

AED use in Wet Environments

These guidelines have been developed to help reduce injury and increase effectiveness when using an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) in wet environments such as natatoriums.

Staff should be trained in the use of the device that is available at their YMCA. Specific manufacturer instructions should be followed at all times. In addition to this training the following guidelines may help to reduce the risk of accidental injury and increase the effectiveness of the AED:

1. The victim should be placed on a backboard, exercise mat, or other nonconductive equipment to eliminate contact with any wet surfaces or standing water. Contact with water could allow the water to conduct the shock to the operator and assistant(s).
2. The victim's chest should be dried before attaching the AED electrode pads. This will help ensure that the pads can be properly applied and will avoid the shock from arcing across the chest and bypassing the heart.
3. The rescuer, victim and assistants should be protected from the weather/elements when using an AED at an outdoor venue.
4. No one should be in contact with the victim during defibrillation.
5. The AED cable should be extended away from the victim before the AED is activated.

A primary safety concern during the operation of the AED is that no one should be touching the victim when the defibrillator is discharged. As long as the electrode pads are properly placed, and there is no contact between the operator(s), the victim or any water, there is no direct current path that could cause a shock to anyone other than the victim.