



# DEFIBRILLATOR GUIDELINES

*Medical, Scientific & Welfare Committee*

2013/2014

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## **Purpose of Document**

The purpose of this document is to provide clubs with an overview of the role of defibrillators and guidelines in key areas such as the acquisition, accessibility & storage, training and maintenance of AEDs.

## **Background to AEDs**

An automated external defibrillator (AED) is a portable device that checks the heart rhythm. If needed, it can send an electric shock to the heart to try to restore a normal rhythm. AEDs are used to treat sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). SCA is a condition in which the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating and can cause death if it's not treated within minutes. Cardiovascular disease is Ireland's biggest killer, with in the region of 10,000 deaths each year. Six thousand are from sudden cardiac arrest and 70 per cent of these occur outside of hospital.

Sports clubs and organisations are among those that can play a role in ensuring they are equipped and prepared to respond in such situations. There is significant evidence to suggest that early defibrillation can have a major impact on survival rates from sudden cardiac arrest.

## **GAA Defibrillator Scheme**

GAA defibrillator programmes are overseen by the Association's Medical, Scientific and Welfare Committee and AEDs are currently available at all GAA county grounds. The GAA's Defibrillator Scheme - which began in 2005, has seen over 1,500 subsidised defibrillators bought by GAA Clubs.

A huge amount of defibrillators have also been supplied to GAA clubs via The Cormac Trust (set up in memory of Cormac Mc Anallen) while many clubs have also purchased AEDs independently and through their own resources. There are numerous stories of lives saved by GAA defibrillators in cardiac arrest situations in the last couple of years.

## **KEY AREAS**

The key areas for GAA Clubs in respect of defibrillators are:

- Acquisition
- Accessibility and Storage
- Maintenance
- Training

## **Acquisition of AEDs**

There are a number of suppliers of AEDs, but since 2005, Heartsafety Solutions has offered GAA Clubs the opportunity to purchase AEDs at a reduced price as part of the Association's defibrillator

scheme. Clubs can purchase AEDs directly through Heartsafety Solutions at a special rate of €850 plus VAT. The model is Samaritan PAD made by HeartSine in Belfast (<http://www.heartsine.com/en/>)

A cheque made payable to 'Heartsafety Solutions' should be sent with a covering letter explaining that you wish to purchase it under GAA scheme (detailing delivery address, contact person etc...) to -

*Heartsafety Solutions,*

*17 Kilcarbery Business Park,*

*Nangor Road,*

*Dublin 22*

*Phone Number: 1850 HEARTS (1850 432787)*

## Recommendations

- ❖ *Clubs with large facilities may require more than one AED to ensure an AED can reach a victim of SCD within 3 minutes.*
- ❖ *In cases where clubs train and play home matches in separate venues, Clubs should give consideration to an AED being available at both arenas.*

## More Information

- ❖ *Official GAA scheme, e-mail [playerwelfare@gaa.ie](mailto:playerwelfare@gaa.ie)*
- ❖ *GAA Press Release - <http://www.gaa.ie/medical-and-player-welfare/news/2208131415-gaa-re-launches-defibrillator-scheme/>*

## Accessibility and Storage

- It is very important to properly store and maintain a club AED.
- Performance of the defibrillator may be compromised if the manufacturer's recommendations are ignored.
- Outdoor cabinets are available from a range of suppliers nationwide (see below for contact details).
- It is desirable to keep a functioning landline telephone near the AED to ensure the emergency services can be contacted.
- The location of the AED is important as research has shown that the chance of its use being effective is considerably increased if defibrillation occurs within 3 minutes.
- To avoid difficulties accessing an AED in the event of an emergency it is advised that the AED should not be kept under lock and key.
- If stored in an outdoor cabinet, the presence of a fitted alarm should deter vandalism or theft (see below for contact details re: acquiring an alarmed cabinet).
- If the AED is kept indoors or in an obscure location, appropriate signage should be in place to illustrate its position and facilitate quick access.

## Recommendations

- ❖ *Clubs with large facilities and multiple playing pitches may require more than one AED to ensure an AED can reach a victim of SCA within 3 minutes.*
- ❖ *It is desirable to keep a functioning landline telephone near the AED to ensure the emergency services can be contacted in the event of a SCA.*
- ❖ *If stored outside, they should be kept in an outdoor cabinet with an alarm, contact [info@hearts.ie](mailto:info@hearts.ie) for more information.*
- ❖ *Appropriate signage should be in place if the AED is kept indoors.*

## More Information

To obtain information on the various storage units which are available, e-mail [playerwelfare@gaa.ie](mailto:playerwelfare@gaa.ie)

## Maintenance

The ACT campaign was launched by the GAA/GPA in partnership with Heartsafety Solutions in 2011 with the aim of encouraging clubs to ensure that their defibrillators were in full working order. Representing three simple steps which could easily save someone's life, the campaign calls for clubs with AEDs or that are considering buying one to 'A', ensure that the defibrillator is **Accessible**, 'C' make sure it is **Charged** and 'T' that people are **Trained** how to use it.

