



***HeartSafe* Community Frequently Asked Questions**



What is a *HeartSafe* Community?

A *HeartSafe* Community is a community where all elements of the Chain of Survival are in place and there is a focus on improving the cardiovascular health of your citizens therefore, increasing the chances that anyone suffering a cardiovascular emergency will have the best possible chance for survival.

Why should my community be designated as *HeartSafe*?

To make your community a safer place to live, work, shop and play by being prepared and to reduce the number of deaths and disability associated with cardiac arrest.

Is there an application fee?

No.

What are the costs associated with meeting the criteria to become a *HeartSafe* Community?

The cost will vary depending on the characteristics of your community. Typical costs might include things such as CPR training and AED costs.

How long is the *HeartSafe* Community designation valid?

Two years.

Will an AED always resuscitate someone in cardiac arrest?

An AED will look at the electrical activity of the heart. If the electrical activity is “chaotic” and needs a shock the AED will indicate a shock should be delivered. If someone is in cardiac arrest and the AED does not indicate a shock, the AED will indicate that CPR should be continued. The survival rate from this type of event is less than 6% nationwide; so most people will not be successfully resuscitated. The goal of a *HeartSafe* Community program is to increase that survival rate by increasing community awareness and having a strong Chain of Survival in place.

Is the AED safe to use?

Absolutely! An AED is safe for anyone to use. The AED will not even look at the heart rhythm to determine if a shock is needed if the victim is breathing, therefore, it will not shock someone who doesn't need it. The AED is designed with multiple safeguards and warning before any energy is released making it very safe for the operator to use.

Can anyone buy an AED?

Yes, however, AEDs are manufactured and sold under guidelines approved by the FDA and require medical oversight.

How much does an AED cost?

There is a variety of AEDs available and the prices vary. A list of manufacturers and/or vendors is available on our website: cccems.org and in the EMS Agency Public Access Defibrillation packet. When a person is resuscitated, particularly a friend, coworker, or loved one, it's priceless!

What does training involve?

Training involves a course in CPR that includes instruction on the use of an AED. A list of training organizations is also available on our website and in the EMS Agency Public Access Defibrillation packet. Local CPR/AED course information is also available at 1-800-GIVE CPR or on our website: cccems.org

What if I am not trained?

If you come upon an unconscious victim and are not trained, it is of utmost importance to call 9-1-1. In Contra Costa County, emergency medical dispatchers will talk you through the steps of performing CPR and using an AED while emergency crews are on their way to you.

How can I help my community achieve *HeartSafe* Community designation?

If you are not already trained in CPR taking a CPR class would be the best way to help your community achieve this designation. Heartbeats are given for each CPR class with 6 or more students and for each AED placed in the community. A CPR class will teach you how to use an AED as well as the CPR. Both skills can help to save a life.