



British Heart
Foundation

HEARTSTART

Training a nation
of life savers

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

Health and safety is important to everyone involved in a Heartstart scheme. As a Scheme Coordinator, you should make sure that health and safety issues and the wellbeing of your Instructors and trainees are always taken into account.

As a condition of affiliation, your scheme is required to comply with the Heartstart health and safety guidelines.

Awareness

Make sure that all your Instructors are aware of the health and safety procedures detailed in these guidelines. You must also provide all Instructors with a copy when recruited, or when they attend Instructor training. A record should be kept to confirm that the Heartstart health and safety guidelines have been issued to all Instructors.

Where possible, Instructors should be observed while teaching a Heartstart course and given feedback on health and safety issues.

These guidelines contain procedures and good practice guidance on:

- the teaching environment and the Heartstart training venue health and safety checklist
- trainees' and instructors' personal health and safety
- personal hygiene
- outbreak of infection
- manikin hygiene and maintenance
- risks to the rescuer
- reporting incidents.

Where there's a health and safety issue, your Instructor must discuss it with their Scheme Coordinator and Training Supervisor. Scheme Coordinators must report significant health and safety issues and any accidents to the British Heart Foundation (BHF) at heartstart@bhf.org.uk

The teaching environment

Wherever your Instructors are delivering a Heartstart course, they must make sure that the environment is safe for themselves and their trainees.

Where possible they should:

- visit a new venue before a training session to check its suitability and to make sure the layout, access, lighting and heating are adequate
- make sure that the venue has clearly marked emergency/fire exits
- confirm the fire evacuation/emergency plans for the building including out of hours procedures
- make sure that furnishings and layouts present minimal hazards
- make sure that they and their trainees know what to do in an emergency
- make sure that there's nothing else that could be a potential safety hazard
- confirm all available first aid and welfare facilities on site.

Trainees' and Instructors' personal health and safety

Trainees

Your Instructors are responsible for the wellbeing of their trainees.

They should:

- advise their trainees at the beginning of the session that life saving skills training involves practising on each other, e.g. the recovery position, and on resuscitation training manikins
- not allow trainees to practise cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), or the techniques for dealing with choking, on each other. This can only be taught in theory or by practising on manikins
- advise their trainees at the beginning of the session that they shouldn't take part in any of the training which may put them at risk, e.g. by aggravating a known injury or health condition
- let trainees work with someone they know when undertaking practical skills, e.g. the recovery position, where possible

- encourage trainees who don't know each other to work together in same-gender pairs, where possible
- not force trainees to practise if they don't want to.
- report any incident involving moving and/or handling equipment to their Scheme Coordinator and complete a Heartstart health and safety incident reporting form. This can be found at bhf.org.uk/heartstart

Instructors

Your Instructors are also responsible for the wellbeing of themselves and their colleagues.

When they're travelling to and from a training session, they should:

- consider any potential risks, e.g. weather and traffic conditions
- tell a family member, friend or colleague where the training is taking place, give them contact numbers and give them an expected return time when travelling alone
- make sure there's enough fuel for their return journey
- choose a safe place to park their vehicle (instructors are often the last person to leave the venue)
- travel (and teach) in pairs, especially when the training takes place in a stranger's home or in rural areas and/or at night, where possible
- carry a mobile phone
- carry a personal alarm, e.g. on a key ring
- carry a warning triangle, high visibility vest, torch and blanket in their vehicle in case of breakdown
- report any incident that occurs while they're travelling, to the Scheme Coordinator.

When they're moving and/or handling equipment, they should:

- consider how much equipment they'll need for the session and check what's already available on site, e.g. TV and DVD players, before any training session
- make sure there's adequate help to move or handle heavier items, especially if they're carrying them up and down stairs or check if a lift is available. It may be necessary for a lightweight trolley to be provided to transport heavier items over longer distances

When they're using training and other equipment they should:

- make sure that all equipment is maintained in a good state of repair and is safe to use at all times
- check training and other equipment regularly to ensure the above
- make sure any equipment that's in a poor state of repair, faulty or unsafe, particularly electrical (such as projectors, TVs or monitors), is withdrawn from use
- report any equipment-related incident to their Scheme Coordinator and the owner of the equipment, if it's not owned by the scheme.

