

Steps for Using an Automated External Defibrillator (AED)

Follow these basic steps for using an AED:

1. Continue CPR as you turn on the AED.
2. Bare the victim's chest and wipe it dry. Attach the pads to the upper right and left sides of the chest.
3. Plug the connector into the AED.
4. Stop CPR and let the AED analyze the victim's heart rhythm.
5. If the AED indicates a shock is needed, make sure there are no hazards present such as puddles of water or flammable materials, including gasoline or free-flowing oxygen. Make sure no one, including you, is touching the victim. Tell everyone to stand clear. Then press the button to deliver the shock.
6. After delivering the shock—or if the AED indicates, “no shock is advised”—perform two minutes of CPR. Continue to follow the prompts on the AED.
7. If you observe signs of life, stop CPR, continue to monitor the victim's breathing, and look for any changes in the victim's condition until EMS arrives.

To avoid causing further harm when using an AED, you need to take certain precautions. You already know that water, gasoline, and free-flowing oxygen, as well as touching the victim when using the AED, create shock and fire risks. You should also not use alcohol to clean the victim's chest because alcohol is flammable.

When the victim is a child who weighs less than 55 pounds, special pediatric AED pads must be used. Always use the correct pads for the weight of the victim. Remove all medication patches before using an AED and make sure no one is using a cell phone within six feet of the victim. The phone signals can disrupt AED analysis. Operating an AED in a moving vehicle can also affect AED analysis.