



HEART START

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Introduction

Health and safety is important to everyone involved in a Heartstart scheme.

As Scheme Coordinator, you should ensure that health and safety issues and the wellbeing of your instructors and trainees are always taken into account.

As a condition of affiliation your scheme is required to comply with the Heartstart health and safety policy.

Awareness

Make sure that all your instructors and volunteers are aware of the health and safety procedures in this policy. You must also provide them with a copy when you recruit them or when they attend instructor training.

Where possible, your instructors should be observed while teaching a Heartstart course and given feedback on health and safety issues.

This policy contains procedures and good practice guidance on:

- the teaching environment
- trainees' and instructors' personal health and safety
- personal hygiene
- outbreak of infection
- manikin hygiene and maintenance
- risks to the rescuer
- reporting incidents.

Where there's a health and safety issue, your instructor must discuss it with their Scheme Coordinator and Training Supervisor.

The teaching environment

Wherever your instructors are delivering a Heartstart course, they must ensure that the environment is safe for themselves and their trainees.

Where possible they should:

- visit a new venue before a training session to check its suitability and to ensure the layout, access, lighting and heating are adequate
- ensure that the venue has clearly marked emergency/fire exits
- ensure that furnishings and layouts present minimal hazards
- ensure that they and their trainees know what to do in an emergency
- ensure that there's nothing else that could be a potential safety hazard.

Trainees' and instructors' personal health and safety

Trainees

Your instructors are responsible for the wellbeing of their trainees.

They should:

- advise their trainees at the beginning of the session that ELS training involves practising on each other, eg, the recovery position, and on resuscitation training manikins
- not allow trainees to practise cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), or the techniques for dealing with choking, on each other. This can only be taught in theory or by practising on manikins
- advise their trainees at the beginning of the session that they shouldn't take part in any of the training which may put them at risk, eg, by aggravating a known injury
- let trainees work with someone they know when undertaking practical skills, eg, the recovery position, where possible
- encourage trainees who don't know each other to work together in same-gender pairs, where possible
- not force trainees to practise if they don't want to.

Instructors

Your instructors are also responsible for the wellbeing of themselves and their colleagues.

When they're travelling to and from a training session, they should:

- consider any potential risks, eg, weather and traffic conditions
- when travelling alone, tell a family member, friend or colleague where the training is taking place, give them contact numbers and give them an expected return time
- ensure there's enough fuel for their return journey
- choose a safe place to park their vehicle (instructors are often the last person to leave the venue)
- travel (and teach) in pairs, especially when the training takes place in a stranger's home or in rural areas and/or at night, where possible
- carry a mobile phone
- carry a warning triangle, torch and blanket in their vehicle in case of breakdown
- report any incident that occurs while they're travelling, to the Scheme Coordinator.

When they're moving and/or handling equipment, they should:

- consider how much equipment they'll need for the session and check what's already available on site, eg, TV and DVD players, before any training session
- make sure there's adequate help to move or handle heavier items, especially if they're carrying them up and down stairs
- report any incident involving moving and/or handling equipment to their Scheme Coordinator and complete an incident/accident report form. This can be found in the Heartstart insurance policy cover.

When they're using training and other equipment they should:

- ensure that all equipment is maintained in a good state of repair and is safe to use at all times
- check training and other equipment regularly to ensure the above
- make sure any equipment that's in a poor state of repair, faulty or unsafe, particularly electrical (such as projectors, TVs or monitors), is withdrawn from use
- report any equipment-related incident to their Scheme Coordinator and the owner of the equipment, if it's not owned by the scheme.

When transporting equipment in a vehicle, they should:

- make every effort to store the equipment safely and securely in a place where the driver's visibility isn't obstructed in any way
- store manikins and other equipment securely, in the boot where possible
- store manikins and other equipment securely, on the floor in the back of the vehicle if necessary
- stack manikins and other equipment so that the risk of accident or injury to the driver and passengers is minimised.

Personal hygiene

Your instructors will be in close proximity to their trainees.

So, they should:

- make sure that their personal appearance reflects well on themselves and the scheme
- wear appropriate clothing for demonstrating practical skills
- be conscious of their personal cleanliness, especially hands and nails.

Outbreak of infection

Your instructors must seriously consider postponing or cancelling training sessions if there are local or national recommendations that people should not congregate due to widespread infectious disease.

Manikin hygiene and maintenance

Trainees attending a Heartstart course must be assured and feel confident that the resuscitation training manikin they're using is clean and in a suitable state of repair.

Your instructors and any others involved in the maintenance of training manikins:

- should ensure that the manikins and their clothing are clean
- should ensure that manikin faces are cleaned with an alcohol wipe (particularly around the mouth and nose) and allowed to dry naturally before use
- must follow the manufacturer's recommendations and provisions for their hygienic use, maintenance and storage. This includes ensuring that the equipment is in good condition, and replacing consumable items as necessary, eg, disposable lungs and manikin faces. (These items may crack or tear, making cleaning difficult or impossible.)

If trainees share a manikin, it should be cleaned after each trainee has used it.

Any face-piece that may have become contaminated during training, for example, by a cold sore, shouldn't be used by another trainee during that session.

The face-piece should either be replaced or washed in soapy water, soaked in a sterilising solution for at least ten minutes, and then dried thoroughly before being used again. Spare manikin faces should be always be available.

Risks to the rescuer

Trainees often ask about risks to the rescuer. Your instructors should be prepared to answer their questions to reduce any fears and anxieties they may have.

Potential danger to a rescuer must never be ignored. A rescuer should never place themselves or others at more risk than the casualty.

The transmission of infection during CPR may be a concern to some of your trainees during a training session. There have been isolated reports of the transmission of infection, but these should be seen in context.

The indications are that the chance of infection from rescue breathing is minimal. In addition, around 75% of all out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur in the home setting, where the person is known to the rescuer.¹

The Resuscitation Council (UK) guidelines recommend that members of the public should be offered training (if they request it) in the use of simple and effective mouth-to-barrier devices. Although barrier devices aren't part of the Heartstart course, your instructors may need to discuss these devices and demonstrate their use. However, the issue should not be over-emphasised, as it could lead to a lack of confidence and reduce the effectiveness of the training.

Members of the public should never leave a training session afraid of performing resuscitation.

Nevertheless, rescuers should take appropriate safety precautions where feasible, especially if the victim is known to have a serious infection such as TB or SARS. During an outbreak of a highly infectious condition (such as SARS) full protective precautions for the rescuer are essential.

Reporting incidents

Your scheme is responsible for health and safety in the course of your Heartstart activities.

You should remember that there's a statutory duty to notify certain types of accidents to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) www.HSE.gov.uk/riddor

¹ Lyon, R.M. Cobbe, S.M. Radley, J.M. et al, (2004); *Surviving out-of-hospital cardiac arrest at home: a postcode lottery?* Emergency Medicine Journal 21:619-624.