



# DEFIBRILLATOR GUIDELINES

Medical, Scientific & Welfare Committee

## Purpose of Document

The purpose of this document is to provide clubs with an overview of the role of defibrillators and guidelines in key areas such as the acquisition, accessibility & storage, training, and maintenance of AEDs. To obtain further information on AEDs, contact **The GAA Player Welfare Manager Eoghan Tuohey:**

[eoghan.tuohey@gaa.ie](mailto:eoghan.tuohey@gaa.ie)

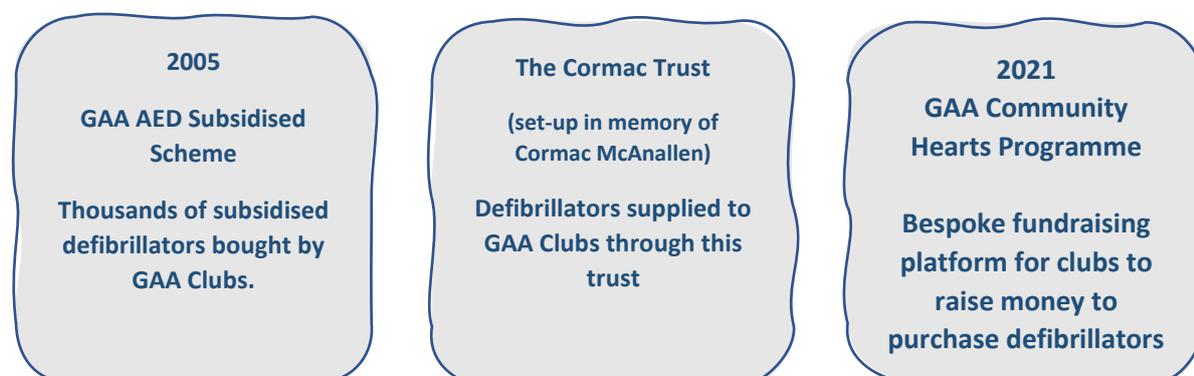
## BACKGROUND TO AEDs

An automated external defibrillator (AED) is a portable device that checks the heart rhythm. If needed, it can send an electric shock to the heart to try to restore a normal rhythm. AEDs are used to treat sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). SCA is a condition in which the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating and can cause death if it's not treated within minutes. Cardiovascular disease is Ireland's biggest killer, with in the region of 10,000 deaths each year. Six thousand are from sudden cardiac arrest and 70 per cent of these occur outside of hospital.

Sports clubs and organisations are among those that can play a role in ensuring they are equipped and prepared to respond in such situations. There is significant evidence to suggest that early defibrillation can have a major impact on survival rates from sudden cardiac arrest.

## AEDs & THE GAA

GAA defibrillator programmes are overseen by the Association's Medical, Scientific and Welfare Committee and AEDs are currently available at all GAA county grounds. The GAA aims to continue to create awareness on the importance of AEDs and has rolled out several Defibrillator Schemes



Many clubs have availed of the schemes outlined above, with other clubs opting to purchase AEDs independently and through their own resources, all providing a valuable resource for our members

and wider communities should a cardiac arrest situation occur, and an AED is needed. We know, in recent years, 42 lives have been saved with the assistance of GAA AEDs and believe there have been many more occasions where lives have been saved by GAA AEDs.

## KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

The four key areas of focus for GAA Clubs in respect of Defibrillators are:

### ACQUISITION

- ♥ There are several suppliers of AEDs, but since 2005, **Heart Safety Solutions** has offered GAA Clubs the opportunity to purchase AEDs at a reduced price as part of the Association's Defibrillator Scheme.
- ♥ Clubs can purchase AEDs directly through Heart Safety Solutions at special rates by contacting [info@hearts.ie](mailto:info@hearts.ie) or [dave@hearts.ie](mailto:dave@hearts.ie)

### RECOMMENDATIONS - ACQUISITION

- ♥ *Clubs with large facilities may require more than one AED to ensure an AED can reach a victim of SCD within **3 minutes**.*
- ♥ *In cases where clubs train and play home matches in separate venues, Clubs should give consideration to an AED being available at both arenas.*

### ACCESSIBILITY & STORAGE

- ♥ It is very important to properly store and maintain a club AED.
- ♥ Performance of the defibrillator may be compromised if the manufacturer's recommendations are ignored.
- ♥ Specialized outdoor cabinets are available from a range of suppliers nationwide (see below for contact details).
- ♥ It is desirable to keep a functioning landline telephone near the AED to ensure the emergency services can be contacted.
- ♥ The location of the AED is important as research has shown that the chance of its use being effective is considerably increased if defibrillation occurs within **3 minutes**.
- ♥ To avoid difficulties accessing an AED in the event of an emergency it is advised that the AED should not be kept under lock and key.
- ♥ If stored in an outdoor cabinet, the presence of a fitted alarm should deter vandalism or theft (see below for contact details re: acquiring an alarmed cabinet). Many AED models are now fitted with GPS tracking systems.
- ♥ Appropriate signage should be in place to illustrate its position and facilitate quick access, particularly if the AED is kept indoors or in an obscure location.

