1. Assess the likelihood and clinical impact of basic management problems.
   A. Difficult ventilation
   B. Difficult intubation
   C. Difficulty with patient cooperation or consent
   D. Difficult tracheostomy

2. Actively pursue opportunities to deliver supplemental oxygen throughout the process of difficult airway management.

3. Consider the relative merits and feasibility of basic management choices:

   A. Awake intubation
      -- vs --
      Intubation attempts after induction of general anesthesia

   B. Non-invasive technique for initial approach to intubation
      -- vs --
      Invasive technique for initial approach to intubation

   C. Preservation of spontaneous ventilation
      -- vs --
      Ablation of spontaneous ventilation

4. Develop primary and alternative strategies

   a. Other options include (but are not limited to): surgery utilizing face mask or LMA anesthesia, local anesthesia infiltration or regional nerve blockade. Pursuit of these options usually implies that mask ventilation will not be problematic. Therefore, these options may be of limited value if this step in the algorithm has been reached via the Emergency Pathway.

   b. Invasive airway access includes surgical or percutaneous tracheostomy or cricothyrotomy.

   c. Alternative non-invasive approaches to difficult intubation include (but are not limited to): use of different laryngoscope blades, LMA as an intubation conduit (with or without fiberoptic guidance), fiberoptic intubation, intubating stylet or tube changer, light wand, retrograde intubation, and blind oral or nasal intubation.

   d. Consider re-preparation of the patient for awake intubation or canceling surgery.

   e. Options for emergency non-invasive airway ventilation include (but are not limited to): rigid bronchoscope, esophageal-tracheal combitube ventilation, or transtracheal jet ventilation.

   * Confirm tracheal intubation or LMA placement with exhaled CO₂

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**DIFFICULT AIRWAY ALGORITHM 1**


http://www.asahq.org/publicationsAndServices/practiceparam.htm