

III. FIRST AID

What is First Aid?

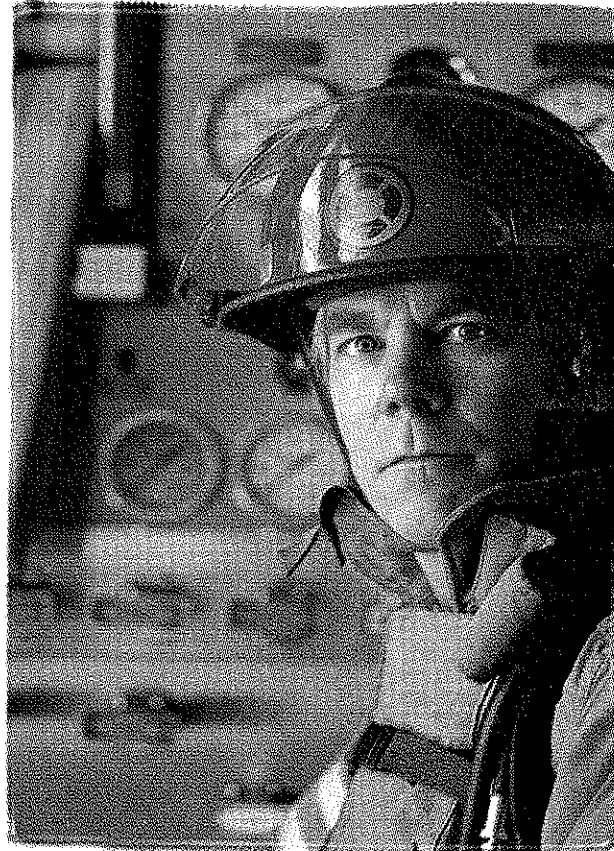
In the parable of the Good Samaritan, two men failed to render aid to a dying man. Another man did. Have you ever considered what you would have done in this situation? After seeing the man beaten and lying in the road, would you have had compassion on him? Would you have bound up his wounds and taken him to a place that could give him the care he needed?

Though it is a rare occurrence to find a dying person in the road, it is not rare to come upon someone that has had an accident and needs emergency medical care. Millions of people each year are hospitalized because of injuries. A large percentage of those injuries result in death. Many deaths caused by accidental injuries can be prevented, however.

First aid is the quick and ready administration of basic medical help given to victims until emergency medical care can be given. As Christians, we should be willing and prepared to help those in need of physical care.

Part of being willing to help is being prepared to help. Merely feeling bad for someone because they are injured or suffering will not help them. True compassion acts. The significant difference between the Good Samaritan and the two other men is that the Good Samaritan acted. Being prepared to help someone in need will enable you to act.

Reading this section will prepare you for action in the event of an injury. To learn the skills and techniques involved with the administration of more advanced emergency medical procedures, contact your local chapter of the American Red Cross. A parent, sibling, friend, or stranger might desperately need your help someday. The First Aid procedures in this section are based on methods of emergency care as established by the American Red Cross.



Answer the following questions with short answers.

3.1 Define *first aid*. _____

3.2 What was the main difference between the Good Samaritan and the other two men that saw the wounded man lying in the road? _____

3.3 Why is it important to know first aid? _____

What is EMS? EMS stands for Emergency Medical Services. It is a system of local resources which include the fire and police departments, ambulance services, medical professionals, and you. As a responsible and caring citizen of your community, you serve as the initial "link" in a chain of emergency procedures.

