

# Introduction



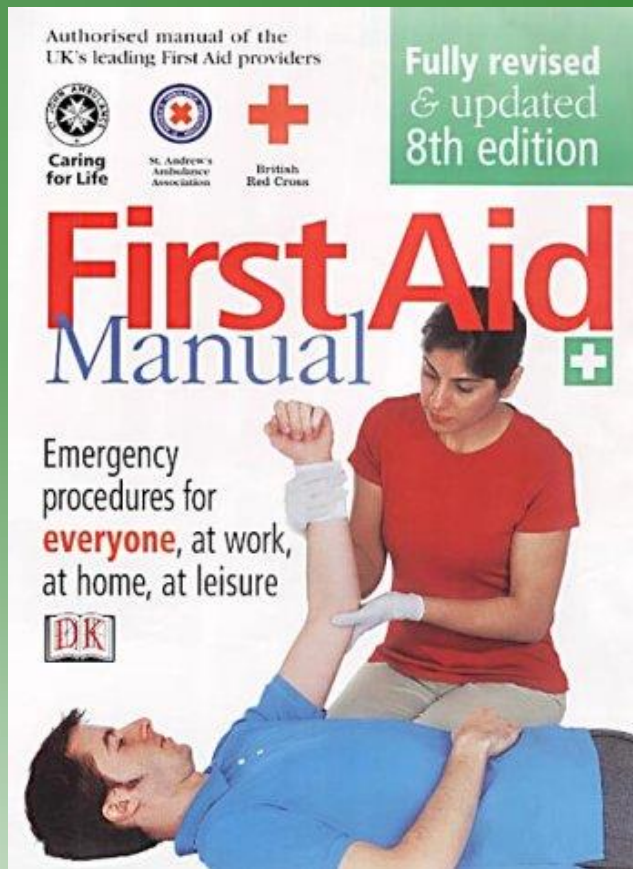
- This module discusses medical emergencies that may occur during field activities and describes the general course of action. The information presented gives an overview of the steps involved in providing first aid.
- The information in this module is very basic and does not take the place of a first aid or **CPR** course.

# Learning Objectives



- At the end of this module, you will be able to:
  - Identify the actions that should be taken to prepare for field medical emergencies
  - List the five steps involved in responding to medical emergencies
  - Identify signs or signals of a medical emergency
  - List information that must be provided to emergency response personnel
  - List the responsibilities of a first-aid provider.

# Emergency Preparedness



- All field team members should:
  - Be certified in basic first aid and CPR
  - Be capable of responding to field medical emergencies
  - Carry a wallet card with personal medical information (e.g., blood type, allergies, current medications, physical conditions). This information is critical in an emergency.
  
- Additional information can be found in American Red Cross workbooks such as:
  - “community First Aid and Safety”
  - “Adult CPR”
  - “Multimedia Standard First Aid.”

# Planning for Field Medical Emergencies



- While conducting field activities, emergency first aid may be required for a wide range of medical problems. To ensure that field team members are adequately prepared to respond to emergencies, each team should complete a Medical Emergency Planning Checklist before engaging in field work.
  - Site specific information
  - Other information

# Test your knowledge

- You are completing an Emergency Medical Planning Checklist for an upcoming field activity. What information do you need?
  - Location of Nearest Medical Facility
    - First-aid Kit
    - Employee Name
    - First-Aid Manual
  - Life Insurance Provider
  - Location of Field Activity
  - Length of Employment
- Communication and Transportation

# Emergency Action Steps



- Responding to medical emergencies means providing first aid until professional medical help arrive.
- The five emergency steps are shown here.
- 1 recognize that an emergency exists
- 2 decide to act
- 3 check the scene
- 4 call the local emergency telephone number
- 5 provide care until help arrives

# Recognizing Emergencies



- The first critical step to ensure proper emergency first aid and medical treatment is recognizing that an emergency exists. You must be alert and aware of the activities around you.
- Unusual Noises
- Unusual Odors
- Unusual Sights
- Unusual Appearances

# Deciding to Act



- Sometimes, even when people recognize an emergency situation, they are hesitant to act.
- The most common factors that can influence a person's response include:
  - The potential for liability
  - Uncertainty about the type of injury/illness
  - The presence of other people
- Regardless of whether you have received first-aid training, there are Good Samaritan Laws that protect you when you assist in emergency situations.



