Considerations for Defibrillators

An automated external defibrillator (AED) is a device, approximately the size of a laptop, which directs the user via voice prompts to deliver electric shock to a cardiac arrest victim after the machine detects abnormalities in the person’s heart rhythm. The current is delivered through the victim’s chest through adhesive electrode pads. The goal of using an AED is to help the heart re-establish a rhythm on its own.

Rescue equipment, like an AED, is not just designed for use in medical facilities. Having an AED in the workplace can save lives, but it’s important to understand how to develop a training programme, along with additional legal and insurance considerations.

Placing an AED in Your Facility

By purchasing an AED for your facility, you can potentially save one of your employee’s lives or the life of a customer or client. Cardiac arrest victims lose consciousness, have no pulse and stop breathing within a matter of moments. At this time, the heart’s contractions become chaotic spasms, so it cannot pump blood properly to the brain or the rest of the body. But by using an AED, a heartbeat can be restarted by establishing a regular heart rhythm.

AEDs are also extremely easy to use for those who are properly trained on how to do so. Only individuals with proper training should operate an AED to avoid injuring themselves and others.

Not only do CPR and AED training courses provide information on how to effectively use these rescue techniques, they also instruct individuals on how to protect themselves while providing care.

Purchasing an AED may also protect your company from litigation, as not being able to properly respond to emergencies may pose a liability. For instance, Lufthansa Airlines faced litigation for not providing adequate treatment to a passenger suffering from cardiac arrest. If they had an AED and an AED training programme in place, they may have avoided a costly legal battle.

While on-site AEDs can make the difference between life and death, it’s important to understand the legal and insurance considerations when developing a programme.

Developing an AED Programme

If you decide to purchase an AED for your facility, you must also create an AED programme to ensure that the machine is used properly and effectively. Consider the following recommendations when designing your own AED programme.

- Establish clear responsibilities for each role in the programme.
- Obtain the guidance of a doctor to oversee the direction and control of your programme. This person will assist you in determining where to place the AED(s), ensure that proper training is given to employees and can review your programme each time an AED is used on-site. The doctor can also assist your facility in complying with regulatory requirements and establish a relationship with emergency medical personnel.
Considerations for Defibrillators

- Devise a written AED programme for each location in which an AED is located.
- Share information about your AED programme with emergency medical personnel to assure that proper protocol is met.
- Integrate the AED usage programme into a broader emergency response action plan.
- The AED should be placed no more than five minutes away from a potential area where cardiac arrest could occur.
- Follow the manufacturer’s recommendations regarding servicing, testing and replacement. Keep records of these duties as well.
- Devise an AED quality assurance programme including a review of each use of the AED, training records and programme evaluations.

Considerations for an AED Programme

- Determine the needs of your facility — How many devices do you need and how long will it take emergency medical personnel to arrive both at your facility and at the emergency site?
- Determine your budget to purchase the equipment, train your employees and maintain the programme diligently. What legal ramifications should you consider as well?
- Determine if you will train existing staff or whether you will hire new staff to run the AED programme. If you are using existing staff, you will need to incorporate these safety responsibilities into their job descriptions.

Insurance Considerations

Purchasing the appropriate insurance cover is also imperative when operating an AED programme. Todd & Cue Ltd is here to help. Contact us today to learn more about all of our workplace risk management solutions.