



TECHNICAL UPDATE

Volume 28 Number 6 | February 6, 2024

ENHANCED COMMUNITY SAFETY: AED USE

An AED (automated external defibrillator) is a medical device that helps people in cardiac arrest by analyzing their heart rhythm, and if necessary, by delivering defibrillation (i.e., electric shock) to help the heart resume a normal rhythm. According to the American Red Cross, more than 350,000 people will suffer from cardiac arrest this year and response times by first responders is between 8-12 minutes. Every minute counts during a cardiac event where the odds of survival decrease by 10% for every minute defibrillation is delayed. Because of this, AEDs have become common in many workplaces.

Colorado requires all AED programs to have AED placement reporting and EMS activation, maintenance, training, medical direction, and program documentation. The Good Samaritan law applies to all AED program participants, but only for activities related to the use of an AED. Immunity is determined by the compliance of administrative and operation requirements. Colorado also requires AEDs to be placed in dentist offices. The state of Colorado has the following statute pertaining to AEDs:

13-21-108.1. Persons rendering emergency assistance through the use of automated external defibrillators – limited immunity.

(1) The general assembly hereby declares that it is the intent of the general assembly to encourage the use of automated external defibrillators for the purpose of saving the lives of people in cardiac arrest.

(3)(a) In order to ensure public health and safety, a person or entity who acquires an AED shall ensure that:

- (I) Expected AED users receive training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and AED use through a course that meets nationally recognized standards and is approved by the department of public health and environment;
- (II) The defibrillator is maintained and tested according to the manufacturer's operational guidelines and that written records are maintained of this maintenance and testing;
- (IV) Written plans are in place concerning the placement of AEDs, training of personnel, pre-planned coordination with the emergency medical services system, medical oversight, AED maintenance, identification of personnel authorized to use AEDs, and reporting of AED utilization, which written plans have been reviewed and approved by a licensed physician; and
- (V) Any person who renders emergency care or treatment to a person in cardiac arrest by using an AED activates the emergency medical services system as soon as possible.

(3)(b) Any person or entity that acquires an AED shall notify an agent of the applicable emergency communications or vehicle dispatch center of the existence, location, and type of AED.

(4)(a) Any person or entity whose primary duties do not include the provision of health care and who, in good faith and without compensation, renders emergency care or treatment by the use of an AED shall not be liable for any civil damages for acts or omissions made in good faith as a result of such care or treatment or as a result of any act or failure to act in providing or arranging further medical treatment, unless the acts or omissions were grossly negligent or willful and wanton.



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR COUNTIES

AEDs are designed to be user-friendly, even for individuals without medical training. Having an AED in county facilities means that it can be quickly accessed and used by trained personnel or bystanders in the critical moments following a sudden cardiac arrest.

Placing AEDs in county facilities demonstrates a commitment to community safety. It reassures residents, employees, and visitors that measures are in place to respond effectively to emergencies, fostering a sense of security in public spaces. However, counties must be sure that they follow Colorado statutes about AED maintenance, training, and usage. For more information on AEDs, contact CTSI at (303) 861-0507.