

A background image of rugby players in a scrum, overlaid with a green gradient and curved lines. The text is centered over the image.

GUIDELINES FOR ADVISORY EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS (AED'S)



Standard Approach to Field Emergencies

The Irish Rugby Football Union promotes access to rugby specific first aid training and equipment to all of its affiliated clubs and schools. The SAFE-Rugby (Standard Approach to Field Emergencies) programme has been developed to provide guidance and training in these areas

Designated personnel should be trained in first aid and be present during all Club/School rugby activities. All coaches, referees and players should be encouraged to participate in first aid training.



Advisory External Defibrillators

These guidelines are to provide information on Advisory External Defibrillators (AED's) to IRFU associated clubs and schools.

The guidelines contain information on:

- Correct and appropriate use
- Training and recertification
- Storage and ongoing maintenance
- Reporting the event after use.

The IRFU strongly advocates that each club/school should ensure that a fully operational AED is available at the pitch side for every game and training session. Clubs/schools need to consider having an AED available in their premises for events/functions. Furthermore, those who may be called upon to use the device in an emergency should be properly trained and certified in its use.

Why do we need an AED?

Thousands of people unexpectedly die from cardiac arrest in Ireland each year. Often the first symptom is sudden collapse where the patient is not breathing and has no heartbeat.

Prompt cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and early defibrillation is the only effective treatment for this event.

AED's work by looking for and treating the electrical disturbances that can occur during a cardiac arrest. They have become a common piece of first aid equipment in Irish sport over the past decade following the unexpected sudden death of a number of athletes. The provision of AED's in sporting venues is now widespread and a majority of clubs have access to at least one AED on site.

Q: How do we make sure the AED is used correctly?

A: **A-C-T**

In order to ensure the greatest chance of survival from a sudden cardiac death, each club/school/venue should put in place a plan to ensure that they **ACT** in the correct way.

ACCESSIBLE

It is imperative that the AED is accessible by anyone, at any time when the facilities of the club/school are in use.

When deciding on the location of the AED consider the following:

- Proximity to playing areas
- Proximity to dressings rooms and medical rooms
- Proximity to social areas including meeting rooms
- Is access to the AED available to all, at all times?
- The facility should consider the security of the device
- The AED should be permanently located in one place, preferably indoors, and all club/school members should be aware of this location
- Where club/school facilities are split over a numbers of locations, more than one AED may be required.

CHARGED

AED's are battery powered and most have extended life batteries of up to 5 years. However, they can develop faults from time to time and the battery will eventually become depleted. In Appendix 1, the IRFU have developed specific guidance to ensure that the AED is checked on a monthly basis and that batteries are replaced when required. It should be noted that the defibrillation pads that are an integral part of many AED's will need to be changed, normally at the same time as the battery.

TRAINED

Basic Life Support (BLS) or Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and the use of an AED are lifesaving skills that can be learned in a short timeframe. International research has shown that the skills associated with CPR can decline quickly if not practiced from time to time. The IRFU and the Irish Heart Foundation (IHF) guidelines suggest that refresher training in CPR and AED take place every 2 years. However it would be good practice for each club or school to arrange a refresher course on an annual basis to keep the knowledge and skills required to manage a sudden cardiac emergency at the highest level.

The IRFU SAFE Rugby courses at all levels have integral BLS/AED training as part of the course. If you are undertaking BLS/AED training, ensure that it conforms to IHF/Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) standards.



Irish Standard AED Signage denoting the location of an AED

How do we look after the AED?

Is it important that a named individual (s) in each club/school take responsibility for;

- the ongoing maintenance of the AED to include the monthly checks on the device and ancillary equipment (appendix 1)
- reporting any faults to the supplier
- ensuring a record of checks is kept
- ensuring that the device is checked and made ready after any use

What should we do if we use the AED?

Sudden cardiac arrest is a rare but potentially devastating event when it occurs. It can have significant negative effects to those in attendance or involved in the resuscitation attempt. The IRFU recommends that at all rugby activities, an individual with training in first aid and BLS/AED should be in attendance. That person should have access to the appropriate first aid equipment and an AED.

In order to be able to support the individual rescuer and the club/school if such an event should occur, the IRFU Medical Department should be informed as soon as possible after the event.

