**Know the Signs, Know What to Do**

Heart attack, stroke and choking are three events that could happen to any of us, or to someone who is with us, at any time; at work, at home, or anywhere in public. Knowing the signs of these sudden life threatening conditions and what to do is critical to the survival of the individual.

The best way to prepare ourselves to understand the signs of these rapid onset conditions and what we as non-medical personnel can do, is to enroll in a First Aid class with an organization such as the American Red Cross.

This safety message is meant only to remind of the recommended methods used to recognize these conditions in order to act fast; seconds count for the lives of a person suffering any of these conditions.

**Heart attack**

Common signs of heart attack include:

* pressure or tightness in the chest
* pain in the chest, back, jaw, and other areas of upper body that lasts more than a few minutes or goes away and comes back
* shortness of breath
* sweating
* nausea
* vomiting

**Stroke**

Common signs to look for when you suspect you or someone else is having a stroke are used in the following slogan:

**B –** Balance Difficulties

**E** – Eyes (Vision) Loss of vision in one eye or part of visual field missing

**F** – Facial Weakness – one side of face drooping for example

**A** – Arm weakness – or numbness – some may think arm is “asleep”

**S** – Slurred speech

**T** – Time to act – Call local emergency number (911)

**Choking**

The common sign for choking with full air blockage is a person clutching at their throat, inability to speak or breathe.

The Red Cross recommends a “five and five” approach.

**Give 5 back blows**: deliver five back blows between the person’s shoulder blades with the heel of your hand.

**Give 5 abdominal thrusts**: Perform five abdominal thrusts (Heimlich maneuver)

Stand behind the person, wrap your arms around the waist, tip the person slightly forward. Make a fist with one hand and position above the person’s navel. Grasp the fist with the other hand and press hard into the abdomen with a quick upward thrust – as if trying to lift the person up.

**Repeat again if the object did not dislodge.**

The most important thing any of us can do to help ourselves, or someone else in one of these conditions is to recognize the signs, immediately call for medical help, learn these simple methods to assist while waiting for medical help to arrive and be willing to act.

Questions to discuss:

* Do you know how to activate the site emergency response team?
* What would you do if you were first on the scene with an individual in any of these conditions?
* What if you were the one suffering one of these while operating a piece of equipment?
* What do you think you could do to help yourself if alone and choking?