

## TOOLBOX TALK #8

### MEDICAL EMERGENCIES – PART 1 HEART ATTACK AND SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST

Every second counts when responding to emergency medical situations. Recognizing the signs and symptoms – and knowing how to properly respond until help arrives – is vital. Staying calm, being prepared and knowing what to do, including when to call 911, can help save a coworker's life.

Here are some common medical emergencies – and what bystanders should do. (In each situation listed, know that you should be ready to administer CPR at a moment's notice.

#### **Heart Attack**

A heart attack occurs when the flow of blood is blocked in part of the heart. Signs of a heart attack include persistent pain, pressure or discomfort in the chest which may spread to the neck, jaw, shoulder and/or arms. This discomfort may come and go or it could last several minutes.

Other symptoms could be shortness of breath, dizziness, light-headedness, nausea or vomiting, cold sweat, and pale or clammy skin. Victims having a heart attack may not have all of these signs or symptoms. Women especially may experience other symptoms, shortness of breath, indigestion, nausea or vomiting, and back or jaw pain.

Call 911 right away if a coworker is experiencing chest discomfort – even if you aren't sure it's a heart attack.

#### **Sudden Cardiac Arrest**

Sudden cardiac arrest occurs when the heart suddenly stops beating. This typically causes victims to collapse, become unresponsive, and stop breathing normally or altogether. If this occurs, call 911. Then, find an AED or ask someone else to get the AED while you begin CPR. An AED will check the heart's rhythms and deliver a shock, if needed, to help restore a heart's normal heartbeat.

It's extremely important for workers to be trained in CPR and how to use an AED. In those first few minutes, your actions can truly make the difference between life and death.

