

# AED Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

## **What is an AED program?**

An AED program is a plan that can be developed in a workplace, school, or community environment, or in places where large groups of people gather.

## **Do AED programs differ based on the environment?**

Yes. Each AED program will differ based on the needs of the organization; however, the initial steps necessary to form the basis for the program are similar.

## **What are some things to consider when developing an AED program?**

*Assessment.* Determine the needs for your environment. How many devices are necessary? How long will it take EMS to arrive at your location? How long will it take EMS to arrive at the site of the emergency; are there obstacles such as stairs, secured doors, etc.?

*Funding.* Determine the budget necessary to purchase the equipment, train employees, volunteers or other staff and provide program maintenance. *Legislation.* Understand the current laws concerning AED use in your state. Please consult with your legal advisor or local state EMS department for further information on the most current AED legislation in your state:

[www.early-defib.org/03\\_05.html](http://www.early-defib.org/03_05.html)

*Implementation.* Determine if your organization needs an internal implementation team to manage the program or needs to purchase a solution package to provide management oversight. The management of the program could include a program point of contact, medical direction, program maintenance, data management, development of protocols and response plans.

## **Who can be trained?**

Organizations should consider whether the staff responsible for AED program oversight, and/or, management will consist of existing staff that already have safety as a part of their job description; or will staff need to be trained? If staff is trained, but safety is not a part of their job description, organizations will need to determine whether these individuals will have a responsibility to respond.

## **What type of support is needed for staffing an AED program?**

Organizations should consider the possible salary costs for program staff that are designated to respond in an emergency; any OSHA requirements, such as Blood Borne Pathogens training and vaccinations and quality assurance requirements.

## **What is sudden cardiac arrest (SCA)?**

Sudden cardiac arrest cases are usually due to abnormal heart rhythms called arrhythmias, the vast majority of which are ventricular fibrillation. Ventricular fibrillation is a condition in which the heart's electrical impulses suddenly become chaotic, causing the heart to cease pumping blood effectively. Victims of SCA collapse and quickly lose consciousness, often without warning. Unless a normal heart rhythm is restored, death will follow within a matter of minutes.

The cause of sudden cardiac arrest is not well understood. Many victims have no history of heart disease, or if heart disease is present, it has not functionally impaired them. Unlike a heart attack, which is the death of muscle tissue from loss of blood supply, many victims of SCA have no prior symptoms. SCA can strike anyone, at any time, anywhere.

## **How common is SCA and who is at risk?**

SCA is one of the leading causes of death in the United States. It strikes more than 200,000 Americans each year: nearly one death every two minutes.

### **What is the current treatment for sudden cardiac arrest?**

The cardiac chain of survival is the current treatment for sudden cardiac arrest.

### **What is the cardiac chain of survival?**

The cardiac chain of survival is a series of four critical steps. All four steps of the chain must be present to help ensure survival from sudden cardiac arrest. The four steps are:

- Step one: Early access to care (calling 9-1-1 or another emergency number)
- Step two: Early cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- Step three: Early defibrillation
- Step four: Early advanced cardiac life support, as needed

The third step, delivering an electrical shock to the heart, which is known as defibrillation, is recognized as the most critical step in restoring cardiac rhythm and resuscitating a victim of SCA.

### **What is an automated external defibrillator (AED)?**

An AED is a device about the size of a laptop computer that analyzes the heart's rhythm for any abnormalities and, if necessary, directs the rescuer to deliver an electrical shock to the victim. This shock, called defibrillation, may help the heart to reestablish an effective rhythm of its own.

### **How does an AED work?**

An AED is easy to operate. It uses voice prompts to instruct the rescuer. Once the machine is turned on, the rescuer will be prompted to apply two electrodes provided with the AED to the victim's chest. Once applied, the AED will begin to monitor the victim's heart rhythm. If a "shockable" rhythm is detected, the machine will charge itself and instruct the rescuer to stand clear of the victim and to press the shock button.

### **If an AED is so easy to use, why do I need training?**

Training is necessary in order to understand the role of defibrillation in the broader context of the cardiac chain of survival. Training in CPR and AED skills will enable the rescuer to use all the steps in the cardiac chain of survival, thereby significantly increasing the victim's chance of survival.

### **How can I get trained in the use of an AED?**

Contact *WORKWELL* Occupational Medicine for a listing of training classes. *WORKWELL* offers half-day courses that include CPR and AED skills and comprehensive, daylong sessions that also include first aid. These interactive courses are taught by certified instructors and use hands-on practice scenarios and videos that reflect a variety of situations. Each participant receives a skills card for use during in-class practice sessions. The skills cards can also aid in retaining skills after completing the course and serves as a quick reference tool in an emergency.

### **Who can use an AED?**

In most cases, EMTs and first responders (police and firefighters) are required to know how to use an AED as part of their job responsibilities. Furthermore, all 50 states now have AED Good Samaritan provisions that help protect laypersons. Contact your local or state emergency medical services ("EMS") department to find out about Good Samaritan protections that your state provides for users of AEDs.

### **Where can I find AEDs?**

AEDs can be found in corporate offices, shopping malls, airports, sports stadiums, schools, community centers, and other places where large groups of people gather and the risk of a sudden cardiac arrest incident is very likely. The number of devices in the community will continue to grow as more and more people begin to understand the importance of AEDs and AED training.

**How can I buy an AED?**

A physician's prescription is needed in order to purchase most AEDs. *WORKWELL* Occupational Medicine provides this service under the Medical Director Services (WMDS) of our Corporate Health Services Division.

**How much does an AED cost?**

The cost of an AED varies by manufacturer and model. Currently, an average price for a single AED unit is about \$1,000 - \$2,300.

**Does *WORKWELL* Occupational Medicine sell AEDs?**

Yes. We recommend DefibTech's Reviver™ and several Philips models. Call our offices for more details and pricing.