

# Get wise to using Defibrillators



## A guide on Defibrillators

### What is a Defibrillator?

There are many brands of defibrillator available, whilst they may look different, all defibrillators are reasonably similar and will deliver a lifesaving shock in an emergency.

Defibrillators are known by several names, including:

- AED;
- Automated External Defibrillator;
- Defib;
- Defibrillator;
- Public Access Defibrillator (PADs).

Look out for the Defibrillator sign in your workplace and public areas.



### Types of Defibrillator

#### Fully Automatic and Semi-Automatic:

Semi-Automatic defibrillators require the rescuer to press a button to deliver a shock. Fully Automatic defibrillators carry out a short countdown and deliver a shock automatically. Both versions have pro's and con's depending upon where the defibrillator is to be used and by whom.

Your Ambulance Service or a BHTA Supplier will be able to offer advice to help you make the right choice.

### Where are they normally found?

There are many defibrillators available in public places such as train stations, shopping centres, airports and leisure centres. These defibrillators are often known as Public Access Defibrillators (PADs) and are usually found in yellow or green cabinet if they are outdoors, or a white cabinet if they are indoors. Whatever the colour, the cabinet will always have the defibrillator sign on it. Some cabinets need a code to open them, some cabinets are already unlocked. If you need to get into a cabinet that is locked, simply call 999 and they will give you the code. These are provided for the use of everyone in an emergency.

If you need to find your nearest Public Access Defibrillator in an emergency, call 999 and the call handler will help you if there is one nearby.

Larger companies are likely to situate a defibrillator in the main reception or close to a First Aid Room. There are many places defibrillators can be found, remember to look for the sign.

### Why is it important to have a Defibrillator available in the event of an emergency?

The amount of time between arrest and defibrillation is one of the most important factors during a cardiac arrest.

#### Statistics

Using a defibrillator within the first three minutes of collapse can increase the chances of survival by up to 70%. <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa040566#t=article>

Every minute after this reduces chances by approximately 10%. It is critically important to act quickly.



### Misconceptions

#### Legal issues

Some people mistakenly feel that they may be held responsible if the casualty does not recover. This is not the case; a person using an defibrillator can not be held liable for trying to rescue a casualty.

- <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/3/contents/enacted>.
- <https://www.resus.org.uk/cpr/legal-status-of-those-attempting-cpr/>

#### It's impossible to get it wrong

Defibrillators are designed to be used by anyone, with or without training.

A Defibrillator will never deliver a shock unless the casualty needs one. Training is advisable, but is not compulsory. Training will improve the user's confidence in an emergency.

### How to use a defibrillator

#### Access

Most Defibrillators can be accessed easily, without keys or codes. Some community defibrillators are protected by a locked cabinet. In this instance, instructions on how to open the cabinet in an emergency will be clearly shown.

#### Instructions

Both visual and audible instructions will be given by the Defibrillator.

The instructions are simple to follow and clearly given.

### Maintenance

All defibrillators are maintenance free.

- Defibrillators should be checked regularly, be free from obstruction and kept clean.
- Defibrillators will perform regular self tests to ensure they are ready for use in an emergency. If the self tests find a problem or concern the defibrillator will indicate this. Different defibrillators use different methods to show that a fault or concern has been detected. Some use flashing lights, some use a screen and some use an audible signal.
- Defibrillators use disposable electrode pads and disposable batteries. Most of these have an expected life of between two and five years. Some defibrillators have displays that show the remaining life, some rely on the dates being checked manually. Pads should be replaced close to their expiry date. Batteries should be replaced when the defibrillators indicates that the battery power is getting low.

### Where to get one?

Please visit the BHTA Website – go to “Find a Member” and search for “First Aid Medical Equipment” for further information on reputable brands, manufacturers and suppliers.



# www.bhta.com

The BHTA represent almost 500 companies, all of whom commit to the BHTA Code of Practice, the only one in this industry to be approved by The Chartered Trading Standards Institute. BHTA member companies operate to higher standards of customer protection than the law requires.

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