Workplace First Aid



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Safety Talk

The first few minutes are important for the survival of any accident victim. If you can provide prompt and proper first aid while waiting for medical assistance to arrive, you greatly increase your co-worker’s chance for a complete recovery.

When you come across an accident, first ensure your own safety. Look, listen and smell for signs of danger. Never endanger yourself to assist another person. That includes never entering a confined space to rescue a co-worker unless you use company authorized procedures. Do not allow yourself to be exposed to blood or other bodily fluids because of the danger of bloodborne diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis B. Act quickly and calmly, even if all you can do is call for medical assistance and stay with the victim to reassure him.

Here are some basic first-aid safety tips for common workplace injuries:

- First, make sure the person is breathing. If necessary, and if you are trained, start the ABCs of first aid -Airway, Breathing and Circulation. This may include either rescue breathing or Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).
- Be prepared to treat every accident victim for shock because it can be a life threatening condition. Look for symptoms such as pale, clammy skin and rapid, shallow breathing. Make the person comfortable, either lying down or in a semi-sitting position, and keep him warm.
- If there is bleeding, remember the 3 P’s. To slow or stop the bleeding, position the person lying down, position the limb higher than the heart and apply pressure on the wound. Cover the wound with a clean cloth and secure with a larger bandage. You must protect yourself from contact with blood.
- Support a broken bone in a comfortable position – using pillows or rolled blankets. Elevate the limb slightly if possible and apply a wrapped ice

pack on the swelling. Don’t move the person unless he is in immediate danger.

- Soak small heat burns in cool water for 20 minutes and protect with a light, lint-free dressing. Serious burns can be fatal and need prompt medical assistance. With all burns, don’t break blisters, don’t apply oil, lotions, butter, or ice and don’t remove charred or melted clothing.
- For burns caused by chemicals, immediately place the person into an emergency shower. Make sure the victim continues showering for a minimum of 15 minutes while he removes all of his clothing. Medical treatment is necessary.
- Chemical eye injuries should be irrigated for at least 20 minutes in an eye wash and while the person is being transported to medical aid.
- A puncture wound to the chest or lungs is a life threatening injury. Quickly seal the wound by placing your hand, plastic, foil, or a credit card over the injury. Have someone else send for medical assistance. Place the person in a comfortable semi-sitting position.
- Amputations can also be life threatening. First, stop the bleeding by applying pressure to an artery in the wrist, arm, groin or leg. Then apply clean dressings to the stump and treat the patient for shock. Wrap the amputated part in a clean cloth and place in a bag of ice. Make sure you send the amputated part with the patient to the hospital.

Quick action in an emergency should be as natural to you as tying your shoes. Take a first aid course and keep your skills current. First aid saves lives.