

Cardiac Emergency Response Drills

How to Plan and Execute

Conducting Cardiac Emergency Response/AED drills as part of your Project ADAM CPR-AED program is essential. No matter how comfortable the response team is with the knowledge gained from CPR-AED training, many glitches can and do occur when an incident arises. Mock drills help to work out potential challenges, alleviate fears and build confidence in responders.

Doing regular AED drills is the best way to test your Cardiac Emergency Response Plan, your communication system and your response team's readiness. Use the steps below to execute a basic school-based AED drill. Utilize the AED Drill Summary Checklist for an objective post-drill review. Drills should be performed at least once per semester to assure optimal performance during an actual emergency. However, you should consider multiple drills. Practice, practice, practice!

1. Planning the Drill:

When: Inform your team that you will be doing an AED drill in the next few weeks so they have time to review the Cardiac Emergency Response Plan in advance. Do NOT tell them exactly when you will do the drill. Ensure that the team member who would normally communicate with EMS does NOT call 911 unless pre-arranged, and be sure it is clearly communicated that this is only a drill.

Who: The drill will involve your School Site Coordinator, Cardiac Emergency Response Team, office staff and a recorder (to record times on the Drill Summary Checklist during the drill). Project ADAM recommends a Site Coordinator be identified at each school to set up the drills. It's important that the recorder is present on scene, next to where the manikin is placed, so they can accurately complete the checklist as the drill occurs. Determine the manner in which classrooms will be covered during a drill or true cardiac emergency if classroom teachers are on the Cardiac Emergency Response Team. All other team members should be responsible for making sure CPR and the AED are initiated promptly.

What you will need:

- Manikin
- Radio/walkie talkie/other communication device
- AED Trainer (compatible with manikin)
- Cell Phone or Telephone
- AED Drill Summary Checklist – preferably on a clipboard with pen or pencil
- Stopwatch

Consider inviting your local Project ADAM Coordinator and/or EMS to your drill. They may be able to provide some of the above supplies and offer a fresh perspective.

Where: Drills can be anywhere on campus so all staff can practice and identify what they will be looking for (unresponsiveness and abnormal or no breathing) and what they will do. If students are on campus, be sure they are informed beforehand about what the drill may look like and that it is only a drill.

Establish a Code: This code name will be used to initiate a response to a cardiac emergency by activating the Cardiac Emergency Response Team. The code should be communicated on the drill day and in a real cardiac emergency as defined in your communication plan. Encourage team members to be descriptive in addition to a code name and state there is a medical emergency in room #, teacher's name and geographic location. For example, Code AED, Room 320, Ms. Jones' room, English hallway or Medical Emergency Response Team to Room 103. Some ideas to consider include putting an AED symbol on your evacuation plan showing AED locations and the code to activate your school's emergency response plan, making a condensed version of your plan for the back of staff ID badges or to place on/near each classroom phone. Additional examples can be found here: www.projectadam.com/Heartsafeschools.

Establish a Communication System: How will the Cardiac Emergency Response Team know the drill has been initiated? Choose a method of mass communication to the team (i.e. overhead announcements, intercoms, walkie-talkies, cell phones, etc.). Consider dead zones for cell phones in the event service is unavailable in certain parts of your building.

2. The Day of the Drill:

Who will participate:

- School Site Coordinator
- Recorder (to record times on the Drill Summary Checklist during the drill)
- Cardiac Emergency Response Team
- Finder (pick someone that isn't on the team to find the manikin)

What you will need:

- Manikin
- Radio/walkie talkie/other communication device
- AED Trainer (compatible with manikin)
- Cell Phone or Telephone
- AED Drill Summary Checklist – preferably on a clipboard with pen or pencil
- Stopwatch

The School Site Coordinator should place a manikin on the floor along with the AED Training Unit with the recorder standing next to the manikin, checklist and pen in hand. Have the finder call the front office advising them that this is only a drill. Tell them you have an unresponsive victim and give the location. Your plan now goes into effect. The school's Cardiac Emergency Response Team should be notified using the established Code (i.e. Code Blue, Code AED, Medical Emergency Response Team, etc.) using the team's established communication system (i.e. overhead announcements, intercoms, walkie-talkies, cell phones, etc.). Your Recorder should document each step as it happens using the **AED Drill Summary Checklist**. The AED Training Unit should be at the drill location, ready to be swapped out with the real school AED once it's brought to the scene. **Never use the real AED pads for drills**. Proceed as if this was a real cardiac arrest situation.

3. After the Drill:

Thank everyone for responding. Spend a few minutes reviewing the checklist together, noting all information documented by the recorder with particular attention to any steps that might have been missed. Ask the responders for feedback and discuss suggestions and concerns. Consider whether there are any action steps needed. Were there specific communication problems? If the drill leads to changes in the plan and protocol, discuss these with your Cardiac Emergency Response Team and administrator. Be sure to make the changes and communicate the changes clearly to your team. Plan another drill to test the revised plan.