7

Emergency Care and Disaster Preparation

1. Demonstrate how to recognize and respond to medical emergencies

Define the following term:

conscious

the state of being mentally alert and having awareness of surroundings, sensations, and thoughts.

1. Demonstrate how to recognize and respond to medical emergencies

HHAs should memorize these steps in responding to an emergency:

- Assess the situation. Make sure you are not in danger and note the time
- Assess the victim. Check the victim's level of consciousness.
- Call for help or send someone to get help
- Remain calm and confident
- Properly document the emergency after it is over

1. Demonstrate how to recognize and respond to medical emergencies

The following are symptoms of injury:

- Severe bleeding
- Changes in consciousness
- Irregular breathing
- Unusual color or feel to the skin
- Swollen places on the body
- Medical alert tags
- Anything the client says is painful

1. Demonstrate how to recognize and respond to medical emergencies

When reporting emergencies it is important to have the following information ready:

- Address, including directions and landmarks
- Victim's condition (medical background)
- Your name and position
- First aid given

1. Demonstrate how to recognize and respond to medical emergencies

Remember:

You will need to properly document the emergency after it is over. Try to remember as many details as possible and always use facts in reporting.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Define the following terms:

first aid

emergency care given immediately to an injured person by the first people to respond to an emergency.

cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)

medical procedures used when a person's heart or lungs have stopped working.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Remember:

If you are not trained, you must never attempt to perform CPR.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Define the following terms:

obstructed airway

a condition in which the tube through which air enters the lungs is blocked.

abdominal thrusts

a method of attempting to remove an object from the airway of someone who is choking.

back blows

a method of first aid for an infant who is choking in which the rescuer strikes the infant between the shoulder blades in order to try to remove an obstruction.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Define the following terms:

chest thrusts

a method of first aid for an infant who is choking in which the rescuer places two or three fingers in the center of the breastbone and pushes in order to try to remove an obstruction.

Performing abdominal thrusts for the conscious person

1. Stand behind the person and bring your arms under her arms. Wrap your arms around the person's waist.
2. Make a fist with one hand. Place the flat, thumb side of the fist against the person's abdomen, above the navel but below the breastbone.
3. Grasp the fist with your other hand. Pull both hands toward you and up, quickly and forcefully.
4. Repeat until the object is pushed out or the person loses consciousness.
5. Report and document the incident properly.

Clearing an obstructed airway in a conscious infant

1. Lay the infant face down on your forearm; if you are sitting, rest the arm holding the infant's torso on your lap or thigh. Support her jaw and head with your hand. Keep her head lower than the rest of her body.
2. Using the heel of your free hand, deliver up to five back blows. Back blows are performed by striking the infant between the shoulder blades.

Clearing an obstructed airway in a conscious infant

3. If the obstruction is not expelled with back blows, turn the infant onto her back while supporting the head. Deliver up to five chest thrusts by placing two or three fingers in the center of the breastbone.
4. Repeat, alternating five back blows and five chest thrusts until the object is pushed out or the infant loses consciousness.
5. Call 911 immediately if the infant loses consciousness. Report and document the incident properly.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Define the following terms:

shock

a condition that occurs when organs and tissues in the body do not receive an adequate blood supply.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

HHAs should know the signs of shock:

- Pale or cyanotic skin
- Staring
- Increased pulse and respiration
- Low blood pressure
- Extreme thirst

Responding to shock

1. Call for help immediately. Victims of shock should always receive medical care as soon as possible.
2. If you need to control bleeding, put on gloves first. This procedure is described later in the chapter.
3. Have the person lie down on her back. If the person is bleeding from the mouth or vomiting, place her on her side. Elevate the legs about eight to 12 inches unless the person has a head, neck, back, spinal, or abdominal injury; breathing difficulties; or fractures.