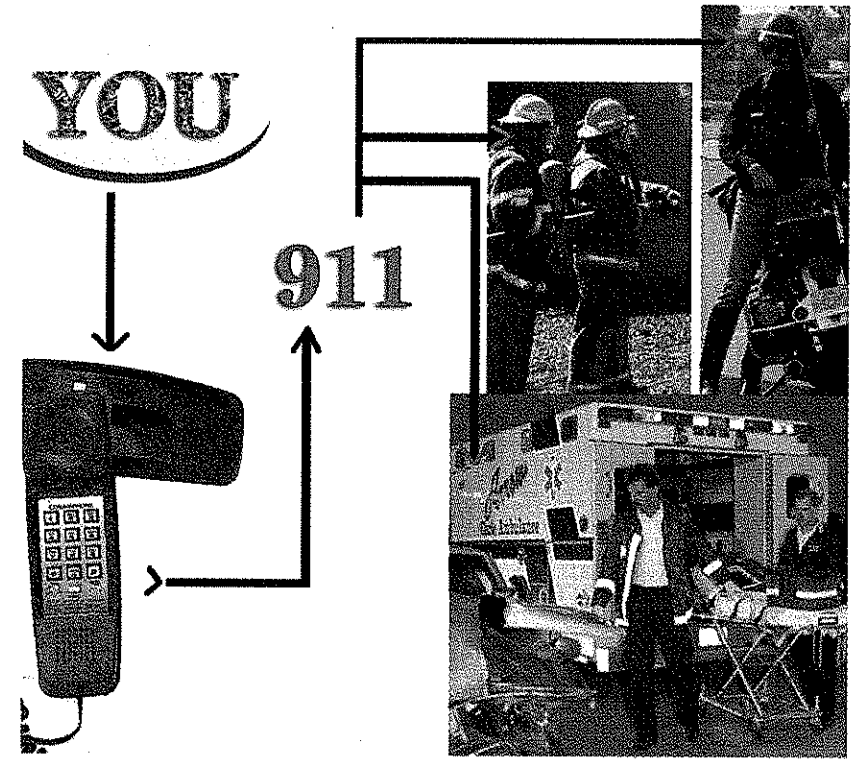
When you call 911 or your local emergency number, you are in effect sounding the alarm. The information that you give to the EMS dispatcher will be used to determine which emergency professionals need to be alerted. In the case of a car accident, for instance, the dispatcher will relay pertinent information to fire, police, and medical personnel. The needed EMS professionals will travel to the location of the emergency, begin emergency care, and transport the victim to a nearby medical facility. Enroute to the hospital, the EMS professionals will inform the emergency room staff of the victim's condition. The medical care received at the hospital is the last "link" in a chain of emergency procedures that are begun by concerned citizens like you.

Your speed in putting to work the EMS system could someday mean the difference between life and death for a family member, a friend, or a stranger.

Good Samaritan Laws. Good Samaritan laws are meant to encourage responsible people to offer aid without fear of being sued by the victim. The Good Samaritan laws provide legal protection for rescuers as well as for the victim. Good Samaritan laws vary from state to state. They are based on these basic procedures:

- ✦ Ask the victim permission to administer aid. If the victim is unconscious, the law assumes that permission is granted. In the case of a child or a mentally handicapped person, ask permission of the parent or guardian, if available.
- ✦ Call for help. After you have determined the severity of the injury, it is your duty to alert emergency medical professionals.
- ✦ Only administer aid that you are qualified to perform. For example, attempting to perform CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) on a victim without proper training and certification can be construed as reckless behavior. Your efforts to save actually might further endanger the life of the victim.
- ✦ Once you have begun to administer aid, you must continue until help arrives. To abandon a victim makes you liable of gross or willful negligence.
- ✦ Do not the move victim, unless they are in a life-threatening situation. Moving a victim can worsen an injury.

To understand more fully your guidelines for action under the law, check your state laws to know exactly what protection is provided for the rescuer.





Answer the following questions with *true* or *false*.

- 3.4 _____ If a victim needs advanced medical aid that you are not qualified to perform, you are legally obligated to attempt whatever aid that is necessary.
- 3.5 _____ If a victim is conscious, you must ask their permission to administer first aid.
- 3.6 _____ If the victim is in a safe position, it is legal to move them.
- 3.7 _____ As a witness to an accident, you are the initial link in the system of emergency resources known as EMS.
- 3.8 _____ According to the Good Samaritan laws, if you are a witness to an accident, you are not legally obligated to alert emergency medical professionals.
- 3.9 _____ The Good Samaritan laws are meant to discourage bystanders from helping accident victims.
- 3.10 _____ Once you begin to administer aid, you cannot leave the victim under any circumstances, unless your life is threatened.



What is Considered an Emergency? Not all injuries or illnesses require emergency medical care. Understanding the basic principles of first aid will help you determine the severity of the situation. For example, if you cut yourself while chopping up food, you do not necessarily need to call EMS. If the cut is small and the bleeding is minimal, you might just need a bandage or possibly stitches.

The American College of Emergency Physicians has issued a brief outline to help people determine what injuries or illnesses need emergency medical care. If one of the following situations occur, call 911 or your local EMS number.

