

Basic first aid is a valuable asset

Sooner or later everyone finds themselves in a situation where they wish they knew more about first aid. It may be because they witness a workplace accident, or are the first to arrive at the scene of a traffic accident. Or it might be because a family member gets hurt and it seems like an eternity before the ambulance arrives.

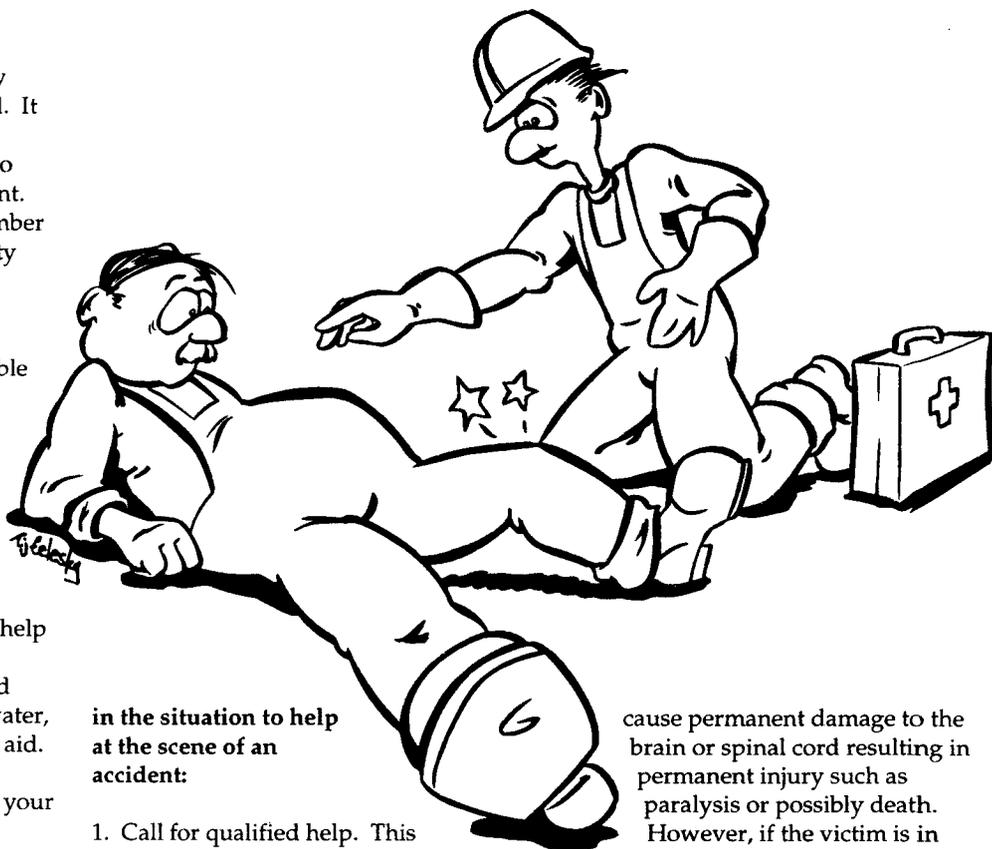
First aid is a skill everyone can and should develop to the extent to be able to help out in case of an emergency. This does not mean everyone must become a certified industrial first aid person. But basic knowledge of first aid can be of great value if someone becomes injured or ill.

What is first aid? It is the initial help given to a victim until medical help arrives. If you have ever helped someone by immobilizing a sprained ankle or immersing a burn in cool water, then you have performed some first aid.

By learning first aid, you help make your workplace safer, you improve your ability to save a life and you can prevent a slight injury from becoming serious.

First aid courses are offered through many sources, including community organizations. Employers may provide incentives for their employees to upgrade first aid training. Training in CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) is highly recommended. They teach you how to save a life when a person stops breathing or when the heart stops beating. CPR techniques have saved the lives of many heart attack victims. These courses also teach related skills including how to save a choking victim.

Following are four basic first aid guidelines to remember if you are ever



in the situation to help at the scene of an accident:

1. Call for qualified help. This may be an ambulance, a first aid attendant or a bystander who knows CPR or first aid. In many communities the phone number 9-1-1 reaches several emergency help agencies. Ask bystanders to call for help and report back to you, control crowds and direct emergency personnel to the accident scene.
2. If the person has stopped breathing or if his heart has stopped beating, apply the appropriate rescue breathing or CPR techniques.
3. If you have any reason to suspect the person may have suffered injuries to the head, neck or back, do not move him. This is because any movement may

cause permanent damage to the brain or spinal cord resulting in permanent injury such as paralysis or possibly death.

However, if the victim is in danger of further injury, as in the case of the fire, you may have to move him carefully to safety, keeping the head, neck and back as stable as possible.

4. Treat for shock, which can quickly cause death. Keep the victim lying down and warm. Continue to reassure the victim, keeping him as calm and quiet as possible.

Obviously, these guidelines are no substitute for first aid training. But hopefully they can serve as reminders of some of the first aid priorities. Make the effort to obtain first aid training — you'll be glad you did.

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