Responding to shock

3. (cont'd) Elevating the legs allows blood to flow back to the brain (and other vital areas). Never elevate a body part if the person has a broken bone or it causes pain.
4. Check pulse and respirations if possible (see Chapter 14). Begin CPR if breathing and pulse are absent and if you are trained and allowed to do so.
5. Keep the person as calm and comfortable as possible.
6. Maintain normal body temperature. If the weather is cold, place a blanket around the person. If the weather is hot, provide shade.
7. Do not give the person food or liquids.
8. Report and document the incident properly.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Define the following terms:

shock

a condition that occurs when organs and tissues in the body do not receive an adequate blood supply.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

HHAs should know the symptoms of a heart attack:

- Sudden, severe pain in the chest, usually on the left side or in the center behind the sternum
- Pain or discomfort in other areas of the body, such as the arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach
- Indigestion or heartburn
- Nausea and vomiting
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Skin color that is cyanotic or pale

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Symptoms of a heart attack (cont'd):

- Perspiration
- Cold and clammy skin
- Weak and irregular pulse rate
- Low blood pressure
- Anxiety and a sense of doom
- Denial of a heart problem

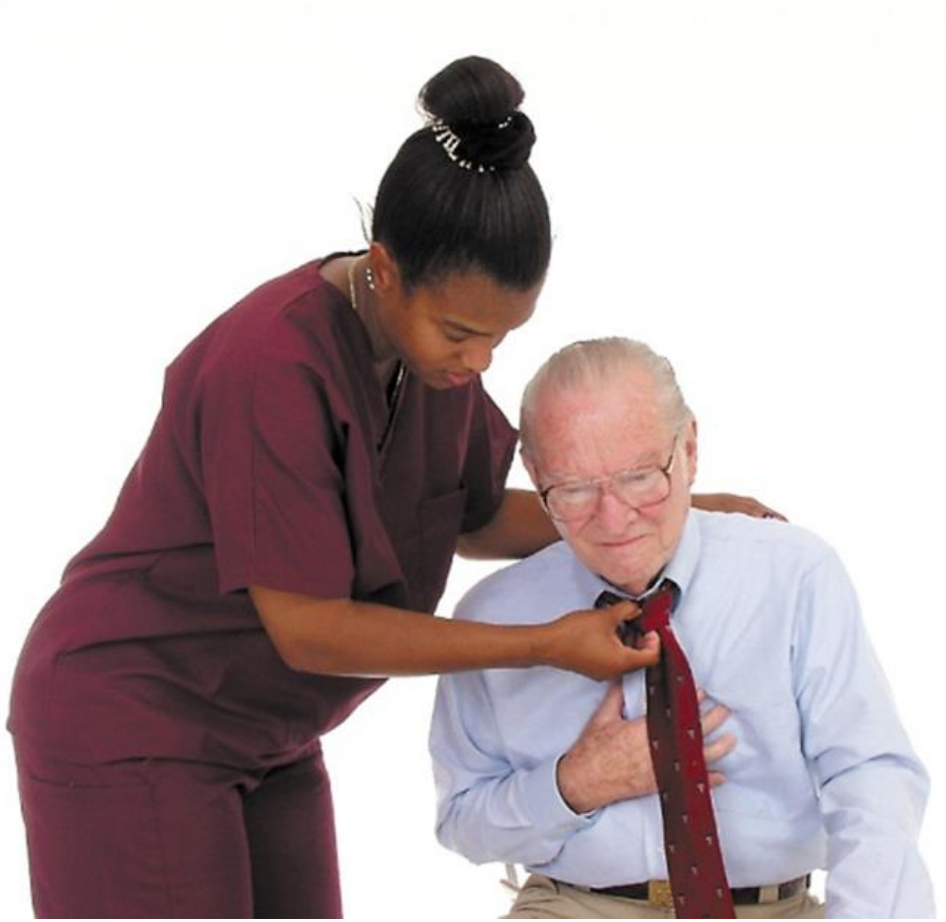
2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Symptoms of a heart attack (cont'd):

- Women may experience chest pain or discomfort, but can have heart attacks without chest pressure
- Women are more likely than men to deny that they are having a heart attack, and to experience these symptoms:
  - Shortness of breath
  - Nausea
  - Lightheadedness, dizziness, or fainting
  - Stomach pain
  - Sweating
  - Fatigue
  - Back, neck, or jaw pain
  - Flu-like symptoms

Responding to myocardial infarction

1. Call for help immediately.
2. Place the person in a comfortable position. Encourage him to rest, and reassure him that yo will not leave him alone.
3. Loosen clothing around the person's neck.
4. Do not give the person food or liquids.
5. Monitor the person's breathing and pulse. If the person stops breathing or has no pulse, begin CPR if you are trained and allowed to do so.



Responding to myocardial infarction

6. Stay with the person until help arrives.
7. Report and document the incident properly.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Remember:

Severe bleeding must be controlled immediately, but be sure to take the time to put on gloves before trying to control bleeding.