- Bleeding that is persistent or severe
- Chest pain or pressure
- Severe abdominal pain or pressure
- Head, back, or neck injuries
- Loss of consciousness
- Difficult or irregular breathing
- Vomiting that is continuous or severe
- Vomiting or passing blood in the urine or stool
- Coughing up blood
- Sudden vision problems
- Seizure
- Possible broken bones
- Desire to injure self or others



If you suspect poisoning, contact your local Poison Control Center. They will give you instructions to follow for immediate care. If necessary, the Poison Control Center will tell you to alert EMS. If you do not know the number to your local Poison Control Center, call EMS.

Keep a list of all emergency medical numbers near every phone. In addition to 911, list the local numbers for emergency care, the fire department, police department, and Poison Control Center. List them clearly and distinctly so that they can be read by everyone. If your phone has an automatic dialing feature for special numbers, be sure to add emergency numbers to the list.



When an Emergency Occurs. The most important thing to do in an emergency is to stay calm. Staying calm will help you think more clearly, enabling you to administer aid correctly and efficiently. Remaining calm will also help to keep the victim calm. If you appear nervous or frightened, it could easily cause the victim to become more frightened than he already is. A nervous or frightened victim is difficult to work with and could aggravate his own injuries. Before approaching a victim or victims, take a second to clear your mind and compose yourself.

It is important to think soberly about your abilities and the victim's situation. Do not attempt to be a hero. Perform only those first aid procedures that you have been trained to perform. Do not place yourself in danger. You can't help the victim in any way if you become a victim. Wait for emergency professionals to arrive.

In order to cause no further harm to a victim, do not move them unless their life is in immediate danger. Leave the victim in the position that you found them. Moving a victim of a back, neck, or head injury can cause more harm than good. It can even result in unnecessary paralysis.

Before touching a victim or the fluids from a victim's body, take the necessary precautions to protect yourself and the victim from the spread of infectious diseases. Keep any cuts or open wounds that you may have away from the victim's blood or fluids. Wear rubber gloves, if possible. Rubber gloves are an essential part of a first aid kit that you keep in your house and car. Protect yourself with a plastic face shield or mouthpiece when administering CPR to a stranger or a person that is known to be infected. Do not place your fingers in your mouth or near your eyes or nose at any time. Infection is also something for the victim to be concerned about as well as yourself.



Multiple Choice.

- 3.11 In which of the following situations should you alert EMS? _____
- a. Minor cut
 - b. Headache
 - c. Coughing
 - d. Loss of consciousness
- 3.12 The most important thing to do in an emergency is what? _____
- a. Leave the victim in the position that you found them
 - b. Stay calm
 - c. Wear rubber gloves
 - d. All of the above
- 3.13 A list of emergency care numbers should be kept where? _____
- a. In a kitchen drawer
 - b. In your address book
 - c. Near every phone in the house
 - d. Near the kitchen phone
- 3.14 In which of the following accident situations would you call both EMS and the Poison Control Center? _____
- a. Chest and throat pain and evidence of an overdose
 - b. Vomiting blood and a spilled bottle of drain cleaner
 - c. Irregular breathing, severe abdominal cramps, and a partially eaten meal
 - d. All of the above
- 3.15 Why is it important to wear rubber gloves or a plastic face mask? _____
- a. To protect yourself and the victim from the spread of infectious diseases
 - b. To keep blood or other fluids from getting on your face or hands
 - c. To look professional
 - d. Both a and b



ACTIVITY

Making a First Aid Kit

One of the best ways to be prepared for an emergency is to have a First Aid kit readily available. First Aid kits can be stored in the bathroom, in a kitchen cabinet, in the garage, or even in your car.

Assembling a First Aid kit is not difficult. You might want to make several, depending upon the types of activities in which you regularly participate.

In this activity, you will assemble a first aid kit that will supply you with items that will help you deal with most emergency situations discussed in this section.

Gather the items listed below and store them in a sturdy container marked "First Aid Kit." If you already have a first aid kit in your home, check its contents for the items listed below. Be sure to replace any medications that might be out-of-date.

- | CHECK | ITEM |
|--------------|--|
| _____ | Gauze bandages (sterile) |
| _____ | Aspirin or aspirin substitute |
| _____ | Foil blanket |
| _____ | Triangular bandage |
| _____ | Scissors |
| _____ | Tweezers |
| _____ | Calamine lotion |
| _____ | Roll of cotton gauze (sterile) |
| _____ | Assorted adhesive bandages |
| _____ | Adhesive tape |
| _____ | Disposable rubber gloves |
| _____ | Antiseptic hand wipes |
| _____ | Safety pins |
| _____ | Antiseptic ointment |
| _____ | Flashlight |
| _____ | Rubbing alcohol in a plastic container |
| _____ | Syrup of Ipecac (used to induce vomiting in case of the ingestion of specific poisons) |



Adult Check _____
_____ **Initial** _____ **Date**

Evaluating the Scene. Before you approach an accident victim, survey the scene. Do this quickly. Be sure to take mental notes on what happened, how many people were involved, and what immediate actions need to be taken. This information will help you to determine if emergency medical care is needed.

