

General Instructions for the use of the Snowsled vacuum mattress

1. Unroll mattress on a flat surface, green side up, checking that the white exhaust nozzle, in the foot area on the red side, is connected.
2. Ensure that beads are properly distributed along the mattress. This can be done by smoothing with a hand backwards and forwards along the green side of the mattress. Sometimes, a greater concentration of beads in different areas may be an advantage.
3. Prepare the casualty and then, using the most appropriate method for lifting, gently lay them on the mattress. Ensure that there is no accumulation of beads above the top of the head. (Head end is where the corners are angled).
4. Gently wrap the mattress sides around the casualty, encouraging the beads to fill gaps beneath the neck, spine and knees. Particularly ensure that the sides of the head are well supported by the mattress. It may be appropriate to use head support cushions as well. Do up the restraining straps.
5. Release the white exhaust nozzle on the mattress and connect the suction pump - push fit connection at the mattress to the lower tube of the pump.
6. 8 - 10 pumps will generally evacuate the mattress to achieve the vacuum required. When this is so,
7. Immediately release the push-fit connection at the mattress. **DO NOT reconnect the white exhaust nozzle during use.** The straps may need retightening. The vacuum mattress is now ready to be lifted - (but see note 1 below).
8. The standard A5 MRC Casualty Evacuation card will fit into the clear plastic envelope on the front of the mattress cover.

Additional notes

1. **NEVER** lift the mattress other than by the lifting handles, and even then, never to use the end ones on their own.
2. **The vacuum mattress is not intended to be used as a stretcher.** For transporting a casualty any distance, it must always be used on a board, trolley, stretcher or other flat, rigid surface.
3. **After use, it is essential to let air into the mattress before rolling up.** Reconnect the white exhaust nozzle and allow up to a minute for air to enter. Roll up in such a way that the beads are 'rolled in' evenly. This will help to ensure that they will need less evening out when the mattress is used again. **NEVER** attempt to fold or roll up the mattress in it's evacuated state; **ALWAYS** ensure that the white exhaust nozzle is connected and that the mattress is floppy before rolling and storing.
4. The Snowsled mattress is very robust. However, in the very unlikely event of a leakage, please return to the manufacturer for assessment and repair.
5. **Cleaning.** For light dirt, use only warm water with a non-biological soap. **NEVER** use solvent. For effective **decontamination and infection control**, use steam cleaning equipment (see, eg. www.ospreydc.com) and follow the equipment manufacturer's instructions.
6. It is recommended that the tube which fits on the pump is removed from the pump prior to packing it away with the stretcher and pump in the rucksac.

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