

## news & notes

### WHEN TO CALL EMS

As the lead story indicates, some people are not cut out to give emergency first aid, and many do not know how. That's where emergency medical services (EMS) come in. **May 16-22 is National EMS Week**, sponsored by the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP).

ACEP recommends you to ask the following questions to determine whether to call EMS:

- Is the condition life-threatening?
- Could it worsen and become life-threatening on the way to the hospital?
- Does the victim require the skills or equipment of emergency medical technicians?
- Could distance or traffic cause a delay in getting to the hospital?

In addition, ACEP advises that children with the following signs need to be taken to the emergency room:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or interacting with parents
- Being too irritable to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with rash

When you do call 911, calmly and clearly give your name, address, and phone number, the location of the victim, and the medical problem. Don't hang up until told to, so you can continue to exchange necessary information and instructions.



**Someone is injured on the job every twenty seconds... His name is Doug.**



**May 2010**

## Emergency!

### *Know what to do*

Did you know?

- Someone is injured on the job every 20 seconds.
- Every hour someone dies at work.
- When a person stops breathing, or when the heart stops beating, brain damage can occur within 4 to 6 minutes.
- Every year nearly half a million Americans die because of heart attacks, usually within 2 hours of having an attack.

Because of these alarming realities, it's important for you to know basic first aid. With a little first-aid training, you can provide valuable help in an emergency—and maybe even save a life—in such common workplace situations as:

- Broken bones
- Burns
- Chemical poisoning
- Choking
- Eye injuries
- Heart attack
- Heatstroke
- No pulse
- Shock
- Stopped breathing
- Wounds causing heavy bleeding

Throughout this newsletter, we cover first aid for various situations. But not everybody is cut out to deal with a medical emergency, and you should never try to do more than you feel comfortable doing. If you're not able to give first aid, you can be the one who calls 911. Or who meets the emergency medical technicians (EMTs) at the door. Or who stays with the victim to give moral support until the EMTs arrive.

Indeed, when an emergency occurs, someone needs to get to the victim to see what's happened. Someone needs to notify the supervisor. Someone may need to apply first aid. Someone may need to call 911 and stay on the line with the dispatcher. So know and follow your workplace emergency procedures. And participate in all workplace emergency drills.

For OSHA's guidelines on workplace first aid, check out their 28-page *Best Practices Guide: Fundamentals of a Workplace First-Aid Program*, which you can access here: <http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3317first-aid.pdf>.

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### NAOSH WEEK

North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week is May 2-8 this year. And May 5 is Occupational Safety and Health Professional Day.

Use these events to recommit yourself to personal safety in your job. For example, take time to reorient yourself to these general safety orientation areas that you went over when you were a new employee:

- General hazards in your area
- Specific hazards involved in each task
- Hazards in other areas of the workplace
- Workplace safety policies and work rules
- Who to talk with about safety questions
- Smoking rules and smoking areas
- How to select, use, and care for PPE
- Safe housekeeping rules
- Facility security procedures and systems
- How to use tools and equipment safely
- Safe lifting techniques and material handling procedures
- Safe methods for handling, using, or storing hazardous materials and the location of MSDSs
- Location of emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers, eyewash stations, and first-aid supplies
- Evacuation procedures and routes
- What to do if there is an accident or injury
- How to report emergencies, accidents, and near misses

Are you still checked out in all the safety issues that apply to your job? If not, get yourself reoriented toward total safety.



# First Aid for Scrapes

*Don't let it get infected*

Small cuts and abrasions can be the start of something big. For example:

- An employee of a concrete company skinned a knuckle, then missed two weeks of work because of blood poisoning.
- Another worker cut a finger on a grinding machine and had to miss several weeks of work because of blood poisoning.
- A car wash attendant lost five weeks of work after failing to treat the knuckles skinned on a bumper.

**Tetanus and blood poisoning** are two of the most common killers that enter the body through small, harmless-looking cuts. Other serious infections may result in amputation. So follow these tips from the American Medical Association:

- Never put your mouth over a wound or breathe on the wound. There are many germs in the mouth that can infect the wound.
- Don't allow fingers, used handkerchiefs, or other soiled materials to touch the wound.
- Immediately cleanse the wound and surrounding skin with soap and warm water, wiping away from the wound.
- Hold a sterile pad firmly over the wound until the bleeding stops.
- Replace the pad and bandage as necessary to keep the wound clean and dry.
- Leave use of antiseptics to the advice of a doctor or other health professional.

## Health and Fitness Day

*The third Wednesday in May*

If you haven't been exercising, talk with your doctor before beginning a new program. Walking is a great way to start improving fitness. Take these steps:

- Wear sturdy, lightweight comfortable shoes that support and cushion your feet.
- Wear cotton socks and comfortable loose-fitting clothes.
- Stretch before starting.
  - Stand with hands clasped over and behind head, elbows straight. Lean to side, shoulders straight. After five seconds, come up and lean to other side. Repeat five times.
  - Stand facing wall, an arm's length away. With both heels on ground, put one leg forward, knee bent. Keep back leg straight. Body straight, lean forward and place palms on wall. Bend elbows until right leg feels stretch. Hold for 20 seconds. Reverse legs and repeat. Repeat several times each way.
- Walk slowly for first five minutes, gradually increasing pace.
- Walk at a brisk pace, with long, easy strides.
- Walk with back straight, arms swinging, and abdomen flat. Breathe deeply.
- Walk for at least 20 minutes.
- Walk more slowly for last few minutes.
- Stretch a few times at end of walk.

Check out <http://physicalfitness.org/nehf.html> to learn more about **National Employee Health and Fitness Day**.