

Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) Guidelines for Schools

The purpose of this document is to establish guidelines for the placement, care and use of an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) located in many of Saskatchewan's schools and buildings. The information in this document is intended to provide support towards development of policies for school divisions that choose to have an AED on site.

AED's are portable devices used to induce electrical stimulation to the heart muscle in the event of a potential cardiac arrest. Early access defibrillation has been recognized as a significant factor in survival from incidents of sudden cardiac arrest. Adequate preparation for responding to a life-threatening emergency can save lives.

Use of an AED in the school setting

If a school division has decided on acceptance of an AED, training and use of the AED should be included in a school medical emergency response plan, operational policy, and a school division policy should be developed to include the following components:

Storage and Accessibility

- Assess each potential building for the optimal location for storage of the AED. The location should be readily identified and secure, yet easily accessible for adults.
- Staff should be notified of the location and how to access the AED equipment in an emergency.
- Access and use of the AED by contracted or community organization personnel should be addressed in the school division policy.
- A designated employee should be responsible for periodic maintenance of the AED.

Responsibilities of School Division

- Selection of employees for AED training and distribution of AED-trained employee lists as required
- Coordination of training for emergency responders
- Coordinating equipment and accessory maintenance
- Maintain on file a specifications/technical information sheet for each approved AED model assigned or donated to the school
- Communication with medical community on issues related to medical emergency response program including post event procedures

AED-Trained Employee Responsibilities

- Activate internal emergency response system and providing prompt basic life support including AED and first aid according to training and experience
- Understanding and comply with requirements of school policy
- Follow the more detailed procedures and guidelines for the AED post event protocols

Volunteer Responder Responsibilities

Anyone can, at their discretion, provide voluntary assistance to victims of medical emergencies. The extent to which these individuals respond shall be appropriate to their training and experience. These responders are encouraged to contribute to emergency response only to the extent they are comfortable. The emergency medical response of these individuals may include CPR, AED or medical first aid.

School Office Responsibilities

- Receive emergency medical calls from internal locations within the school
- Use an established 9-1-1 checklist to assess emergency and determine appropriate level of response
- Contact the external community 9-1-1 response team (EMS) if required
- Deploy AED-trained employees to emergency location
- Assign someone to meet responding EMS aid vehicle and direct EMS personnel to site of medical emergency

Note: Employee training should be consistent with CPR/ First Aid training certifications provided by the Canadian Heart & Stroke Association, Red Cross or other authorized agencies. Employees should also be aware that they are not liable for rendering such emergency care.

AED Utilization Guidelines

The following AED response protocol has been developed as a recommended guideline for school systems to incorporate into an AED policy. The protocol should be reviewed on an annual basis and updated as needed.

1. Conduct an initial assessment of the patient and environment.
 - Assess the scene for safety.
 - Use standard (universal) precautions.
 - Assess patient for unresponsiveness.
 - If unresponsive, activate EMS and in-house emergency plan per school protocol or policy.
 - Call for an AED.
2. Assess breathing.
 - Open the airway.
 - Look, listen and feel for breathing.
 - If breathing is absent, deliver two rescue breaths.
3. Assess circulation.
 - If signs of circulation are absent, provide CPR if trained. Continue CPR until the AED arrives.
4. Begin treatment with the AED.
 - As soon as the AED is available, turn on the AED and follow prompts.
 - Remove all clothing from the chest area. Dry the chest if it is wet.

- Apply defibrillation pads. Look at the symbols on the AED pads and place pads as shown on the illustrations. Ensure pads are making good contact with the patient's chest. Do not place pad over the nipple, medication patches, or visible implant devices.
- Make sure the patient area is clear, and then deliver a shock to the patient when advised by the AED.
- When advised by the AED, initiate/resume CPR starting with compressions.
- Continue to perform CPR until otherwise prompted by the AED or EMS personnel.

5. Actions to take when the EMS arrives.

Responders working on the victim should document and communicate important information to the EMS provider, such as:

- Victim's name
- Known medical problems, allergies or medical history
- Time the victim was found, condition and vital signs if obtained
- Type and time of intervention(s) provided, to include the number of shocks delivered and length of time the defibrillator was used
- Patient response to intervention(s) and information from the AED screen

Post-incident Procedures

- An employee involved should notify the building administrator or School Nurse Coordinator as soon as possible.
- A designated employee should check the AED, restock the supplies immediately after the event and perform the after-patient-use maintenance on the AED.
- The School Nurse Coordinator or a designated employee should conduct an employee incident debriefing and document as indicated by school policy.

Periodic Maintenance- scheduled and after use

- Inspect the exterior and connector for dirt or contamination.
- Check supplies, accessories and spares for expiration dates and damage.
- Check operation of the AED by removing and reinstalling the battery and running a battery insertion test.

School protocols should be written and posted in appropriate areas for use of the AED. Administrators, teachers, and staff should practice and evaluate response to sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) using the AED.