



American College of Cardiology

Position Statement

Early Defibrillation

[The ACC Board of Trustees endorsed the following American Heart Association (AHA) position statement on "Early Defibrillation" at its meeting on October 20, 1991. Reprints are available from: Educational Products Sales and Marketing; 9111 Old Georgetown Road; Bethesda, MD 20814; 800/257-4740.]

It is essential to integrate the concept of early defibrillation into an effective emergency cardiac care system. This is best characterized by the "chain of survival" concept, which includes early access to the emergency medical services system (EMS), early cardiopulmonary resuscitation when needed, early defibrillation when indicated, and early advanced cardiac care.

To achieve the goal of early defibrillation, the American Heart Association endorses the position that all emergency personnel should be trained and permitted to operate an appropriately maintained defibrillator if their professional activities require that they respond to persons experiencing cardiac arrest. This includes all first responding emergency personnel, both hospital and nonhospital (e.g., emergency medical technicians [EMTs], non-EMT first responders, fire fighters, volunteer emergency personnel, physicians, nurses, and paramedics).

To further facilitate early defibrillation, it is essential that a defibrillator be immediately available to emergency personnel responding to a cardiac arrest. Therefore, all emergency ambulances and other emergency vehicles that respond to or transport cardiac patients should be equipped with a defibrillator.