Implementing an
AED Program

American Heart Association®

Heartsaver®

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is a leading cause of death in the United States. More than 350,000 cardiac arrests occur outside of the hospital each year. Twelve percent of those victims survive. SCA can happen to anyone at any time. It is important for companies and organizations to implement AED programs so employees are prepared to respond to an SCA emergency. Key steps to implementing an AED program are listed below.

1. Get medical oversight

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) may require a physician's prescription to purchase an AED. The responsibilities of the physician may include signing off on or making recommendations on training plans and policies and procedures, evaluating data recorded on an AED during a medical emergency and helping assess each use of an AED to recommend any improvements.

2. Work with local EMS

Working with your local EMS system is a key step to implementing an AED program. Most states require you to coordinate your AED program with local EMS and to provide follow-up data to EMS after any use of the AED. In states that require registration or application for AED programs, the physician or program coordinator completes this process.

3. Choose an AED

There are several AEDs on the market that are suitable for a company's or organization's AED program. The American Heart Association does not recommend one device over another. The AED you choose should be simple and easy to use.

4. Contact technical support

Make sure you have technical support when your AED device requires it. Call the manufacturer's technical support number and see what kind of response you get. Is a representative available to help you right away? Are you on hold for a long time? Does your call go to voice mail?

5. Make sure program support is available

Some AED manufacturers provide help with program implementation and ongoing support. They can assist with placement, medical authorization, registration, training and supplies. Review your capabilities and determine if services like these would be helpful in deploying your AED program.

6. Place your AEDs in visible and accessible locations

Effective AED programs are designed to deliver a shock to a victim within three to five minutes after the person collapses. Use a three-minute response time as a guideline to help you determine how many AEDs you need and where to place them. AEDs can be placed near elevators, cafeterias, main reception areas, in secured or restricted access areas and on walls in main corridors.

7. Develop a training plan

AED users should be trained in CPR and the use of an AED. Training in the use of an AED can help increase the comfort and confidence level of responders. Some companies and organizations recruit and train employees as responders. Responders are trained in CPR and the use of an AED so someone is always available to respond to an emergency. The American Heart Association offers CPR AED training in a classroom setting and an eLearning format.

8. Raise awareness of the AED program

After initial implementation, provide information to all employees at your company about the AED program. You can use internal newsletters, posters, magnets, signage or other means to promote your AED program and identify where the devices are located. By continually raising awareness of the program, you reinforce to employees that your company or organization is committed to their safety.

9. Implement an ongoing maintenance routine

It is important to do a weekly or monthly visual inspection of the AEDs to ensure they are in working order. The program coordinator or another designated person can do the inspections. This person develops a written checklist to assess the readiness of the AEDs. Also, talk with your manufacturer regularly to get the latest information about software updates or upgrades.

Learn more about Heartsaver First Aid CPR AED and Bloodborne Pathogens training for your company or organization at:
heart.org/workforcetraining