

GLASGOW TRAUMA SCALE

The Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS) is a 3-15 point scale used to assess consciousness and neurologic functioning based on best motor response, best verbal response, and eye opening (eg. eyes open to pain, open to command).

This basic scoring system is used by paramedics who attend the scene of an accident, as well as triage or A&E staff once a person is admitted to hospital. The score is often used for an early assessment that there may be a brain injury and where a more subtle injury is suspected.

The main benefit of the GCS system is its simplicity: people with even a basic level of training can perform and interpret the test, and it is widely used by ambulance crews and mobile doctors.

A score of 15/15 means a patient is conscious, oriented and responds well to questions.

The lowest score of 3/15 means that they are either dead or in a deep coma.

The scale consists of three tests: eye, verbal and motor responses:

	Eye responses	Verbal responses	Motor responses
1	No eye opening	No verbal response	No motor response
2	Eye opening in response to pain	Incomprehensible sounds	Extensions to pain (eg. extension of wrist)
3	Eye opening to speech	Inappropriate words	Abnormal flexion to pain (eg. flexion of wrist)
4	Eyes opening spontaneously	Confused	Flexion/withdrawal to pain (eg. pulls away when pinched)
5		Oriented	Localises to pain (eg. purposeful movements towards painful stimuli)

NB. If you are pursuing a brain injury claim, one of the first things your solicitor will look at is the scores within the ambulance and hospital records.

This note is for information only and does not constitute medical or legal advice.