

First Aid

This advice sheet aims to summarise basic information on providing first aid to members and on the symptoms of some common medical problems, as well as covering legal issues and where to obtain portable first aid guides for members.

WHAT TO DO¹

When someone is choking

1. COUGH IT OUT – Encourage them to cough.
2. SLAP IT OUT – Give them five sharp back blows between their shoulder blades with the heel of your hand.
3. SQUEEZE IT OUT – Stand behind them, put your arms around the upper part of the abdomen, clench your fist and put it between the navel and the bottom of their breastbone, grasp your fist firmly with the other hand, pull upwards up to five times.

If the person is still choking, repeat the backslaps and abdominal thrusts up to three times, then call 999 or 112 and continue the sequence until help arrives.

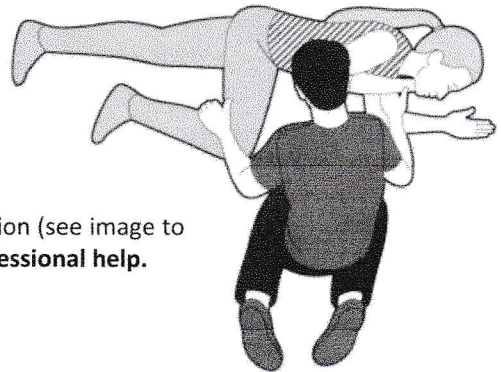
When someone is bleeding severely

1. PRESS IT – Apply direct pressure over the wound using a dressing. Use gloves where possible and if no dressing is available, ask the person to apply pressure themselves.
2. RAISE IT – Help them to lie down and where possible raise the injured limb to reduce blood loss.
3. CALL 999 OR 112.

When someone is unconscious

1. OPEN AIRWAY – Check the airway is open and clear.
2. TILT HEAD – Lift their chin to ensure the airway stays open.
3. CHECK BREATHING – Look, listen and feel for signs that they are still breathing.

Only if spinal injury is **not** suspected, put them into the recovery position (see image to the right). **If there is any doubt, do not move the casualty: await professional help.**



When someone has stopped breathing

If they are unconscious, follow steps 1-3 above, then:

1. CALL 999 OR 112 – Ask for an ambulance.
2. DEFIBRILLATOR – Ask for an Automated External Defibrillator if one is available*.
3. PUMP – Place one hand on the centre of their chest. Place the heel of your other hand on top of the first and interlock your fingers, keeping your fingers off their ribs. Lean directly over their chest and press down vertically about 5-6cm (2-2 ½ inches). Give 30 compressions at a rate of 100-120 per minute.
4. BREATHE – If you are able to, tilt their head, pinch their nose, take a breath, seal your lips over their mouth and breathe out for approximately 1 second, until their chest rises. When it has fallen, repeat to give a second rescue breath then repeat 30 compressions in a continuous cycle, until the person shows signs of regaining consciousness such as coughing, opening his eyes, speaking or moving purposefully.

*USING A DEFIBRILLATOR: Defibrillators are easy to use as you just have to follow the spoken instructions. Although they look different they all work in the same way and you do not need training to use them. Your first priority should be to call an ambulance and perform CPR – do not interrupt this to go and find one but do send someone to get one when you are able.

¹ The information in this section is taken from the St John's Ambulance essential first aid guide (details below)