Controlling bleeding

1. Call for help immediately.
2. Put on gloves. Always take time to do this. If the person is able, he can hold his bare hand over the wound until you can put on gloves.
3. Hold a thick sterile pad, clean cloth, or clean towel against the wound.
4. Press down hard directly on the bleeding wound until help arrives. Do not decrease pressure. Put additional towels over the first towel if blood seeps through. Do not remove the first pads.

Controlling bleeding

5. If you can, raise the wound above the level of the heart to slow the bleeding. Prop up the limb if the wound is on an arm, leg, hand, or foot, and there are no head, neck, back, spinal, or abdominal injuries; breathing difficulties; or fractures. Use towels or other absorbent material.
6. When bleeding is under control, secure the dressing to keep it in place. Check the person for symptoms of shock (pale skin, staring, increased pulse and respiration rates, low blood pressure, and extreme thirst). Stay with the person until medical help arrives.
7. Remove and discard gloves and wash hands thoroughly when finished.
8. Report and document the incident properly.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

HHAs should recognize the signs of poisoning:

- Vomiting
- Heavy breathing
- Drowsiness
- Confusion
- Burns or red areas around the mouth

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Think about these questions:

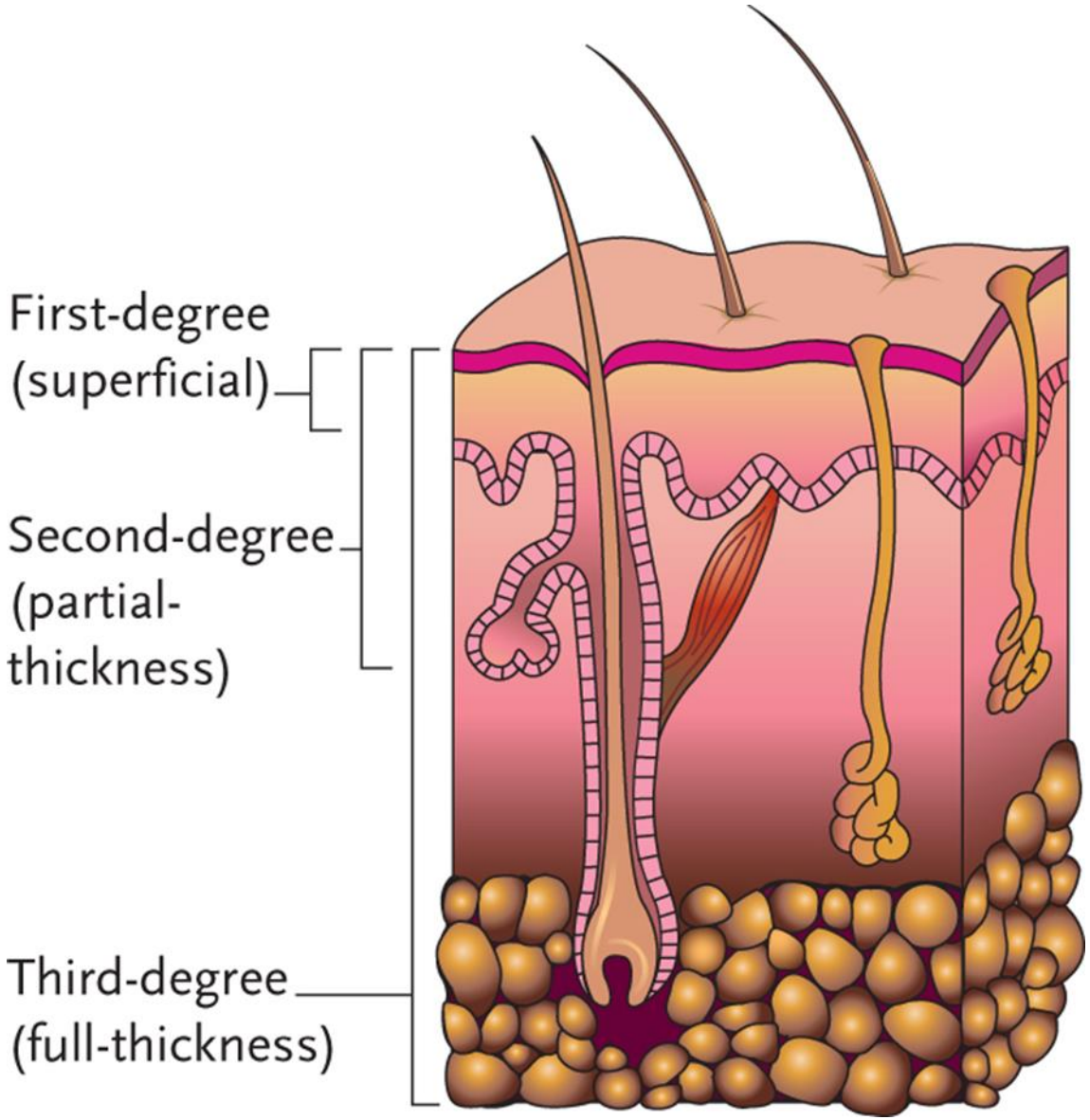
What household items could be poisonous if consumed?

