

Appendix G

The Medical Response Team

More than just common injuries and need for medical assistance –

- Instead, emergency medical care
 - also called wilderness medical care
 - **they apply the Big Band-Aid**
- Severe, life-threatening injuries
 - and ambulance is 15-20 minutes away.

Physician is not needed...ANYONE can do this.

- You are the help until help arrives.
- All covered by Good Samaritan laws
- Cannot do more harm than good
- Need to stop blood flow with bandage or tourniquet
- And presence of mind to do it immediately!

Duties of a Medical Response Team:

- Provide immediate medical care prior to the arrival of emergency responders.
- Provide first aid and assistance in the event of minor accidents or illnesses.
- Evaluate potential activities or situations that might present medical or safety concerns for participants and make recommendations.
- Work in coordination with security team members and others at special events, providing oversight of conditions. Ensure the presence of adequate first aid supplies and equipment.
- Provide training and information to staff members and teachers about a variety of illness and accident related topics.
- Ensure proper safety measures are taken about body fluids or other bio-hazards.
- Add to the overall church outreach and safety and security program.
- Provide an increased level of comfort and assurance to the church family and to guests, if they are present during special events.

Expand the role past the obvious

If the only function of the Medical Response Team is to be on stand-by in case of a medical emergency, members may lose interest over time and

the group may no longer attract volunteers. It also prevents the team from being as useful as they potentially can be.

A walk-through of the church building and grounds can help disclose many opportunities for using a Medical Response Team as a resource or in a stand-by mode.

- Playgrounds, nursery, child care and classrooms: Could staff members and teachers use information about how to respond to emergencies while waiting for assistance?
- Kitchen, restrooms and utility areas: Are there conditions that could be harmful or unsanitary?
- Child care and nursery: What training should helpers receive? Are diapers or other sources of bacteria being handled and disposed of safely?
- Baptismal area: Should a Medical Response Team person stand-by during baptisms to assist if someone has an emergency or if there is an accident?
- Are there special medical needs within the congregation? If it is known that someone has a medical condition that might require emergency response, are Medical Response Team people aware of it and aware of symptoms of an emergency and the best response while waiting for help to arrive?
- How can the Medical Response Team assist after a disruptive or violent situation or other emergency?
- What kind of written material could Medical Response Team members have available for distribution to individuals?
- If the Medical Response Team contains medical professionals there will be different options than if it does not—but there are many areas of health, safety and emergency response in which both professionals and volunteers can be helpful.

Establishing and Maintaining a Medical Response Team

1. Identify a lead team member who will work with church leadership to develop the team and their activities.

If your church has one or more medical professionals as members those will probably be the appropriate people to form the team and develop procedures and policies related to team activities.

Many churches find that non-professional volunteers are available more often to provide coverage at all services. If trained appropriately and

retrained regularly, they can perform effectively and often are even more committed to expanding the program appropriately than are medical professionals who have limited time.

2. Establish the role of the team and team members.

This often evolves over time as the team changes or grows, but it is a necessary starting point.

- What is the team expected to do?
- What is the team restricted from doing, except in extreme emergencies?
- How much time commitment will be involved?
- What knowledge and training level are necessary to fulfill the basic functions of the role?
- Is there a membership application and acceptance process? If so, what criteria are applied?

3. Establish training and retraining for general and church-specific needs.

Training needs can be determined by consulting with the insurance carrier, talking to leaders in churches of similar size that have Medical Response Teams, through the Internet or other resources, and by considering the programs of the specific church and what medical responses are likely to be needed over time.

Medical professionals: If your team contains only of medical professionals most training and certification will be taken care of through their own requirements.

Non-medical volunteers: If you have volunteers, it is reasonable to require that every person on the Medical Response Team should be certified in CPR and AED and Big Band-Aid lifesaving responses, (Big Band-Aid meaning compression bandages and tourniquets). Team members should be recertified as needed. Without such basic training and refresher training, team members may not be as helpful as needed.

4. Determine what equipment and supplies will be necessary or useful. Costs and reasonableness will have an effect on this issue. Among the items found useful in some places of worship (but not necessarily appropriate for all situations):

- One or more AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators)

- A wheel chair to assist someone who is unable to walk easily but not injured or ill to the point of needing an ambulance. Wheel chairs are especially useful in churches or meetings with many senior participants.
- Home-quality blood pressure and pulse devices for use by volunteers, or stethoscopes and other professional quality items if there are professionals on the team.
- One or more blankets and a small pillow. (These must be washed or clean or the covering washed or cleaned after each use.)

6. Establish a procedure for keeping a record of Team actions.

This documentation is crucial. At a minimum the records should contain the person for whom assistance is provided, the Medical Response Team member, the time, date, location and a description of the situation and what action was taken and advice was given.

Outreach programs. Medical Response Team members can:

- Sponsor a wellness seminar or fitness clinic
- Host a blood donation drive,
- Set up a health service vaccination day
- Arrange training for new parents
- Develop nutritional information in conjunction with senior's programs
- Become resources for other issues related to the physical needs of members and visitors.
- Provide playground safety tips for children.
- Sponsor safety poster contests in children's classes, Vacation Bible School or other programs, related to parking lot and church safety

Training and skills development:

Another way to ensure that Medical Response Team members stay committed is to provide training—often it can be found within the congregation or the community, for free or minimal charge.

- Meet with paramedics to discuss best practices before assistance.
- Get information from a physician, nurse, rehab counselor or other specialist about symptoms of drug overdoses, diabetic reactions or other medical conditions.
- Get training about how to deal with the aftermath of a medical emergency when they and the families of those being treated might be vulnerable to stressful or emotional reactions.