### RECOMMENDATIONS – ACCESSIBILITY & STORAGE

- ♥ *Clubs with large facilities and multiple playing pitches may require more than one AED to ensure an AED can reach a victim of SCA within 3 minutes.*
- ♥ *It is desirable to keep a functioning landline telephone near the AED to ensure the emergency services can be contacted in the event of a SCA.*
- ♥ *If stored outside, they should be kept in an outdoor cabinet with an alarm, contact [info@hearts.ie](mailto:info@hearts.ie) or [dave@hearts.ie](mailto:dave@hearts.ie) for more information.*
- ♥ *Appropriate signage should be in place if the AED is kept indoors.*

## MAINTENANCE

The **ACT** campaign was launched by the GAA/GPA in partnership with Heart Safety Solutions in 2011 with the aim of encouraging clubs to ensure that their defibrillators were in full working order. Representing three simple steps which could easily save someone's life, the campaign calls for clubs with AEDs or that are considering buying one to 'A', ensure that the defibrillator is Accessible, 'C' make sure it is Charged and 'T' that people are Trained how to use it.

- ♥ **Accessible** – make sure that your defibrillator is stored in an area where ACCESS is not restricted, remember minutes are critical. Specialised units are available for outdoor storage.
- ♥ **Charged** – Ensure that your defibrillator is fully CHARGED and that self-tests have been passed by carrying out weekly inspections. Ensure that your battery and pads (pad-packs) have not reached their expiry date. The checklist provided can assist weekly inspections.
- ♥ **Trained** – Ensure there are enough TRAINED rescuers to respond anytime the clubhouse or pitches are occupied, this includes training sessions as well as matches.

GAA clubs can avail of a defibrillator maintenance offer with Heart Safety Solutions – this involves the inspection of batteries, pads, ancillary equipment, and hardware. Contact [eoghan.tuohey@gaa.ie](mailto:eoghan.tuohey@gaa.ie) for further information on this maintenance offer.

## RECOMMENDATIONS – MAINTENANCE

- ♥ Maintenance of AEDs is straight-forward. A weekly inspection is advised to ensure everything is in order.
- ♥ Clubs with large facilities and multiple playing pitches may require more than one AED to ensure an AED can reach a victim of SCA within 3 minutes.
- ♥ It is desirable to keep a functioning landline telephone near the AED to ensure the emergency services can be contacted in the event of a SCA.
- ♥ If stored outside, they should be kept in an outdoor cabinet with an alarm, contact [info@hearts.ie](mailto:info@hearts.ie) for more information.
- ♥ Appropriate signage should be in place if the AED is kept indoors.
- ♥ **DID YOU KNOW -AEDs HAVE A SHELF LIFE OF APPROX. 8 YEARS AND MAY NEED TO BE REPLACED AFTER THIS TIME – CHECK WITH MANUFACTURER THE SHELF LIFE OF CLUB AED**

## TRAINING

- ♥ **It's important to note you don't have to be trained to use an AED, when operating one they instruct the user through each step of usage.**
- ♥ Counties/Clubs in hosting training can decide on whether they want to engage with a particular supplier or not. There are many companies that deliver AED training for large groups.
- ♥ Training is also available through a national network of training organisations, affiliated to the Irish Heart Foundation. Contact the IHF at [www.irishheart.ie](http://www.irishheart.ie) for information and the British Heart Foundation (6 counties). Contact BHF at [www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)
- ♥ Counties/Clubs can also contact their Community First Responders at [www.cfr.ie](http://www.cfr.ie) who can provide information on AED training.
- ♥ Its important to organise AED training with an accredited and recognised body the above organisations can provide appropriate guidance.

