

Automated External Defibrillators

Automated External Defibrillators (AED) are machines that have now been made available in workplaces and to the general public. They are no longer just for ambulance paramedics and hospital staff.

AEDs are sophisticated, reliable, safe, computerised devices that deliver electric shocks to victims of cardiac arrest. They use voice and visual prompts to guide users, and are suitable for use by lay people and healthcare professionals alike. All AEDs analyse the casualty's heart rhythm, determine the need for a shock, and then deliver a shock.

The Council organises defibrillator training courses to allow designated employees to operate the machines. In addition to this, instructional videos are available on CONNECT that are designed to inform all employees on how to use an AED.

Use:

An AED is primarily used to treat casualties that have suffered cardiac arrest. The AED may however be brought to a location where an casualty remains conscious but is perhaps displaying signs and symptoms associated with a heart condition or other circumstances where unconsciousness may occur.



The context in which an AED may be used will be outlined in the Service guidance.

The most important part when dealing with an unconscious casualty is to get help and start cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Instructional videos are available on CONNECT to help everyone understand how easy this is.

Storage:

AEDs are not available in every Council building but where they are present there should be a notice indicating where they are being stored. They should be stored in a location that is relatively central and be readily available to those that would have a need to use it.



If there is a defibrillator in your workplace find out how to access it and watch the CPR and AED videos on the first aid pages of [CONNECT](#).

Sequence of Actions When Using an AED

1. Make sure the victim, any bystanders, and you are safe. If two rescuers are present, assign tasks.
2. If the victim is unresponsive and not breathing normally send someone for the AED and to call for an ambulance. If you are on your own do this yourself; you may need to leave the casualty.
3. Start CPR.
4. As soon as the AED arrives switch on the AED and attach the electrode pads. If more than one rescuer is present, continue CPR whilst this is done. Follow the voice / visual prompts and ensure that nobody touches the casualty whilst the AED is analysing the rhythm.
5. If a shock is indicated, ensure that nobody touches the casualty. Push the shock button as indicated and continue as directed by the voice / visual prompts.
6. If no shock is indicated immediately resume CPR using a ratio of 30 compressions to 2 rescue breaths. Continue as directed by the voice / visual prompts.
7. Continue to follow the AED prompts until:
 - qualified help arrives and takes over;
 - the victim starts to breathe normally;
 - you become too exhausted.

Note:

- a) Hair on the chest can interfere with the safe use of an AED. Use the disposable razor if necessary to shave the areas where the pads will go. The chest doesn't need to be completely bare of hair few strands can still remain. The razor should be used dry. If you accidentally cut the casualty with the razor, quickly wipe away any blood before attaching the pad.
- b) You should remove any patches observed of the chest area with a gloved hand, before placing AED pads on patient. You should also wipe off the skin with a piece of cloth in order to make sure any patch medication is removed.

Trained Defibrillator Users:

Trained defibrillator users should be listed on a poster placed in relevant locations around the property.

Nominated AED responders will refresh their skills at least twice each year.

Other Resources:

AS9 - First Aid in the Workplace;
HSF16 - First Aid Risk Assessment;
HSF49 - First Aid - Treatment Record Card;
IS10 - Safe Disposal of First Aid Waste;
IS15 - Blood Borne Viruses;
IS16 - Needles and Sharps;
IS27 - First Aid at Work (2009 Changes);
IS36 - Use of Gel Dressings;
IS63 - First Aid - An Introduction.