



NAEMT Position Statement Emergency Cardiac Care in Schools

Statement: NAEMT supports the development of emergency action plans for all schools which require Automated External Defibrillators (AED's) to be readily accessible at all school and public events on school property.

Public access to an AED is an important link in the chain of survival from sudden cardiac arrest. It is important for emergency action plans in schools to include the training of school staff in CPR with AED and, emergency first aid in conjunction with the immediate activation of Emergency Medical Services (911) when a serious medical condition or injury is detected.

Background: Sudden cardiac arrest is one the leading causes of death in young athletes during sporting events. It is estimated that sudden death occurs in one out of every 200,000 high school athletes for a total of about 100 events per year. Ninety percent of the victims are male and 70% come from football and basketball.

Although sudden cardiac death is a rare event in school age youth and children, attendees at school events include adults which may be at risk for such events. Schools are community gathering places and are often identified as sites for mass care and shelter during a disaster.

In the United States, 220,000 people die from sudden cardiac arrest each year. Before complete arrest the heart often develops ventricular fibrillation or ventricular tachycardia, irregular heart rhythms in which the heart muscle contractions are disorganized and effective pumping of blood ceases. The sooner defibrillation is provided via an AED, the better the victim's chance of survival. With each passing minute the odds of survival are reduced by 7-10%. Early defibrillation is a link in the chain of survival that includes early recognition of the problem, early CPR and early activation of the emergency medical services system that increases chances of survival.

References:

Emergency Medical Services for Children position on AED in schools

<http://www.emscmn.org/Schools/aed.asp>

Sudden Cardiac Arrest Foundation list of AED Position Statements,

<http://www.sca-aware.org/sca-resources/position-statements>

Ohio State Medical Association, Joint Advisory Committee on Sports Medicine,

<http://www.osma.org/i4a/pages/Index.cfm?pageID=3911>

The Consensus Statement on Emergency Preparedness and Management of Sudden Cardiac Arrest (<http://www.nata.org/jat/readers/archives/42.1/i1062-6050-41-4-143.pdf>).

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