Use your senses to help you evaluate if the scene is safe. For example, look for signs of fire, smell for toxic fumes, or listen for approaching traffic. If the scene is dangerous, do not place yourself in danger. Allow trained emergency professionals to rescue the victim.

Approach the scene only if doing so does not endanger the victim or yourself. Check for multiple victims. If they are conscious, introduce yourself. Tell the victim or victims that you know first aid and are able to help them until emergency professionals arrive. Ask them if it is okay for you to help. Do not touch a conscious victim unless he or she gives you consent. If the victim is unconscious, assume that permission to administer first aid is granted.

Check vital signs next. To help you remember what needs to be checked, think about what the American Red Cross calls the ABCs—**A**irway, **B**reathing, and **C**irculation.

Checking for an open airway will help you to determine if the victim can breathe. If their mouth is closed, tilt their head back gently, pressing on their forehead and lifting their chin. If the possibility of a neck or back injury exists, do not move the head. Wait for EMS to arrive.

To checking the victim's breathing, watch for their chest to rise and fall. If you cannot see the chest rising and falling, listen for air movement near the nose and mouth.

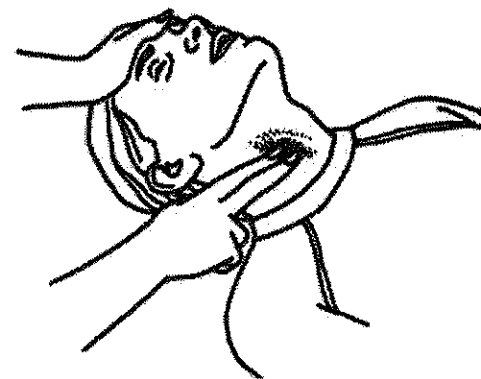
Check the victim's circulation by feeling for a pulse. This can be done by placing your two forefingers on the side of the victim's neck just to the right of the larynx.

If the victim is not breathing or has no pulse, CPR needs to be administered by a qualified individual. If you are qualified to perform CPR, attempt to resuscitate immediately and instruct someone else to call EMS. If you are not qualified, find an individual that is. Stop any severe bleeding as soon as possible.

Calling for Help. After quickly gathering information about the scene and the condition of the victim(s), call EMS. If you cannot leave a victim, tell a bystander to call EMS. Do not assume that someone will make that call.

Whoever makes the call should be prepared to give the EMS dispatcher information about the victims in a calm concise manner. This will help facilitate the arrival of EMS professionals. The dispatcher will ask for the following information:

- ▼ Where the emergency is located? (If you do not know the address of the location, ask other bystanders.)



- ▼ What is your name?
- ▼ What happened?
- ▼ Who is involved in the emergency?
- ▼ What is the condition of the victims?
- ▼ How are they being helped?

Taking Action. After EMS has been called, check the victim again for injuries. Watch closely for changes in the victim's physical condition and the surrounding circumstances. In a matter of seconds, a victim can stop breathing, lose consciousness, or lose vast amounts of blood.

Attend to injuries in the order of severity until EMS arrives. Injuries that endanger the victim's respiratory or circulatory systems should be attended to first. For example, if a victim is not breathing and has a broken leg, CPR should be administered immediately. The broken leg can be attended to later. Unlike breathlessness, a broken leg is not a life-threatening condition.



Answer the following questions.

- 3.16 Number the procedures in the proper sequence.
- _____ Call EMS with information about the accident.
 - _____ Check vital signs of the victim(s).
 - _____ Administer first aid.
 - _____ Check the scene for hazardous conditions.
- 3.17 Check the pertinent information about the accident that will need to be given to the EMS dispatcher.
- _____ Your name.
 - _____ Your date of birth
 - _____ How the victims are being helped
 - _____ Who is involved in the emergency
 - _____ How you feel
 - _____ What happened.
 - _____ Who is at fault for the accident
 - _____ Where the emergency is located.
- 3.18 List the injuries in the order in which they should be treated.
- _____ Broken leg
 - _____ Breathlessness
 - _____ Severed finger