The IRFU Medical Department can offer its help, if requested, to those involved. We may be able to arrange a basic debrief of the event, along with a review of the data captured by the AED device. This intervention may lead to identification of any further training needs and may help to strengthen the chain of survival at that facility.

It will be important that the AED unit is checked and made ready for use again as soon as possible after an event. Contact the suppliers or agents for your AED and arrange to have the defibrillation pads, battery or other equipment checked and replaced if needed.

What happens if I do it wrong?

In Irish law there is no general duty to intervene and rescue unless a specific duty of care relationship exists, however there is a moral and ethical duty for individuals involved in club and school rugby to assist in the event of an emergency.

It has been recognised that individuals may be reluctant to render aid in the event that may become liable for any harm that occurs during their attempts to assist an injured player.

The Civil Liability (Good Samaritans and Volunteers) Bill 2009 provides legal protection for those individual who act in good faith to assist with a medical emergency including the use of AED and therefore individuals should have no concerns about legal liability when providing care.

In any case involving a cardiac arrest, you can only do good by attempting resuscitation. Without early CPR, the changes of a successful resuscitation are poor. The AED will not allow you to deliver a shock to someone who does not need one.



How can we choose the right AED for us?

There are a variety of AED devices available on the Irish market. The IRFU does not recommend any particular make or model of device, however most AED's are similar in how they work and are normally self-explanatory.

If any club or school is in the process of purchasing an AED, guidance is available in the form of the National Pre Hospital Standards for AED's 2008 available at:

<http://www.phecit.ie/Images/PHECC/National%20Pre%20H%20os%20standard%202008.pdf>

While AED's are normally extremely reliable it is important that the unit is checked on a regular basis for any faults that may arise. Most devices perform a basic self-check every 24 hours with a more in depth check weekly. If the unit identifies a fault, it will normally display a fault warning either visually or in the form of an audible warning tone. Further information on these occasional fault warnings will be available from the supplier or manufacturer of the AED. It is vital that once discovered, immediate steps are taken to rectify the problem with the device. The templates overleaf may aid the club/school to look for and resolve any faults that arise.

Appendix 1. A draft monthly AED check list has been provided. This should be altered as required, depending on the brand and model of AED in the club/school. Information relating to the specific AED model will be contained in the operating instructions supplied with the device.

Appendix 2. A guide to recording the monthly check by the responsible person in the club/school

Advisory External Defibrillator (AED) Monthly Check list

Appendix 1.

AED MODEL: SAMARITIAN PAD

LOCATION:

1:

2:

3:

	check ✓
1. Remove unit from protective case. Visually inspect unit externally for any signs of physical damage, moisture damage or contamination. Clean as required	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Verify that the status indicator light is flashing green every 5 seconds. If the light is flashing red or the not flashing, there is an issue with the device and it should be removed from service	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Ensure that the Pad-Pak is in date and the Pad package is undamaged	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Verify that the ancillary equipment is all present and in good order	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Pocket facemask x 1	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Shears x 1	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Small absorbent pad x 1	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Prep razor x 2	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Spare Pad-Pak x 1 (in date)	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Replace Unit into protective case and return to normal location	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Sign and date log sheet / book	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Irish Rugby Football Union actively promotes access to Advisory External Defibrillators, Rugby First Aid Training and Equipment to all of its affiliated clubs and schools.

The SAFE-Rugby (Standard Approach to Field Emergencies) programme has been developed to provide guidance and training in the areas of Rugby Specific First Aid, Basic Life Support and Advisory External Defibrillation, and the provision of medical rooms and associated equipment.

Designated personnel should be trained in Basic First Aid and be present during all Club/School rugby activities. All coaches, referees and players should be encouraged to participate in First Aid training.

For information on SAFE Rugby programmes go to www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/safe_rugby.php or contact the First Aid and Injury Prevention Coordinator shane.mooney@irfu.ie or ring 086 021 6064



The IRFU does not recommend or endorse any specific brand or make of equipment. Where specific devices are mentioned in this document they are normally the most commonly used and will be familiar to most people. There are numerous examples of each piece of equipment available from a variety of suppliers.