

How to Plan & Execute Cardiac Emergency Response Drills

Conducting Cardiac Emergency Response/AED drills as part of your Project ADAM CPR-AED program is essential. No matter how comfortable the response team is with the knowledge gained from CPR-AED training, many glitches can and do occur when an incident arises. Mock drills help to work out potential challenges, alleviate fears and build confidence in responders.

Doing regular Emergency Response Team drills is the best way to test your Cardiac Emergency Response Plan, your communication system and your response team's readiness. Use the steps below to execute a basic school-based Emergency Response Team drill. Utilize the **Project ADAM AED Drill Checklist** for an objective post-drill review. Drills should be performed at least once per school year to assure optimal performance during an actual emergency. However, you should consider multiple drills from a variety of locations. Practice, practice, practice!

1. Planning the Drill

When: Inform your team that you will be doing an Emergency Response Team drill in the next few weeks, so they have time to review the Cardiac Emergency Response Plan in advance. Do NOT tell them exactly when you will do the drill. Ensure that the team member who would normally communicate with EMS does NOT call 911 unless pre-arranged and be sure it is clearly communicated that this is only a drill.

Who: The drill will involve your School Site Coordinator, Emergency Response Team, office staff and a recorder (to record times on the **Project ADAM AED Drill Checklist** during the drill). Project ADAM recommends a Site Coordinator be identified at each school to set up the drills. It's important that the recorder is present on the scene, next to where the manikin is placed, so they can accurately complete the checklist as the drill occurs. Determine how the classrooms will be covered during a drill or true cardiac emergency if classroom teachers are on the Emergency Response Team. All other team members should be responsible for making sure CPR and the AED are initiated promptly.

What you will need:

- Manikin
- Radio/walkie talkie/other communication device
- AED trainer (compatible with manikin)
- Cell phone/telephone
- **Project ADAM AED Drill Checklist** (preferably on a clipboard with pen/pencil)
- Stopwatch
- Consider inviting your local Project ADAM coordinator and/or EMS to your drill. They may be able to provide some of the above supplies and offer a fresh perspective

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Where: Drills can be anywhere on campus so all staff can practice and identify what they will be looking for (unresponsiveness and abnormal or no breathing) and what they will do. If students are on campus, be sure they are informed beforehand about what the drill may look like and that it is only a drill.

Establish a Code: This code name will be used to initiate a response to a cardiac emergency by activating the Emergency Response Team. The codes should be communicated on the drill day and in a real cardiac emergency as defined in your communication plan. Encourage team members to be descriptive in addition to a code name and state there is a medical emergency in room #, teacher's name and geographic location. For example, Code AED, Room 320, Ms. Jones' room, English hallway, or Emergency Response Team to Room 320. Some ideas to consider putting an AED symbol on your evacuation plan showing AED locations and the code to activate your school's emergency response plan, making a condensed version of your plan for the back of staff ID badges or to place on/near each classroom phone.

Additional ideas can be found here: www.projectadam.com/Heartsafeschools.

Establish a Communication System: How will the Emergency Response Team know the drill has been initiated? Choose a method of mass communication to the team (i.e. overhead announcements, intercoms, walkie talkies, cell phones, etc.). Consider dead zones for cell phones in the event service is unavailable in certain parts of your building.

2. The Day of the Drill

The School Site Coordinator should place a manikin on the floor along with the AED Training Unit with the recorder standing next to the manikin, **Project ADAM AED Drill Checklist**, and pen in hand. Have the finder call the front office advising them that this is only a drill. Tell them you have an unresponsive victim and give the location. Your plan now goes into effect. The school's Emergency Response Team should be notified using the established Code using the teams established communication system. Your recorders should document each step as it happens using the **Project ADAM AED Drill Checklist**. The AED Training Unit should be at the drill location, ready to be swapped out with the real school AED once it's brought to the scene. **Never use the real AED pads for drills.** Proceed as if this was a real cardiac arrest situation.

3. After the Drill

Thank everyone for responding. Spend a few minutes reviewing the checklist together, noting all information documented by the recorder with particular attention to any steps that might have been missed. Ask the responders for feedback and discuss suggestions and concerns. Consider whether there are any action steps needed. Were there specific communication problems? If the drill leads to changes in the plan and protocol, discuss these with your Emergency Response Team and administrator. Be sure to make the changes and communicate the changes clearly to your team. Plan another drill to test the revised plan.