

CASE STUDY 13.3

Power Tool Accident

■ Plan

At shift change, you are dispatched to 766 Bell Way, where a patient has experienced a hand injury involving a power saw. On the way to the call, you and your partner discuss the potential factors that might arise in relation to three issues:

- Full amputation
- Partial amputation
- Destination of transport

■ Assess

You find a 32-year-old male in his shop, with a blood-soaked towel wrapped around his left hand. The patient is standing, conscious, and breathing without difficulty. His skin is pale and dry, and he states that he caught his hand in the radial arm saw and knows for sure that he cut off all of his fingers and his thumb. **Table 13-3** outlines the elements of this patient's clinical picture.

Table 13-3 Case Study: Power Tool Accident

Chief Complaint/MOI	Hand injury from a radial arm saw
Respirations	Unlabored, at 16 breaths/min
Pulse	Strong radial pulse, at 100 beats/min
Mental Status	Conscious and alert
Skin Signs/Color	Pale, cool, and dry
Obvious Trauma	Amputated fingers and thumb

MAKE A DECISION

◀ **SICK** **NOT SICK** ▶

Discussion

This patient's upright position and alert mental status are not signs of someone with an immediately life-threatening injury. At this point in your assessment, he would be classified as **NOT SICK**. You take note of his pale, cool skin, however, and maintain a heightened awareness of the potential for significant hemorrhage and shock.

You are confident that the bleeding from the injury has stopped, and you begin oxygen therapy as a precautionary measure. You must closely monitor this patient for any changes in his clinical picture that may indicate development of shock. Blood pressure and vital signs should be taken every 5 minutes.

The Clinical Picture

Finger/hand amputation	Chief Complaint/MOI	
	Respirations	Unlabored, at 16 breaths/min
	Pulse	Strong radial pulse, at 100 beats/min
	Mental Status	Conscious and alert
Pale, cool, and dry	Skin Signs/Color	
	Obvious Trauma	Amputation (bleeding controlled)
DECIDE		
SICK	→	NOT SICK

