

WEEKLY SAFETY TIP – 4/11/11 – A-B-C-D-E-F OF FIRST AID

“When someone is bleeding, and is not breathing, what is the first thing I should do?”

That question was posed at a CPR/First Aid class that we taught this past weekend. We were at the Four Seasons Therapeutic Riding Stable in Tracy, CA. The students in the class were training to be attendants and horse riding trainers for people with special needs. The question is asked frequently at our medical training classes. When someone is injured, whether at a jobsite, in a traffic accident or at home, which injuries get treated first? Which get treated second?

To help us as first aiders remember how to prioritize injuries we have the A-B-C-D-E-F of first aid:

A: Airway. Plain and simple, no matter what other injuries are visible or how much blood you can see, it is most important for the patient to be getting air. To establish an airway, use the head-tilt-chin-lift method.

B: Breathing. Look, listen and feel for an airway by listening with your cheek near their face where you might feel any breathing while looking to see if their chest is moving. Do this for 5 to 10 seconds.

C: Circulation. If the patient is not breathing, make sure that emergency medical assistance (9-1-1) is called, and begin CPR.

D: Defibrillation. This is where the call to 9-1-1 is important. If you do not have an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) available, most emergency responders will have one. More lives are saved through defibrillation than CPR alone!

E: Exsanguination. This is a Latin medical term for bleeding. Once you know your patient is breathing, you can do a quick check to see if they are bleeding, and possibly determine why they are bleeding. Take care of yourself and your patient by wearing gloves. If the patient is bleeding from a cut or abrasion, and the patient is capable, have them hold a dressing on their wound.

F: Fractures. Broken bones come 6th in the priority of things. While others may want to splint a broken bone, if it is more comfortable for the patient to “self splint” (hold the broken arm, wrist, etc) close to their body, let them do so. Just try to make them as comfortable as possible, and get them to a doctor.

While the explanations in this list are basic and simplified for this safety tip, it should give you an idea of the general order of treating patients as a first aider. Please call or email us if you have questions.

Additionally, we will be posting some pictures of a CPR class taught in the Four Seasons barn on our Safety Compliance Management facebook page later today. Accidents and

medical emergencies can happen anywhere – and so can quality training. Watch for the pictures!