**Accessible** – make sure that your defibrillator is stored in an area where **ACCESS** is not restricted, remember minutes are critical. Specialised units are available for outdoor storage.

**Charged** – Ensure that your defibrillator is fully **CHARGED** and that self-tests have been passed by carrying out weekly inspections. Ensure that your battery and pads (pad-packs) have not reached their expiry date.

**Trained** – Ensure there are enough **TRAINED** rescuers to respond anytime the clubhouse or pitches are occupied, this includes training sessions as well as matches.

GAA clubs now have the opportunity to avail of a defibrillator maintenance offer which includes inspection of batteries, pads, ancillary equipment and hardware for a cost of €20 and with a guarantee of a five day turn around. Each machine will be picked up on a Monday morning by courier and inspected by Heartsafety Solutions at their headquarters in Dublin. An action report form will be completed and the relevant Club Secretary will be contacted to see if he/she would like any updates performed.

## Recommendations

- ❖ *Maintenance of AEDs is straight-forward. A weekly inspection is advised to ensure this life-*

*saving equipment is always ready if required.*

- ❖ *A dedicated rota for AED maintenance should be devised and a record kept.*
- ❖ *Anyone trained to use the AED or responsible for maintaining it should read the machine's user manual.*
- ❖ *GAA clubs can avail of an AED inspection for €20, see information above.*

## More Information

- ❖ *To avail of an inspection of batteries, pads, ancillary equipment and hardware for €20, e-mail [playerwelfare@gaa.ie](mailto:playerwelfare@gaa.ie)*

## Training

There are many companies that currently deliver AED training for large groups. It is a matter for each club and county to decide on whether they want to engage with a particular training supplier or not. Training is also available through a national network of training organisations, affiliated to the Irish Heart Foundation. Contact the IHF or visit [www.irishheart.ie](http://www.irishheart.ie) for information.

## Recommendations

- ❖ *It is recommended that a dedicated list of AED-trained individuals should be kept adjacent to the AED with phone numbers.*
- ❖ *An array of club members should be trained in AED use, including players, coaches, committee members and a club referee to ensure sufficient coverage of training sessions and matches with an AED-trained individual.*
- ❖ *If possible, an AED-trained club member should be present at every training session and match.*
- ❖ *Clubs should contact training providers and seek a discount for mass training.*
- ❖ *There is a need for continual re-training in AED-use (recommended every 2 years) and the mass training of new individuals on a regular basis.*

## Training Providers

- ❖ **Irish Heart Foundation** – T: (01) 668 5001; Web: [www.irishheart.ie](http://www.irishheart.ie)
- ❖ **Heartsafety Solutions** – T: 1850 HEARTS (1850 432787); E: [info@hearts.ie](mailto:info@hearts.ie)
- ❖ **Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council** – T: (045) 882 070 E: [info@phecc.ie](mailto:info@phecc.ie)

## SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- There is significant evidence to suggest that early defibrillation can have a major impact on survival rates from SCA.
- Since 2005, over 1,500 AEDs have been bought by GAA clubs on a subsidised basis and can be purchased for €850 plus VAT from Heartsafety Solutions.

- Clubs with large facilities may require more than one AED to ensure an AED can reach a victim of SCA within 3 minutes.
- It is desirable to keep a functioning landline telephone near the AED to ensure the emergency services can be contacted.
- If stored outside, AEDs should be kept in an unlocked outdoor cabinet, preferably with an alarm to deter vandalism and theft. Contact [info@hearts.ie](mailto:info@hearts.ie) for more information.
- If the AED is kept indoors, appropriate signage should be in place to clearly illustrate its location.
- A dedicated rota for AED maintenance should be devised and a record kept.
- Clubs should contact training providers and seek a discount for mass training.
- A dedicated list of AED-trained individuals should be kept adjacent to the AED with phone numbers.
- An array of club members should be trained in AED-use, including players, coaches, committee members and club referees to ensure maximal coverage of training sessions and matches with an AED-trained individual.

## More Information

If you would like more information on the GAA Defibrillator Scheme, please telephone: (01) 1 865 8685 or e-mail: [playerwelfare@gaa.ie](mailto:playerwelfare@gaa.ie)

## Glossary

- **AED**  
An automated external defibrillator (AED) is a portable device that checks the heart rhythm. If needed, it can send an electric shock to the heart to try to restore a normal rhythm. AEDs are used to treat sudden cardiac arrest (SCA).
- **Arrhythmia**  
Abnormal heart beat. The heart may beat too quickly, too slowly or in an irregular way.
- **Defibrillation**  
This involves a trained person delivering an electric shock, with an AED, to the victim's heart to help restore a normal heart rate.
- **CPR**  
CPR, kiss of life, resuscitation, heart massage. These are all words used for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) by the media and general public.

- SCA

Sudden Cardiac Arrest is a condition in which the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating and can cause death if it's not treated within minutes.

- SCD

The heart has an inbuilt electrical system, which makes it work. If this is interrupted, the heart cannot pump enough blood around the body. Without a supply of blood pumped by the heart the brain can't function, the victim collapse and death follows within minutes.