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Automated External Defibrillators (AED) in Public Settings

Early defibrillation is a key step in the Chain of Survival, after activation of the emergency response system and early CPR. According to the American Heart Association, immediate cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and early defibrillation, with an automated external defibrillator (AED), can more than double a victim's chance of survival. New Jersey has enacted a number of laws to make AEDs more available to professional rescuers and laypersons. As of January 2016, AEDs are required:

- In airports & casinos
- In nursing homes & assisted living facilities
- In health clubs
- In public and private K-12 schools and at public & private K-12 school athletic events and practices

These facilities are also required to have staff members trained in CPR and the use of the AED. Training must be conducted by an instructor of a training organization recognized by the N.J. Department of Health and Senior Services, such as the American Red Cross (ARC), American Heart Association (AHA), or American Safety & Health Institute (ASHI).

AEDs programs fall into two categories; User and Public Access. User Defibrillation Programs are needed when the AED is provided by an entity for use by authorized employees. Examples are the AEDs in police vehicles, fire apparatus, or health club. Public Access Defibrillation (PAD) Programs refer to the placement of the AED in a public space, such as a municipal building lobby, for use by nearby persons who are trained in CPR / AED.

Whichever program is warranted, a written program is needed that delineates roles and responsibilities for the AED's selection, use, and care (inspection and maintenance) (NJSA Title 34 2A:62A-25 par. 3). Requirements include:

- An AED is a medical device that must have medical oversight. The entity that provides the AED must consult with the prescribing physician when developing their program.
- AEDs must be registered with the local emergency service provider.
- Conduct at least monthly (the Safety Director recommends weekly) visual inspection of the readiness of the device and availability of ancillary equipment, such as rubber gloves, barrier breathing device, and razor. A sample inspection form is available on the MEL website, (www.njmel.org) under the SAFETY tab.
- The inspection should also verify the AED's battery and pads are not expired.
- Periodically checking for recall notices and program updates to current CPR guidelines.

To promote their wide-spread distribution and immediate use, New Jersey included strong immunities for persons or entities that prescribe, provide, train, and use an AED (NJSA Title 34 2A:62A-25 par. 5). The intent of lawmakers is clear. They recognized the lifesaving benefits of an immediately-available AED and provided the necessary immunities and guidance to encourage their placement in public settings where large numbers of residents, visitors, or spectators are anticipated.

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