## RECOMMENDATIONS – TRAINING

- ♥ *It is recommended that a dedicated list of AED-trained individuals should be kept adjacent to the AED with phone numbers.*
- ♥ *An array of club members should be trained in AED use, including players, coaches, committee members and a club referee to ensure sufficient coverage of training sessions and matches with an AED-trained individual.*
- ♥ *If possible, an AED-trained club member should be present at every training session and match.*
- ♥ *Clubs should contact accredited and recognised training providers and seek a discount for mass training.*
- ♥ *There is a need for continual re-training in AED-use (recommended every 2 years) and the mass training of new individuals on a regular basis.*

TRAINING PROVIDER	CONTACT EMAIL	WEBSITE
Irish Heart Foundation	<a href="mailto:info@irishheart.ie">info@irishheart.ie</a>	<a href="http://www.irishheart.ie">www.irishheart.ie</a>
British Heart Foundation	<a href="mailto:heretohelp@bhf.org.uk">heretohelp@bhf.org.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.bhf.org.uk">www.bhf.org.uk</a>
Community First Responders	<a href="mailto:info@cfr.ie">info@cfr.ie</a>	<a href="http://www.cfr.ie">www.cfr.ie</a>

## SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- ♥ There is significant evidence to suggest that early defibrillation can have a major impact on survival rates from SCA.
- ♥ Clubs with larger facilities may require more than one AED to ensure an AED can reach a victim of SCA within 3 minutes.
- ♥ It is desirable to keep a functioning landline telephone near the AED to ensure the emergency services can be contacted.
- ♥ If stored outside, AEDs should be kept in an unlocked outdoor cabinet, preferably with an alarm to deter vandalism and theft. Contact [info@hearts.ie](mailto:info@hearts.ie) for more information.
- ♥ If the AED is kept indoors, appropriate signage should be in place to clearly illustrate its location.
- ♥ A dedicated rota for AED maintenance should be devised and a record kept.
- ♥ Clubs should contact accredited training providers and seek a discount for mass training.
- ♥ A dedicated list of AED-trained individuals should be kept adjacent to the AED with phone numbers.
- ♥ An array of club members should be trained in AED-use, including players, coaches, committee members and club referees to ensure maximal coverage of training sessions and matches with an AED trained individual.
- ♥ **DID YOU KNOW -AEDs HAVE A SHELF LIFE OF APPROX. 8 YEARS AND MAY NEED TO BE REPLACED AFTER THIS TIME – CHECK WITH MANUFACTURER THE SHELF LIFE OF CLUB AED**

If you would like more information on the GAA Defibrillator Scheme, please email –

[eoghan.tuohey@gaa.ie](mailto:eoghan.tuohey@gaa.ie)

### GAA CLUB – AED READINESS CHECKLIST

<b>AED Location</b>		<b>Date of Check</b>	
<b>AED Model</b>		<b>Checked By</b>	
<b>AED Serial No.</b>		<b>Signature</b>	

AED Location	Checked	Comments/Corrective Action
AED is visible		
AED is easily accessed		
AED signage clear & readable		
AED is stored appropriately		
AED Condition	Checked	Comments/Corrective Action
AED – Date of manufacture/age of unit		
		<i>*Please note if AED is aged 8yrs or older it may need replacing. The manufacturer warranty may have expired. Check with manufacturer or contact <a href="mailto:dave@hearts.ie">dave@hearts.ie</a></i>
Working Service Indicator Light		
Battery status in date		
AED carry case in good condition/undamaged		
AED Components	Checked	Comments/Corrective Action
Two sets of Adult AED Pads		
AED Adult Pads in date		
AED Adult pads in sealed pack		
Two sets of Paediatric AED Pads		
AED Paediatric Pads in date		
AED Paediatric pads in sealed pack		
Basic Life Support Kit	Checked	Comments/Corrective Action
Pocket mask with one way valve stored in box and usable		
Examination gloves stored in box and usable		
Safety Razors stored in box and usable		
Clothing shears stored in box and usable		
Towel stored in box, clean and usable		

Additional Comments/faults defects noticed

Copy of Checklist: Submitted to GAA Club Executive  YES  NO

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### ♥ AED

An automated external defibrillator (AED) is a portable device that checks the heart rhythm. If needed, it can send an electric shock to the heart to try to restore a normal rhythm. AEDs are used to treat sudden cardiac arrest (SCA).

### ♥ Arrhythmia

Abnormal heartbeat. The heart may beat too quickly, too slowly or in an irregular way.

### ♥ Defibrillation

This involves a trained person delivering an electric shock, with an AED, to the victim's heart to help restore a normal heart rate.

### ♥ CPR

CPR, kiss of life, resuscitation, heart massage. These are all words used for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) by the media and general public.

### ♥ SCA

Sudden Cardiac Arrest is a condition in which the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating and can cause death if it's not treated within minutes.

### ♥ SCD

The heart has an inbuilt electrical system, which makes it work. If this is interrupted, the heart cannot pump enough blood around the body. Without a supply of blood pumped by the heart the brain can't function, the victim collapses and death follows within minutes.