

CPR - First Aid Fact Sheet

Cardiovascular Disease continues to be the number one cause of death in the United States. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) attributes 831,000 deaths each year to Cardiovascular Disease¹. CDC further estimates that 456,000 heart-related deaths occur each year before the victim reaches the hospital². If a person experiencing sudden cardiac arrest receives a shock from a defibrillator and CPR within the first four minutes, there is a 74% chance of full recovery³.

In major metropolitan areas of our country, the average response time for an EMT/Paramedic to arrive at scene of a person in distress is 10 minutes from the time a call is received. When medical emergencies occur on the water entry into the Emergency Medical System (EMS) is significantly longer. In the Chesapeake Bay, the Baltimore Sector of the US Coast Guard estimates the average response time for help to arrive at the scene of a medical emergency, remove the victim(s) from the vessel, and deliver them into the EMS, is 1.75 hours and may be as long as 2.75 hours⁴. Due to the delay in getting help, boaters have a greater need to recognize the signs and symptoms of a person in distress and know the proper procedures to save the lives of crew or guests aboard their vessels.

The US Coast Guard recognizes the value of a quick, appropriate response to a medical emergency and recommends that every boater⁴:

- Be trained in CPR and First Aid.
- Have on board a DSC enabled VHF radio properly programmed with an MMSI number and connected to the ships GPS.
- Have an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) on board.
- Have a first aid kit appropriate to the anticipated time for entry into the EMS.

1. American Heart Association Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics – 2010 Update, American Heart Association Dallas, TX (based on 2006 statistics)

2. Mickey S. Eisenberg, M.D. Incidence and Prevalence of Coronary Artery Disease and Cardiac Arrest RESUSCITATE! (2009) 207-208

3. Mickey S. Eisenberg, M.D. Incidence and Prevalence of Coronary Artery Disease and Cardiac Arrest RESUSCITATE! (2009) 98

4. Commander Brian Penoyer, US Coast Guard Deputy Sector Commander Sector Baltimore, Maryland Department of Natural Resources Education Conference on Boater Education, Ocean City, Maryland, March 20, 2010