



# AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS

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## **Background Information**

The American Heart Association (AHA) reported that more than 350,000 people in the United States experience an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest annually, which are subsequently assessed and treated by emergency medical services (EMS). Sudden cardiac arrest is caused by ventricular fibrillation - a condition in which the heart's regular electrical signals become erratic, causing the heart to cease pumping blood effectively. Applying an electric shock (defibrillation) to a heart in ventricular fibrillation can restore a natural heart rhythm and is the only definitive treatment for sudden cardiac arrest. Using an Automated External Defibrillators (AED) within minutes of a sudden cardiac arrest significantly increases the chances of survival.

## **Requirement**

On June 27, 2023, the County of Los Angeles - Board of Supervisors adopted a policy – AEDs for Employee and Public Use, and Hands-Only Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and AEDs Usage Training for Employees. This requires all buildings occupied by County employees to have at least one AED present in the workplace. Additionally, the policy requires all County departments to make available AEDs and Hands-Only CPR training to their employees.

## **Facility Needs Assessment**

AEDs are portable devices that analyze heart rhythm and deliver an electric shock after electronically detecting and assessing ventricular fibrillation. While there is no single method to determine the need for an AED at a facility, there are several factors that should be considered such as:

- **Response Time:** Emergency treatment should be available as soon as possible. The optimal response time is three minutes or less.
- **Demographics:** Consideration should be given to the age profile of the workforce since the likelihood of sudden cardiac arrest increases with age.
- **Visitors:** Facilities that host large numbers of visitors are more likely to experience a sudden cardiac arrest event.
- **Specialty Areas:** Facilities where strenuous work is conducted are more likely to experience a sudden cardiac arrest event.

- Physical Layout of Facility: Response time should be calculated based on how long it will take for a responder (with an AED) to reach a sudden cardiac arrest victim.

### ***AED Training***

Title 22, California Code of Regulations, Division 9, Chapter 2.3 establishes training standards to ensure AED responders are properly trained in the use of the device. AED training courses should not be less than four hours and should include the following topics and skills:

- Basic Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) skills.
- Proper use, maintenance and periodic inspection of the AED.
- The importance of CPR, defibrillation, advanced life support, adequate airway care and internal emergency response system.
- Overview of the local EMS system, including 911 access, and interaction with EMS personnel.
- Assessment of an unconscious patient to determine if cardiac arrest has occurred and the appropriateness of applying and activating an AED.
- Information relating to defibrillator safety precautions to enable the individual to administer shock without jeopardizing the safety of the patient, the authorized responder and other nearby people.
- Recognition that an electric shock has been delivered to the patient and that the defibrillator is no longer charged.
- Rapid, accurate assessment of the patient's post-shock status to determine if further activation of the AED is necessary.
- Responsibility of the authorized responders for continuation of care, such as repeated shocks if necessary, and/or accompaniment to the hospital, if indicated, or until the arrival of more medically qualified personnel.

The required hours for an AED training program can be reduced by no more than two hours for students who have been certified in basic CPR in the past year and can demonstrate proficiency in the current techniques of CPR. Although there is no consensus on the ideal frequency for retraining, the American Red Cross recommends reviewing AED skills every 2 years.

### ***AED Maintenance***

AEDs must be maintained in workable fashion and regularly tested according to the operation and maintenance guidelines set forth by the manufacturer, American Heart Association, American Red Cross, and the Food and Drug Administration. AEDs should

be checked monthly to confirm that they are operational and ready for use. Here is a link to the AED Monthly Inspection Checklist at:

[https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/ceo/rmo/1198856\\_AEDInspectionChecklist.pdf](https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/ceo/rmo/1198856_AEDInspectionChecklist.pdf)

A comprehensive inspection should be conducted every six months or as recommended by the manufacturer. Records of these periodic checks should be maintained.

### ***Medical Control***

A medical director or other physician is not required to be involved in the purchase or placement of an AED.

### ***Liability Based on Negligence – Immunity for Employees***

The County is liable for any injury caused by an employee negligently rendering emergency aid. However, under Civil Code section 1714.21, an employee is immune from liability for any civil damages resulting from acts or omissions in rendering emergency care or treatment using an AED so long as the emergency care is rendered in good faith and not for compensation. A recent revision of Civil Code section 1714.21 eliminated the requirement for AED users to complete training in basic CPR and AED usage as a condition for obtaining immunity from liability. The immunity does not apply in cases of personal injury resulting from an employee's gross negligence or willful misconduct.

### ***Liability Based on Negligence – Immunity for the County***

Pursuant to Civil Code 1714.21, the County is not liable for civil damages from acts or omissions in the rendering of the emergency care by use of an AED where the County has complied with requirements set forth in subdivision (b) of section 1797.196 of the Health and Safety Code. In order to be immune from civil liability, however, the County must do the following:

- Comply with all regulations governing the placement of an AED.
- Notify the local Emergency Management Service agency of the existence, location, and type of AED acquired.
- Location of the AED should be clearly labeled and the unit accessible.
- Regularly maintain and test AEDs in accordance with all applicable manufacturers' guidelines.
- Ensure AEDs are tested at least bi-annually and after each use.
- Check all AEDs for readiness at least once every 90 days and after each use, maintain records of each check.
- Records of the maintenance and testing required are maintained.

- At least once a year, offer a demonstration to at least one person associated with the building so that the person can be walked through how to use an AED properly in an emergency.
- Post instructions on how to use the AED next to the device in 14-point type.
- Notify building tenants annually of the location of AEDs in the building and information on who to contact if they want to voluntarily take AED or CPR training.
- Prepare a written plan describing the maintenance, training, and procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency requiring the use of an AED.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Question:** **Who is the local Emergency Management Services (EMS) Agency?**  
**Answer:** *Los Angeles County Emergency Management Services (EMS) agency is a unit under Department of Health Services. Their website is AED Program - Emergency Medical Services Agency at <https://dhs.lacounty.gov/emergency-medical-services-agency/home/training-program-approvals/aed-program/> and can be reached at (562) 378-1500.*

**Question:** **How do I register the AED unit(s) at my facility?**  
**Answer:** *You can register your AED units by completing the Public Access Defibrillation Program Notification Form and submitting it to EMS Agency. Contact EMS agency for the required forms.*

**Question:** **Do I need to inform the fire department that I have an AED installed at the facility?**  
**Answer:** *It is good practice to notify your local fire department that there is an AED unit installed at your facility as it will assist them in responding effectively to emergency situations.*

**Question:** **Will I be held liable if I perform AED/CPR on a victim?**  
**Answer:** *Individuals who perform AED or CPR on a victim in an emergency are generally protected from civil liability under the Good Samaritan laws if they act in good faith and without compensation. Contact emergency services if you are uncertain about the situation.*

**Question:** **Can I still use an AED on a victim if I never had training?**  
**Answer:** *Yes, formal training is not necessary to use an AED in an emergency. The AED is designed to be used by bystanders with little or no medical training. The AED's voice prompts and messages will guide you through the resuscitation process. Contact emergency services if you are unsure about the situation or the victim's condition.*

**Question:** **How can I receive training on Standard First Aid and CPR?**  
**Answer:** *Various vendors provide Standard First Aid/CPR/AED training, such as the American Red Cross and American Heart Association. County employees can receive Hands-Only CPR and AED awareness training by signing up for a course on TalentWorks. These courses do not replace the Certify CPR Class.*