# Deciding to Act: Good Samaritan Laws



*Good Samaritan laws grant immunity or limited immunity to volunteers who help strangers in emergencies and may vary by state. Here is an example of how one is worded\*\*.*

*.....A person, who, in good faith, lends emergency care or assistance without compensation at the place of an emergency or accident, and who was acting as a reasonable and prudent person would have acted under the circumstances present at the scene at the time services were rendered, shall not be liable for any civil damages for acts or omissions performed in good faith...*

**\*\*Resource: American Heart Association**

- Good Samaritan Laws apply when a person responds to an emergency in a reasonable and prudent manner. For example, a reasonable person would move a victim only if the victim's life was endangered and would continue to provide care until trained personnel arrived. These laws differ from state to state. Be sure to contact a local authority, such as the Red Cross, regarding Good Samaritan Laws in the state where you will be working.
- Do not be discouraged by potential liability. Use common sense and your best judgment to save a life or prevent further injury. When discovering an emergency, do not assume that other bystanders are handling the situation. You should act quickly, assess the situation, and offer as much help as needed.

# Checking the Scene



Look For:

**Hazards**

**Clues to the situation**

**Unusual odors**

**Life Threatening Conditions**

**Bystanders for help or information**

# Calling for Help



- Calling for help is often the most essential step in emergency response because it ensures that professional help is on the way as fast as possible.
- Whenever possible, ask a bystander or co-worker to call for help, or shout for help if someone is nearby.
- If you are the only person available, stabilize or control the injury as much as possible, and then find the nearest telephone. After placing the call, return immediately to the victim, and continue assistance.

# Calling for Help: Life-Threatening Injuries

- Always call the local emergency number for life-threatening injuries or conditions, such as when the victim:
  - Is unconscious
  - Is not breathing or is having trouble breathing
  - Has no pulse or heartbeat
  - Has chest pain or pressure
  - Is bleeding severely
  - Has seizures, sever headache, or slurred speech
  - Has injuries to the head, neck, or back
  - Has possible broken bones
  - Appears to have been poisoned
  - Has severe pressure or pain in the abdomen
  - Is vomiting or passing blood.

# Calling for Help: Special Hazards



- Emergency personnel should be called immediately for situations involving special hazards that would require trained and properly equipped personnel, such as:
  - Fire or explosion
  - Downed electrical wires
  - Presence of poisonous gas or hazardous chemicals
  - Vehicle collisions.

# Calling for Help: Providing Necessary Information

- When calling for emergency medical assistance, make sure to provide the dispatcher with the necessary information, including the:
  - Caller's name
  - Exact location and directions to the location
  - Telephone number from which the call is being made, if applicable
  - Type of accident (e.g., fall, collision)
  - Number of persons involved or injured
  - Condition of the victim(s) (e.g., bleeding, unconscious, not breathing, no pulse)
  - Emergency first aid being provided.



# Test your knowledge

- Which of the following are signs or signals that a person may be in need of medical assistance?
  - Unrecognizable odors
    - Breaking glass
    - Screams
  - Confused speech
  - Unusual skin color

# Providing Emergency Care



- Once the scene has been checked and emergency personnel have been contacted, you may need to initiate or continue general first aid.
- Before rendering first aid, you need to get consent from the victim. If the victim is unconscious, consent is implied. If the victim is conscious, identify yourself, state that you are qualified in first aid, and ask the victim if you can assist. If the victim does not want help, you can not force it.
- You should first provide basic care while evaluating the extent and nature of the injuries, and then administer specific first aid based on the results of this evaluation.



# Basic Care



- To ensure that proper and effective care is provided, the first-aid responder should check the victim and provide basic care.

# Specific Treatment



- Once the victim has been checked, the first-aid provider must quickly assess the type of emergency care needed and the priority it should be given.
- Always treat life-threatening emergencies (e.g., no breathing) before those that are not life-threatening (e.g., small lacerations or cuts).

# Specific Treatment: Know Your Limitations



- You should know the limits of your capabilities and make every effort to avoid further injury to the victim in the attempt to provide the best possible emergency first-aid care. The person who is most qualified to treat the victim should provide first aid. For example, emergency CPR should be administered by persons who are trained and certified.
- In addition to CPR, specific training is required to treat the following conditions:
  - Severe bleeding and shock
  - Injuries to the head, neck, and back
  - Chemical splashes and chemical burns
  - Inhalation of toxic gas
  - Poisonings and allergic reactions
  - Drowning
  - Heat and cold stress.

# Summary

- In this module you learned about general emergency preparedness and emergency notification. Because field activities may take you to remote areas, your knowledge of first aid will be essential until medical help arrives. Several things that you can do are listed below:
  - Complete a Medical Emergency Planning Checklist before engaging in a field activity
  - Be alert to signs or signals that may indicate a medical emergency
  - Check a scene before providing first aid to ensure that the area is safe and to obtain as much information about what happened as possible
  - Call emergency response professionals immediately for life-threatening injuries or conditions, or when in doubt about the condition of the victim
  - Ensure that the person most qualified to treat the victim provides first aid.

- You have completed the module:
- Emergency Preparedness and First Aid