

THE RIGHT KIND OF SHOCK

With ambulance response rates making headlines for all the wrong reasons, the opportunity to install a defibrillator might well help your shooting ground save a life.

Martin Puddifer reports.

How long would an ambulance take to reach your shooting ground if someone required emergency treatment? It's a sobering thought that when someone suffers a cardiac arrest, their chances of survival reduce by ten percent with each minute that passes without CPR and defibrillation (an electric shock that restarts the cardiac cycle). Those who have – hopefully – come to the afflicted person's aid within moments of a cardiac arrest must not only call for help, but also remain calm in the knowledge that any delays in treatment are literally a matter of life or death. According to the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership, the NHS's clinical auditors, 60,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests happen each year: the survival rate is just one in ten.

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When Ross Severn, the director of Defib Plus, first approached the CPSA about the initiative, one simple word was repeatedly at the forefront of his mind when offering immediate and effective first aid following a cardiac arrest.

"Location! It's all about location – the survival of cardiac arrests is time critical,"

Ross explains.

"Unfortunately, and through no fault of the emergency services, we have pretty poor ambulance response times at the moment in this country. If you combine

those two factors, and add the fact that

by definition of where clubs are (clay shooting clubs and grounds are likely to be out in rural areas) your ten-minute window (the stated window for the survival of cardiac arrests) makes survival a real uncertainty, the best provision you can make is to look after your own by having a defibrillator on site. Paramedics might not get to you in ten minutes, even if you call 999 within seconds of an incident, you only need to read the press to get a feel for that."

NO TRAINING REQUIRED

A common sight at sports grounds, shopping centres, and even red telephone boxes nowadays, the presence of defibrillators are normally down to a moral compunction and is sadly not a legal requirement. The



AEDs offered by Defib Plus to CPSA member grounds and clubs are public access defibrillators (PADs), which are "specifically designed for the uninitiated and untrained" as Ross puts it. "These are the ones that will instruct you audibly and sometimes visually as to what to do in the event of a cardiac arrest – anyone can use one and shouldn't be afraid to do so."

It is of note that the CPSA has joined the initiative and in doing so reiterated its commitment to the wellbeing, health and safety of its members, whilst at the same time trying to secure the most cost-effective option available to those members and their clubs.

Ross is confident that staff within CPSA grounds will be aware of how these units operate via First Aid at Work (FAW) and Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW) courses, but reiterates no training is required in the use of this equipment. "It doesn't matter if we were to go and instruct the owner of the member club or ground; it might not be them who actually uses the device. Even if it were, the demonstration and familiarisation videos we provide are there for them to share amongst all their staff, to make all aware of the process of deployment," says Ross, adding that Defib Plus will always leave it to the owners to decide where their unit should be positioned, but can advise.

TIME SAVES LIVES

"If you are on a game shoot, you're going to be in the middle of nowhere and when you add up the Guns, guests, beaters, pickers-up etc, you will have 20 to 30 people there. We are of the belief that there should be one vehicle on every shoot day that's got a defibrillator in it. You could be classified as rural, remote or inaccessible by the emergency services, so you have got to look after yourself: time saves lives. It is also worth remembering that when not out in the field it can reside in a private residence. Where a club or ground choose to put its defibrillator is wherever they think it is most accessible, i.e the most central point on their ground. Then again, most clubs or grounds have a quad bike at their disposal, so maybe it's better in the clubhouse where they can save money on a cabinet. As long as it's on-site and everyone knows where it is, that's the key."

THE FEAR OF LITIGATION

An important point that mustn't be overlooked is the maintenance of the AED. Ross is at pains to point out that Defib Plus won't just sell the unit to clubs and grounds, they will offer after-sales support, too. "The principal barrier for the ownership of defibrillators has been fear of liability and litigation," explains Ross.

"We address that through maintenance. While we work in conjunction with whoever does the required efficacy checks on the unit, we also certificate, meaning we take on the responsibility of making sure the unit works. A club or ground employee checks the unit as part of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER), but should someone feel that questions might be asked or even a legal challenge may be launched following a



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cardiac arrest at the club or ground, we have their liability managed or mitigated. Everyone hopes they'll never have to use their AED, but we'll make sure they're covered under 'best practice' and 'duty of care' if they do."

OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS

The initiative will run until 1 April 2023 and is not just available to clubs and grounds – it is open to anyone within the CPSA membership who owns a business, or has a requirement. As an added incentive, Defib Plus will supply a new defibrillator at the end of the manufacturer's warranty, typically six to seven years, under their Tier 1

maintenance, free of charge, so you may never need to buy another AED after the first. Additionally and under the Capital Allowances Super Deductions Scheme, which runs until March 31, 2023, a business which buys an AED for £1,000 will find it has a tax write-off value of £1,300, which equates to a 130 per cent tax deduction, meaning you're almost getting paid to buy one. Maintenance is also 100 percent tax deductible, though grounds and clubs should seek financial advice on both of these points.

Ross is also hopeful the initiative will open a broader conversation about the provision of AEDs in the countryside and the wider fieldsports community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the initiative, the AED units offered by Defib Plus and to learn about how they work, visit defib-plus.co.uk