



# First Aid at Work

Arkansas Workers' Compensation Commission/ Health and Safety Division  
[www.awcc.state.ar.us](http://www.awcc.state.ar.us) 1-800-622-4472 fax: 501-683-3169  
Health&Safety@awcc.state.ar.us

No one wants to get hurt, on or off the job. But sometimes accidents happen. The injury may be minor, or it may be severe. Knowing the right thing to do as soon as an accident happens can help. All workplace injuries should be reported as soon as they happen so that proper medical care can be obtained. You should only attempt to provide first aid until professional medical help is available. You can also be prepared to assist in an emergency by knowing how to quickly call for medical help. Know the telephone numbers to report an accident, plant nurse/rescue team, or nearby clinic. And don't forget that "911" is used in most counties in Arkansas to summon local assistance from ambulance, police or fire crews.

The following are some first aid tips for different types of injuries that may occur in the workplace:

## Minor Cuts and Scratches

Minor cuts and scratches need attention, too. They should be cleaned and covered to prevent contamination.

## Foreign Particles in the Eye

Never rub the eye to remove a particle. If the particle is under the eyelid or floating on the surface of the eyeball, you can try removing it with the corner of a clean piece of cloth. Never try to remove a particle that is embedded on the eye's surface. Have the victim lie flat, place a sterile pad over both eyes, bandage loosely in place and get medical help immediately. Try to minimize movement of the head, since movement could cause the particle to become more deeply embedded.

## Severe Bleeding

Try to stop the bleeding if possible. Have the victim lie quietly and apply direct pressure on the wound with a sterile pad or the cleanest piece of cloth you can find. If the cloth becomes saturated with blood, just keep adding more pads of cloth and secure them with a bandage. If the wound is on an arm or leg and the blood flow is particularly hard to stop, you can try raising the wounded part above the heart. Continue to apply direct pressure. Never use a tourniquet unless you are willing to risk the loss of a limb to save a life. Never remove or loosen a tourniquet once it is applied.

## Broken Bones

Unless the injured person is in danger, they should not be moved until the broken bones are stabilized by splints. This should only be done by someone who is trained to apply splints. If an accident has happened that could have resulted in broken bones, it is best not to move them (again, unless they are in danger) until a medical professional can assess the damage and direct the application of any splints that might be needed. You should keep the person quiet, try to prevent them from moving, and control any bleeding that is evident.

## **Chemical Exposure**

If you or a co-worker are splashed with a chemical, the best thing to do is flush the areas where the chemical contacted your skin with plenty of water for at least 15 minutes. This includes chemicals that may have been splashed in the eyes. It is usually necessary to gently hold the eyelids open to make sure they are properly rinsed. After 15 minutes of flushing with water, seek medical attention immediately.

## **Shock**

Sometimes when a person is injured, they may seem weak and confused. Their skin may be pale, cold and clammy. They may feel nauseated and that they are going to faint. Their eyes may appear vacant with dilated pupils. If a person who has been injured has any of these symptoms, the person should be placed flat on their back. Normally, the feet should be elevated slightly. If they have head or chest injuries or have difficulty breathing, the head and shoulders should be slightly raised with pillows. Place blankets over and under the person to keep them warm. Don't give someone who may be in shock any fluids. Seek medical help immediately.

## **Unconscious**

There are many reasons a person may lose consciousness. They may have fallen and hit their head, fainted, had some sort of medical problem such as a heart attack or stroke, or in some instances may have been overcome by chemicals such as carbon monoxide or hydrogen sulfide. If a person is unconscious, you should make sure they are breathing and get medical help immediately. Try and stop any bleeding, but do not move them unless they are in danger of further injury.

If you suspect they may have been overcome by chemical fumes do not attempt a rescue unless you are properly trained and have all the required safety equipment. All too often multiple fatality tragedies occur as workers who are not trained and equipped try to save a co-worker who has gone down.

## **Review**

Let's go over some of the important first aid procedures:

All workplace injuries should be reported.

Minor cuts and scrapes should be cleaned and covered.

Never try to remove embedded particles from the eye; only remove particles that float or are under the eyelid.

Try to stop severe bleeding with direct pressure or elevating the injured part; only use a tourniquet as a last resort.

Broken bones should be splinted before the person is moved; this should be done by a trained individual.

Flush any chemical exposure with water for 15 minutes; hold eyelids open to flush if eyes were splashed.

Get immediate help for anyone with the symptoms of shock. Keep them warm and quiet until help arrives.

Don't attempt a rescue unless you are properly trained and equipped.

Unless the injury is minor or the victim is in danger, generally do not move injured persons until medical help arrives.