



ACCESSING SAFETY KNOWLEDGE (ASK) SHEET: *AED's In the Workplace*

Each year sudden cardiac arrest claims the lives of some 250,000 Americans before they reach a hospital. Today the chance of survival from sudden cardiac arrest is less than 5 percent. Up to 50,000 of these deaths could have been prevented if an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) had been available and someone has initiated the Cardiac Chain of Survival, immediately at the time of the emergency.

The Federal Occupational Health program strongly encourages large businesses and public facilities to establish AED programs to increase the chances of survival for people with heart related emergencies. With an AED program a person will be better prepared to save the life of a co-worker, friend, family member, or stranger. The goal of every AED program is to deliver defibrillation to a sudden cardiac arrest victim within 3 to 5 minutes of collapse.

CHAIN OF SURVIVAL

More people survive sudden cardiac arrest when a certain sequence of events happens as quickly as possible. This series of steps is called the Chain of Survival.

- **Early Access:** Recognizing that a cardiovascular emergency exists and immediately notifying the EMS (Emergency Medical Services) system is a key element. In most communities, phoning 911 accesses the EMS systems.
- **Early CPR:** Starting CPR immediately after cardiac arrest to circulate oxygen-rich blood to vital organs buys time for the victim until defibrillation can be given.
- **Early Defibrillation:** Defibrillation of the victim as soon as equipment arrives.
- **Early Advanced Care:** Trained healthcare providers arriving quickly to administer advanced lifesaving interventions.

For every minute that passes without defibrillation, the victim's chance of survival decreases by about 7–10 percent.

LEGAL ISSUES

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires a physician's prescription to buy an AED, and each state has its own training requirements. For example, almost every state requires an individual to complete basic CPR and AED courses from a nationally recognized organization. Many states require a licensed medical professional - often the medical Director of the EMS system or the medical advisor to the workplace - to oversee the program to ensure quality.

All 50 states and the District of Columbia now include using an AED as part of their Good Samaritan acts. These acts vary by state, but generally they limit the liability of rescuers using AEDs and others involved with an AED program. In addition, the Cardiac Arrest Survival Act (CASA) provides limited immunity to persons using the AED and the purchaser of the AED unit. CASA is a "gap-filling" federal measure that does not supersede existing state law which provides immunity.

Today, anyone with proper training can learn how to respond to a medical emergency with an AED. The American Heart Association Heartsaver AED Course combines hands-on, scenario-based AED instruction with adult CPR training in 3 1/2 to 4 hours. Through the network of Training Centers, the American Heart Association provides local and national training solutions.

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