



Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members

Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Safety Message

The list of possible medical emergencies you can experience in life is a long one. A common medical emergency that takes the lives of many people are emergencies that involve the heart. Heart attacks are extremely common; over 725,000 Americans experience a heart attack each year.

Another medical emergency involving the heart is sudden cardiac arrest. Sudden cardiac arrest is different than a heart attack due to the fact that the heart suddenly stops beating altogether whereas blood can still flow during a heart attack. Sudden cardiac arrest can occur after a heart attack, however.

One life-saving tool that can prevent death resulting from sudden cardiac arrest is an automated external defibrillator, or AED for short.

Important Points for AED Use

Do not wait to get the victim medical attention. Studies have shown that if defibrillated within the first minute of collapse, the victim's chances for survival are close to 90 percent. For every minute that defibrillation is delayed, survival decreases by 7 percent to 10 percent. If it is delayed by more than 10 minutes, the chance of survival in adults is less than 5 percent.

Because of their ease of use anybody can use an AED. That being said, someone with training should be the one to use the AED on a victim if present.

Documented regular inspections of AEDs are critical. AEDs have indicator lights that either show green or red. A red light or flashing red light indicates some problem with the AED. Dead batteries are also another common problem with AEDs. Check the manufacturer's literature as to how often the batteries need to be replaced. Batteries in AEDs commonly need to be replaced between every two and four years.

Summary

Most people are familiar with what an AED is and probably have them in their place of work, but may not understand how they function. It is critical that everyone is at least familiar with how they work and in what situations they should be used. AEDs are often the only chance that a victim of sudden cardiac arrest will survive.

Discussion points:

Where is the closest AED in your work area?

Do you have any apprehension about using an AED? Why?