



# Lutheran Disaster Response

Newsletter from the  
Disaster Response Network  
of the Northeastern Iowa Synod

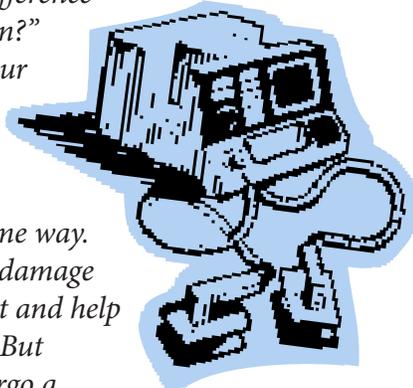
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Quick response  
to heart attack  
can save lives

## Why every church should have an automated external defibrillator on site

Someone once asked, "What is the difference between a Recession and a Depression?" The answer is "a recession is when your neighbor is out of work and a depression is when you are out of work."

Disasters can be thought of in the same way. Whenever a flood or tornado causes damage to someone else, we want to reach out and help people recover as quickly as possible. But what can we do for people who undergo a personal disaster such as a heart attack?



## When someone has a heart attack, immediate response is critically important.

Once 911 is called, the average response time is **8 to 12 minutes**. It is estimated that for each minute defibrillation is delayed, the chance of survival is reduced approximately **10 percent**. For these reasons, the NEIA Synod Disaster Response Network recommends that every church obtain at least one automated external defibrillator (AED). Churches with more than one building or levels

**"30% to 50% of sudden cardiac arrest victims would survive if AEDs were used within five minutes"** -AEDs Today

should consider purchase of two or more AEDs. These can be purchased through multiple sources, including the American Red Cross <http://phss.redcross.org/aedoffers/>. The AED will analyze the victim's heart rhythm and, if necessary, deliver an electrical shock to help the heart reestablish an effective rhythm.

## Symptoms of a heart attack:

- Angina, which is pain or discomfort in the center of the chest. It may last for several minutes or come and go and is commonly mistaken for indigestion
- Pain or discomfort in the left shoulder, back, neck, jaw, or stomach
- Difficulty breathing
- Sweating
- Heartburn-like symptoms
- Nausea or vomiting
- Lightheadedness, dizziness or anxiety
- Rapid or irregular heartbeats
- In addition, women may report unusual symptoms such as upper back or shoulder pain

# What to do if you think someone is having sudden cardiac arrest:

1. If someone **collapses** and passes out or if you find a person already **unconscious**, confirm that they can't respond. Shout at and shake an adult or pinch an infant/child to make sure they aren't sleeping.
2. After confirming that the person is unresponsive, call or tell someone with you to **call 911** immediately.
3. If there are two people present, have the second rescuer get the **AED** after calling 911. The first rescuer should assess the person's vital signs.
4. Check the person's breathing and pulse. Place your cheek close to the person's mouth and feel for breathing. Look to see if the chest rises and falls. **Feel for a pulse** at the neck or wrist.
5. If breathing and pulse are absent or **irregular**, prepare to use the AED as soon as possible.
6. If an AED **isn't available** or if you don't know how long the person has been unconscious, you should provide two minutes of **CPR**. If you don't have an AED, continue CPR until emergency professionals arrive.
7. If you have an AED, turn the unit on. The AED will provide you with detailed directions. Follow the directions carefully.
  - a. Check for water near the person and move him or her to a dry area if necessary.
  - b. Expose the person's chest and wipe it dry. Apply the pads from the AED to the person's chest (follow pictures on AED screen). One pad will be placed on the right center of the person's chest above the nipple and the other pad slightly below the left nipple.
  - c. The AED will instruct you to hit a button to "analyze" the person's heart rhythm, and instruct you to shock the person if necessary. You will need to make sure no one, including yourself, is touching the patient when you push the "shock" button.
8. If the patient becomes responsive following the shock, keep them calm and monitor them until medical help arrives.
9. If the person does not start breathing after you use the AED, continue to provide CPR until medical help arrives or until the person becomes responsive.
10. After two minutes of CPR, you can use the AED again to analyze the person's heart rhythm and give another shock if instructed.
11. If a shock isn't needed and the person is not responsive, continue CPR.

***Taking time to learn how to perform CPR and use an AED can prevent a disaster from happening to members of your congregation.***



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From your Northeastern Iowa Synod  
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