

# Medical Emergencies

---

Research shows that people do not easily recognize medical emergencies or they underestimate their seriousness and fail to call for help. Remember, if you THINK you or someone else is experiencing a medical emergency—call **9-1-1** immediately. Some examples would be if someone is:

- Bitten by a snake or stung by a bee and is having a reaction
- Experiencing an allergic reaction of any kind
- Having a seizure or convulsion
- Experiencing jerking movements they cannot control
- Burned over an area larger than the palm of your hand
- Electrically burned or shocked
- Severely injured or is a victim of trauma or an attack
- Bleeding or spurting blood and you can't get it to stop
- Not breathing or having difficulty breathing
- Gasping for air or turning blue or purple
- Choking and the obstruction cannot be cleared
- Unconscious, faints, is not alert or is making funny noises
- Experiencing chest pains, constricting bands, or crushing discomfort
- Around the chest area—even if the pain stops
- Experiencing unusual numbness, tightness, pressure, or aching pain in their chest, neck, jaw, arm or upper back

The signs and symptoms of a medical emergency can be vague or unusual. For example, the classic symptom associated with heart attack is an uncomfortable, dull feeling of pressure or tightness in the chest. However, some people experiencing a heart attack may simply feel light headed, short of breath, sick to their stomach, or have a cold sweat. Many dismiss less well-known symptoms such as these as a minor illness. Another reason that people fail to call 9-1-1 in an emergency is that those who are ill or injured are frequently in denial. The person may feel that the illness is not serious enough to call 9-1-1, or he or she may be worried about the long-term impact of the situation. You may have to force yourself to take action even though you are not sure that a real emergency exists or when the person is actively denying that they need help. Never be afraid to dial 9-1-1 just because you are unsure a real emergency exists. Dial 9-1-1 and let the dispatch center and emergency service professionals help you in times of confusion or doubt. That is what they are there to do.

## **Updated**

June 20, 2011

**Source**

[www.wc-redcross.org](http://www.wc-redcross.org)

**More Information**

[www.oseh.umich.edu/pdf/guideline/AEDGuideline.pdf](http://www.oseh.umich.edu/pdf/guideline/AEDGuideline.pdf)

## **Prevention / Mitigation / Preparedness - Medical Emergencies**

Contact the University of Michigan Office of Emergency Preparedness (734) 615-7025 and OSEH to request guidance as needed.

Establish a three deep system of personnel in the building who will respond to such an event to assist emergency first responders.

Educate students, faculty and staff on how to respond to such an event

Maintain first aid supplies and equipment in a readily accessible location.

Post emergency procedures poster and emergency flipchart in common areas (elevator lobby, office reception, etc.) of the building to assist in initial response to the incident

Check first aid supplies periodically and replace any used or missing supplies.

Bio-hazardous waste bags/containers should be available for proper identification and disposal of bio-hazard/potentially infectious waste. Contact OSEH at (734) 647-1143 for assistance.

### Training & Certification:

Provide in-service training in basic first aid and CPR to responder staff (Residence Life staff, etc.). Contact OSEH (734) 647-1143 for assistance.

Staff expected to provide first aid should be formally trained and certified.

### Training should include:

- General first aid
- CPR
- Use of AED
- Location of AED units
- Universal Precautions
- Blood-Borne Pathogens

Custodial services expected to cleanup blood and body fluids should be trained in blood-borne pathogens, universal precautions and decontamination

Maintain a list of building employees that are trained and certified in first aid. Maintain this list in the respective department's main office.

## Response - Medical Emergencies

If life threatening, dial 911 for emergency services response. Some incidents may be life threatening to some and not to others (i.e., bee sting, allergic reaction to nuts, etc.). If in doubt, call 911.

When calling 911 have the following information available, if possible:

1. Location of the incident or the injured parties
2. Nature of the injury, cause and severity
3. Victim's age and name, if possible
4. Any medical information known
5. Where can emergency responders be met for quickest entry point to affected individual(s)

If AED is available is available, bring to patient and use if appropriate.

Have a designated person meet emergency responders and escort them to the injured/ill person. Keep all non-essential personnel away from the scene. Stay with emergency responders to act as liaison until released.

Keep the victim(s) calm and reassured that help is on the way.

Do not attempt to treat or move the injured if you are not formally trained in first aid.

Take precautions whenever there is a potential for contact with blood or other potentially infectious material. Treat all blood and body fluids as infectious. This is referred to as using Universal Precautions.

Secure the area for emergency responders to protect everyone from coming into contact with blood and body fluids.

The building incident response person will need to make notification, if needed, to their respective facility director about this incident. The facility director will then notify, as needed, his/her senior administration.

## Universal Precautions

Universal Precautions is a method of infection control in which all human blood and certain human body fluids are treated as if known to be infectious for HIV, HBV and other blood-borne pathogens. Exposure occurs through contact with mucous membranes (e.g., eyes, nose and mouth) or broken (cut or abraded) skin with contaminated blood.

## Recovery - Medical Emergencies

If the injury was the result of damaged / faulty equipment, contact Plant Operations (734) 647-2059 or the maintenance service vendor for immediate assistance

Contact the University Risk Management department (734) 764-2200 to handle claims management and other insurance matters can be handled.

Ensure that any building first aid supplies that were used are replenished quickly.

Use of AED unit:

- Include information in DPS report, then follow reporting protocol – Chief Health Officer, OSEH
- AED vendor will read AED card and refurbish unit.

Depending on the size or nature of the incident consider a debriefing with all parties involved in the response and recovery efforts to discuss strengths and weaknesses and what could have been done better. Contact OEP for assistance with this matter.

Contact University OSEH department at (734)647-1143 for assistance in cleaning and decontaminating areas that may have potential blood-borne pathogens present. If custodial staff are used for this task, they should be trained in Universal Precautions and decontamination procedures.

All contaminated waste and equipment should be properly handled, treated or disposed.

Preserve the scene of the medical emergency in the event the incident will require an investigation by DPS.

Keep all patient information confidential as required by HIPPA.