



Lifeguard Newsletter

July 2011

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When contacting Lifeguard through your local dispatch or by calling (800) 223-6627, please be ready to provide the following:

- Your general location & type of Emergency
- Identify frequency that Lifeguard will be using to speak with ground units
- Identify who Lifeguard will be speaking with

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Going the Distance to Save Lives

Hyperthermia

The definition of hyperthermia is an “abnormally high body temperature due to inadequate body responses of the heat-regulating system”. This is a good time to discuss this topic as we have begun to experience high temperatures again. The two groups of people that are the most susceptible to hyperthermia and its effects are the elderly and children.

The early signs of hyperthermia, which is heat exhaustion, are dizziness, weakness, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache and cool, clammy skin. The late signs, which constitute heat stroke, are confusion, impaired speech, irritability, staggering gait, absence of sweat, lethargy, hot, dry, flushed skin. Heat stroke occurs when a person’s temperature rises above 105 degrees F. In the elderly, the speed and effectiveness in response to the environment are often decreased or lost. Also as the skin becomes thinner and subcutaneous fat diminishes, the insulation against cold and the ability to radiate heat off the body does not occur.

With hyperthermia, the heart is overworked, pumping blood to the skin periphery to assist in the body’s effort to release heat via radiant exposure. The extra work is often the cause of death, not being exposed to heat. Many elderly suffer from dehydration due to a decreased sense of thirst. They do not have the extra fluid circulating to sweat off. So the heart works even harder. Add to that blood vessels that have narrowed and hardened and the person has even more problems.

With children under the age of four, their temperature regulatory system has not been completely developed yet. They rely on the adults in their lives to regulate the temperature in which they live. This year alone, (July 9, 2011) there have been 21 deaths of children from hyperthermia. Children that have died from vehicular hyperthermia have ranged in age from 5 days to 14 years. More than half of these deaths are in children under the age of 2. 30% of the deaths of children in vehicles are from children getting into the cars themselves and then being unable to get back out. Unfortunately yet another death occurred just this weekend in Oklahoma. The outside temperature was 96 degrees F.

A study was done to show the effects of ambient temperature on the inside of a vehicle. In this study, temperatures were noted both outside the vehicle and inside and then inside a vehicle whose windows have been “cracked”. When the outside temperature is 82 degrees at 0900, the temperature inside the vehicle is 109 degrees. When the windows are cracked, the temperature is 98 degrees. At noon, the temperature outside is 101 degrees and inside it is 119 degrees. Inside the vehicle with cracked windows? 113 degrees.

Please remember to not leave your children or your pets in a vehicle during this heat. Neither can survive. Simply turning on your vehicle and letting the a/c run might be enough. But what happens if the vehicle stops running, out of gas, overheats itself? Please remember to check on your elderly neighbors to make sure they are drinking enough fluids, have fans or air conditioning. Make sure your children and pets have plenty of water and cool places to be. Take care of yourself as you age. Be aware of your environment at all times.

References

1. National Institute on Aging; (2001); Hyperthermia, Too Hot for your Health
2. Kane, RL; (2004); Disorders of Temperature Regulation, Essentials of Clinical Geriatrics
3. Hale, B; (1997); Heat Stress, the Impact on Seniors
4. San Francisco State University; (2007); Fact sheet

Requesting Lifeguard:

Remember if you are unsure whether you'll need Lifeguard, you may tell dispatch that you would like to place Lifeguard on "stand-by". The crew will prepare for lift-off while awaiting the "go-mission" call. This saves minutes on lift-off time because the crew is already at the helicopter, and ready for lift-off.

To contact Lifeguard for a Safety Training or PR event, call (319) 369-8995 and ask to speak to a member of the flight crew.



We still have some slots open for safety training classes. We are scheduling these through the end of September.

If we had to cancel yours due to weather or being on a flight, make sure to call us and set up another class.

Since we do NOT shut down on scene, these classes are very important. We consider your crew to be part of our crew and are always concerned about everyone's safety.

Meet Sarah Schemmel

Welcome to our newest Flight Paramedic, Sarah Schemmel. She'd been working in St. Luke's ED and was hired to the team in February, 2011. Many of you may be familiar with Sarah as she also works at Iowa County Ambulance and teaches at Kirkwood Community College. Prior to coming to St Luke's, Sarah worked at Blank Children's Hospital in Des Moines and at Area Ambulance in Cedar Rapids. Sarah's been a paramedic for 8 years, after taking an EMT class on a whim, she found she loved doing this.

In her limited off time, Sarah enjoys spending time with her family; parents, four brothers, and a wonderful niece; her boyfriend Curtis, and friends.

She also enjoys working on her house and has many stories to tell about her home improvements and home wildlife. Just ask her! She and her cat 'Mattie' chase out bats, hunt down mice and snakes and shoo birds. What a team. She also likes to read when she isn't working on her house and enjoys being outside.

Sarah is looking forward to the challenge of working in a much more confined area. She said she can't just get up and get something like she is used to in the ambulance. She's also looking forward to the opportunities of going into communities and interacting with all of you, learning new things, and especially getting some air time. Welcome, Sarah!



Upcoming Educational Opportunities

August 1-12	Pregnancy and Trauma	NEICC---Online
August 10	NRP	St Luke's, Cedar Rapids
September 14	NRP	St Luke's, Cedar Rapids
October 1	LG EMS DAY	St Luke's, Cedar Rapids
October 7-8	Trends in Trauma	Waterloo
October 12	NRP	St Luke's, Cedar Rapids
November 10-12	IEMSA Conference	Des Moines

Save the Date—Watch for your invite for the 2nd Annual EMS Day 10/1/11

Updates and Reminders

Please send your service's email and you can get the newsletter via email. You can email the address to Debbie Julian at JulianDJ@crstlukes.com

The Air Medical Safety Committee is asking that all services use law/mutual aid without tone codes for all communication with an incoming helicopter.

Did you know:

July is: National Blueberry Month, Anti-boredom Month & the Unlucky Month for weddings?

July 7 is Chocolate Day?

July 15 is Cow Appreciation Day....give 'em a hug!

July 24 is Amelia Earhart Day.....go FLY!!

August is: National Golf Month, Peach Month, & Eye Exam Month?

August 5 is Work like a Dog Day?

August 8 is Sneak some zucchini onto your neighbor's porch day?

August 10 is National S'Mores Day?

September is: National Courtesy Month (please and thank you), Baby Safety Month, & Better Breakfast Month?

September 5 is Labor Day?

September 16 is POW/MIA Recognition Day?

September 24 is Cherries Jubilee Day?