

## **Insight on AED Decision and Selection Criteria by Cardiac Science**

Sudden cardiac arrest kills someone every two minutes. It causes an estimated 365,000 deaths in North America every year — more than 7 times the number of deaths from breast cancer.

When cardiac arrest occurs, death is just minutes away. There's only one life-saving treatment: A shock from an automated external defibrillator. It must be delivered in the critical first few minutes.

The survival rate for witnessed incidents of cardiac arrest in the U.S. is between 5 and 10 percent. Many of these rescues occur because bystanders call 911, do cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and an ambulance equipped with an AED arrives in time. But research on communities and buildings where AEDs are kept near at hand shows that the survival rates can be much, much higher. A study of U.S. high schools with AEDs found that 64 percent of sudden cardiac arrest victims — two-thirds of them adults — survived.

### **AEDs where people gather**

Sudden cardiac arrest strikes people of all ages and all fitness levels. Statistically, it's most likely to occur wherever people gather. That's why states like Oregon now mandate AEDs in large and mid-size buildings where people gather<sup>(1)</sup> — a mandate that includes the state's hotels and conference centers. It's why San Diego requires AEDs in high-rise buildings<sup>(2)</sup>. And it's why many states — led by Louisiana, Rhode Island, Illinois, New York<sup>(3)</sup>, and Michigan — have laws requiring defibrillators in fitness centers. South Jordan, Utah, one of the state's fastest growing metropolitan areas, passed a law requiring AEDs in many buildings, including hotels and motels.

Traditionally, hotels, country clubs, and resorts have been wary about installing automated external defibrillators. Management has been concerned that the properties would be liable if the devices were misused.

But in recent years, with AEDs increasingly common at sports arenas, in schools, in fitness clubs, and in casinos, resorts are now concerned about being sued if someone suffers cardiac arrest and no AED is near at hand. It's a situation comparable to having a fire break out and discovering the hotel has no fire extinguishers. A 2009 article in the Wall Street Journal was deeply critical of the industry for lagging behind other service industries in providing AED protection for guests, conference attendees, and staff.<sup>(4)</sup>

### **AEDs in hotels and resorts**

With conferences, parties, and other high-traffic public events, hotels and resorts are increasingly aware of the need to protect guests and staff with AEDs. But how does an AED program work in a busy, high-turnover industry like hospitality? The experience of fitness centers, golf courses, and casinos<sup>(5)</sup> — hospitality related businesses that have taken a lead creating AED programs — show clearly the advantages of having these life-saving devices on hand.

Harrah's Entertainment reported that they saved more than 200 lives after they bought AEDs and trained staff to use them.

“200 people had the opportunity to live and love another day because Harrah's made defibrillation accessible for them,” says Jerry LaChapelle, former Director of Risk Management at Harrah's.

Hotels in cities and states covered by AED mandates are creating AED programs on a site-by-site basis, and it's only a matter of time before their parent companies are developing comprehensive programs of their own. In many cases, facilities overseas, from the Radisson Beijing to the Comwell Hotel chain in Denmark, are setting the standard for their U.S. affiliates.

Last year, Starwood, the parent company for the Sheraton, Westin, and “W” hotels, created a plan for a nationwide AED program that will roll out to all of their properties.

### **Two hospitality case studies**

Just a year ago, Hong Kong's Excelsior Hotel installed AEDs as part of a citywide initiative to enable businesses to provide anyone who collapsed from heart failure with AED treatment within five minutes. This year, when a hotel guest from England went into sudden cardiac arrest and collapsed, the hotel was ready. Staff attached the on hand AED, which administered two shocks and revived the woman well before an ambulance team arrived.<sup>(6)</sup>

“All the work we put in with emergency response drills and training really paid off,” says Peter Chung, Director of Risk Management of The Excelsior. “The fully automatic AED detected when a shock was required, and informed us of the action to be taken. It was a remarkable event — we saved a life!”

