



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

MARINE SAFETY ALERT

Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety, Security and Stewardship

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Alert 02-11

PROVIDING CPR – NO TIME TO WASTE

This Safety Alert serves as a reminder to the international maritime community that *when it is necessary to provide a patient Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) there is simply no time to waste*. Every second which passes affects the patient's chance of survival. According to the American Heart Association:

- Sudden cardiac arrest is most often caused by an abnormal heart rhythm called ventricular fibrillation (VF). Cardiac arrest can also occur after the onset of a heart attack or as a result of electrocution or near drowning. When sudden cardiac arrest occurs, the victim collapses, becomes unresponsive to gentle shaking, stops normal breathing and after two rescue breaths, still isn't breathing normally, coughing or moving.
- Effective bystander CPR, provided immediately after sudden cardiac arrest, can double or triple a victim's chance of survival.
- Effective bystander CPR helps maintain vital blood flow to the heart and brain and increases the amount of time that an electric shock from a defibrillator can be effective.
- Brain death starts to occur four to six minutes after someone experiences sudden cardiac arrest if no CPR or defibrillation occurs during that time.
- If bystander CPR is not provided, a sudden cardiac arrest victim's chances of survival fall 7 percent to 10 percent for every minute of delay until defibrillation.
- Few attempts at resuscitation are successful if CPR and defibrillation are not provided within minutes of collapse.

For additional information access the following websites:

American Heart Association <http://www.heart.org> **American Red Cross** <http://www.redcross.org>

Regardless of other CPR training requirements, such as basic safety training required by STCW-95 for certain mariners, the Coast Guard **strongly recommends** that all vessel owners and operators ensure each crew member is properly trained in CPR. Important changes to CPR procedures have taken place in late 2010.

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