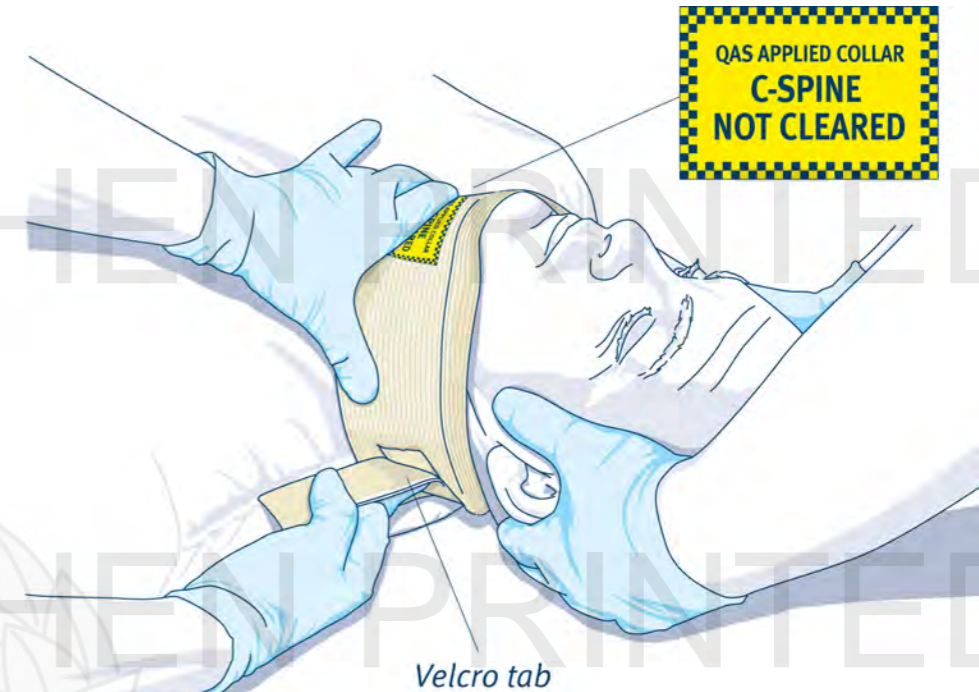QAS APPLIED COLLAR
C-SPINE NOT CLEARED

Procedure – Cervical collar

1. Gently align the patient's head to a neutral anatomical position or position of greatest comfort.

2. Measure the distance between the base of the chin and the suprasternal notch.

3. Select the appropriate size collar by comparing the patient's neck measurement to the width of soft collar's chin support.

QAS APPLIED COLLAR
C-SPINE NOT CLEARED

Velcro tab

4. Slide the collar under the patient's neck (right to left) until the adhesive Velcro strap is clearly visible.

➕ Additional information

- The c-collar is an integral component of the approach to spinal care.

- The ends of a correctly sized OAPL™ soft collar should meet or slightly overlap at the back of the patient's neck.

- The QAS supplies OAPL™ soft collars in the following sizes:

Size	Height	Length
Extra-small	65 mm	480 mm
Medium	90 mm	480 mm
Large	100 mm	535 mm