Critical Thinking:
A focal neurologic deficit is a problem with nerve, spinal cord, or brain function. For neuro deficits from a spinal cord injury, look for weakness or numbness in the extremities distal to the injury.

To determine if a patient should be immobilized or not, use the NEXUS C-Spine Criteria. Place a c-collar on the patient if he/she exhibits any one of the following:

1. Focal neurological deficit
2. Midline bony spinal tenderness
3. Altered level of consciousness
4. Intoxication from any source
5. A significant distracting injury
6. Age over 65 with any complaints of neck pain

All trauma patients with suspected c-spine injury should be carefully moved to the cot with the head raised no more than 30°. A patient may be extricated with the long board, if needed, then log rolled to the cot for transport. Contact medical control for any questions.

Note:
Placing a c-collar on a patient and allowing them to carefully self-extrication with guidance while keeping the neck causes the least amount of movement in the c-spine. Backboards should only be used for extrication for patients complaining of back pain, or those who have a neuro deficit or altered mental status.