FIELD GUIDE · NO. 20

CPR & AED Placement

Call for help, start CPR if it is needed, and use an AED as soon as one is available.



FROM THE BOOK

1. Make sure the area is safe. Try to get the person's attention — speak in a normal voice and gently tap their shoulder. If they do not respond, look for normal breathing. Someone who is not breathing normally or is only gasping should be treated as a medical emergency.
2. Call emergency services immediately, or direct a specific person to make the call. If others are present, ask someone to locate an AED.
3. CPR helps circulate blood to the brain and other vital organs when the heart has stopped beating effectively. It cannot restart the heart on its own. Current guidelines emphasize firm, continuous chest compressions at the proper depth and rate. For adults, hands-only CPR (continuous compressions with no pauses for rescue breaths) is the recommended approach for anyone not trained in rescue breathing.
4. If you have been trained, follow the techniques you were taught and continue until responders arrive, another trained person takes over, or you cannot physically continue. If you have not been formally trained, emergency dispatchers can often give instructions by phone.
5. An AED is designed for ordinary people to use. It gives spoken instructions. Once pads are on the person's bare chest, the device analyzes the rhythm and decides whether a shock is appropriate. If a shock is advised, it will tell everyone to stand clear. If not, it will direct you to continue CPR. Do not decide the shock yourself — follow the device.
6. Children and infants require different CPR techniques, best learned through hands-on training. Notice where AEDs are kept in places you visit. If the person begins breathing normally again and no spinal injury is suspected, the book says to place them in the recovery position to help keep the airway open, then keep monitoring until professionals take over.

PRACTICE IT

Take a certified CPR and AED course, and notice the AED locations in buildings you already visit so you would not have to search for one for the first time during an emergency.

Educational reference only. Not a substitute for certified first-aid training or professional medical care. In a life-threatening emergency, contact local emergency services as soon as it is safe to do so. Use this information only within the limits of your training.