The Mercer Island Country Club near Seattle, Washington, keeps an AED at the front desk. A few months ago, when a club member playing doubles tennis suddenly collapsed on the court, his friends thought he was kidding around. The bystanders who rushed to help him up were astonished to discover he had no pulse. Once the country club's AED was attached, it diagnosed a shockable condition, and twice restarted the man's heart. Those two shocks kept him alive until an ambulance arrived, attached its own AED, and transported him to a hospital where he received a implantable cardioverter defibrillator.<sup>(7)</sup>

These two reports were typical of what we hear from many customers: that the AED was surprising simple to use, and what might — without an on hand AED — have been a tragedy for the victim, and a traumatic incident for staff and other guests, turned out instead to be cause for celebration.

### **Creating a hotel AED program**

“The question is not whether to acquire them, but how many,” the South Carolina Retail and

Hospitality Law Blog wrote.<sup>(8)</sup> The blog quoted observations by Chris Chaimes, executive director of the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association, that AEDs are now common at gyms, at schools, at office buildings, in airports and on planes. It concluded, “In light of the prevalence of AEDs in everyday American life, their absence in the hospitality industry sector is a disconnect.”

With AEDs now common in public places, all U.S. states now have Good Samaritan laws on the books that protect individuals who use AEDs to assist a victim in an emergency. In addition, many states have enacted laws that specifically protect companies that make AEDs available on their premises.

With hospitality managers often overwhelmed by day-to-day issues, risk management consultants and hospitality lawyers can play a critical role in bringing hotels up-to-date on AEDs. This discussion often comes up as part of a review of a property’s emergency response program — a plan that should include employee first aid training and AED deployment.

Whether an AED program is for one facility or for an entire chain of properties, the steps in developing an effective and efficient program are the same:

**1. Purchase AEDs that are easy to use and to maintain:** Look for AEDs that self-test daily so they will be “rescue ready” when you need them. There are AEDs available with both easy-to-read status indicators and an alarm that will sound if anything is amiss. Ask about the type of battery needed for the AEDs, and how often the battery will need to be replaced to keep the AEDs properly charged. Choosing a model with medical grade batteries can reduce the need for frequent battery replacement.

**2. Establish an AED management system:** An AED management system will integrate your AEDs into your overall emergency/disaster plan. Web-based program management systems enable you to track AED device information (locations, serial numbers, and expiration dates). These programs can also be used to keep track of employee training records and compliance with state or local requirements for AED programs. A management system can also be used to send out email reminders about scheduling training or ordering replacement pads for your AED.

**3. Conduct CPR/AED training for staff:** Training from a first aid instructor is available through community agencies and through your AED supplier. It doesn't take much time, but it ensures your employees are comfortable dealing with a medical emergency and using an AED. (The management plan should include CPR/AED training for new hires, as well.)

### Find out more

Cardiac Science and Hospitality Lawyer are hosting a July 14 webinar on AEDs for Hospitality. This comprehensive seminar is designed to bring you up to speed on best practices and industry standards for AED deployment, covering frequently asked questions and using industry case studies.

This information is general and informational and is not legal advice. For more information,

please visit [www.hospitalitylawyer.com](http://www.hospitalitylawyer.com) or call Cardiac Science at 1.800.426.0337.

---

- (1) <http://www.cardiacscience.com/blog/2009/12/oregon-aed-law-january-2010/>
- (2) <http://www.cardiacscience.com/blog/2008/11/san-diego-aims-high-mandates-aeds-in-tall-buildings/>
- (3) [http://clubindustry.com/mag/fitness\\_aed\\_agenda/](http://clubindustry.com/mag/fitness_aed_agenda/)
- (4) <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123543325221454001.html>
- (5) <http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/abstract/343/17/1206>
- (6) <http://www.cardiacscience.com/blog/2010/05/hong-kong-excelsior-hotel-aed-celebrates-aed-save/>
- (7) (<http://www.cardiacscience.com/blog/2010/01/first-person-if-not-for-an-aed-id-be-dead-right-now/>)
- (8) [http://retailhospitalitylaw.blogspot.com/2010/02/aeds-in-hospitality-sector-question-is\\_12.html](http://retailhospitalitylaw.blogspot.com/2010/02/aeds-in-hospitality-sector-question-is_12.html)