When transporting equipment in a vehicle, they should:

- make every effort to store the equipment safely and securely in a place where the driver's visibility isn't obstructed in any way
- store manikins and other equipment securely, in the boot where possible
- store manikins and other equipment securely, on the floor in the back of the vehicle if necessary
- stack manikins and other equipment so that the risk of accident or injury to the driver and passengers is minimised.

Personal hygiene

Your Instructors will be in close proximity to their trainees.

So, they should:

- make sure that their personal appearance reflects well on themselves and the scheme
- wear appropriate clothing for demonstrating practical skills
- be conscious of their personal cleanliness, especially hands and nails.

Outbreak of infection

Your Instructors must seriously consider postponing or cancelling training sessions if there are local or national recommendations that people should not congregate due to widespread infectious disease.

Manikin hygiene and maintenance

Trainees attending a Heartstart course must be assured and feel confident that the resuscitation training manikin they're using is clean and in a suitable state of repair.

Your Instructors and any others involved in the maintenance of training manikins:

- should make sure that the manikins and their clothing are clean
- should make sure that manikin faces are cleaned with an alcohol wipe (particularly around the mouth and nose) and allowed to dry naturally before use
- must follow the manufacturer's recommendations and provisions for their hygienic use, maintenance and storage.

This includes making sure that the equipment is in good condition, and replacing consumable items as necessary, e.g. disposable lungs and manikin faces. (These items may crack or tear, making cleaning difficult or impossible.)

If trainees share a manikin, it should be cleaned after each trainee has used it. Any face-piece that may have become contaminated during training, for example, by a cold sore, shouldn't be used by another trainee during that session.

The face-piece should either be replaced or washed in soapy water, soaked in a sterilising solution for at least ten minutes, and then dried thoroughly before being used again. Spare manikin faces should be always be available.

Risks to the rescuer

Trainees often ask about risks to the rescuer. Your Instructors should be prepared to answer their questions to reduce any fears and anxieties they may have.

Potential danger to a rescuer must never be ignored. A rescuer should never place themselves or others at more risk than the casualty.

The transmission of infection during CPR may be a concern to some of your trainees during a training session. There have been isolated reports of the transmission of infection, but these should be seen in context.

The indications are that the chance of infection from rescue breathing is minimal. In addition, around 80% of all out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur in the home setting¹, where the person is likely to know the rescuer.

The Resuscitation Council (UK) guidelines recommend that members of the public should be offered training (if they request it) in the use of simple and effective mouth-to-barrier devices. Although barrier devices aren't part of the Heartstart course, your Instructors may need to discuss these devices and demonstrate their use. However, the issue should not be over-emphasised, as it could lead to a lack of confidence and reduce the effectiveness of the training.

Members of the public should never leave a training session afraid of performing resuscitation.

Nevertheless, rescuers should take appropriate safety precautions where feasible, especially if the victim is known to have a serious infection such as tuberculosis (TB) or severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). During an outbreak of a highly infectious condition (such as SARS) full protective precautions for the rescuer are essential.

Instructors may be requested to advise trainees on legal liabilities of rescuers delivering first aid. Further information is available on the Resuscitation Council (UK) website at

www.resus.org.uk/faqs/faqs-cpr/

Reporting incidents

Your scheme is responsible for health and safety in the course of your Heartstart activities.

All accidents and incidents associated with the operation of the scheme must be reported to the BHF for further review. Accidents must be reported on the Heartstart health and safety incident reporting form and sent to heartstart@bhf.org.uk

You should remember that there's a statutory duty to notify certain types of accidents to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). Find out more at www.HSE.gov.uk/riddor

Further advice on any health and safety issue will be provided where necessary by BHF's Survival team or Health and Safety team.

If you have any questions concerning this document, please contact BHF's Survival team at heartstart@bhf.org.uk

You'll find printable versions of all the Heartstart forms and guidance at bhf.org.uk/heartstart

References

1. Consensus Paper on Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest in England
British Heart Foundation, NHS
England, Resuscitation Council (2015)