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Remember:

Look up the poison control center number, write it down, and keep it posted near the phone in case of emergency.

Key Material 7-1: Burns



2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Care of a burn depends on its depth, size, and location. There are three types of burns:

- First-degree burns involve just the outer layer of skin. The skin becomes red, painful, and swollen, but no blisters appear
- Second-degree burns extend from the outer layer of skin to the next deeper layer of skin. The skin is red, painful, swollen, and blisters appear
- Third-degree burns involve all three layers of the skin and may extend to the bone. If the nerves are destroyed, no pain occurs. The skin is shiny and appears hard. It may be white in color

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Remember:

It is important to do no harm to severe burns. Do not use ice, ointment, salve or grease to treat a burn.

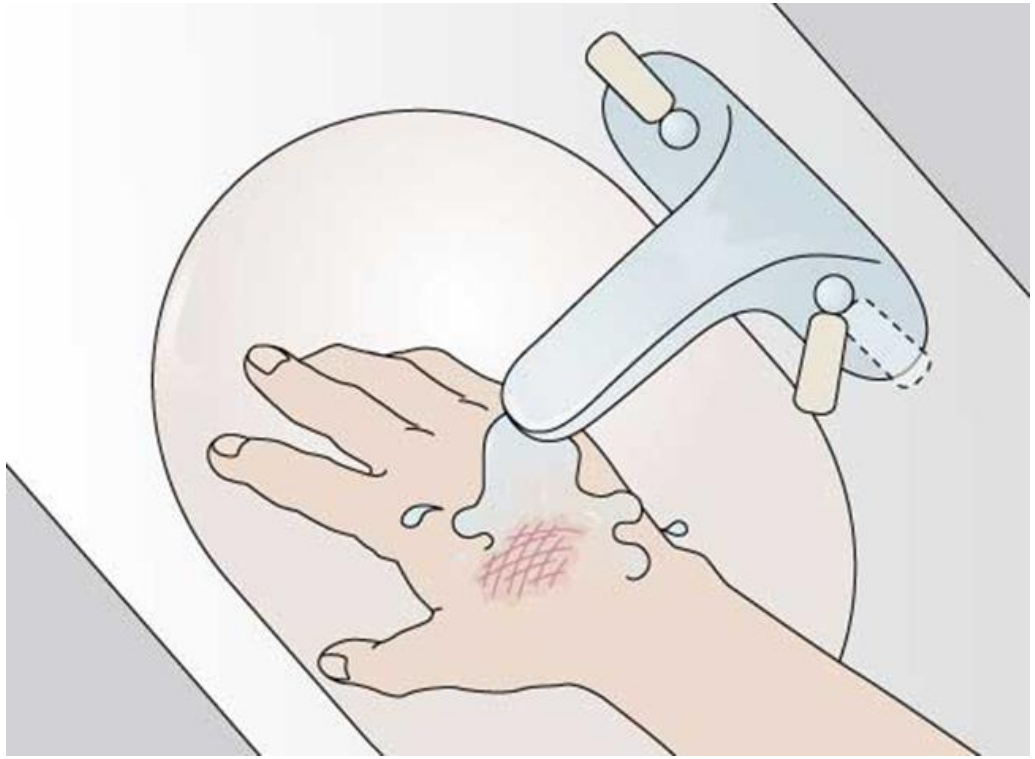
2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Think about this question:

Why is it important to not use ice, ointment, salve, or grease on a burn?

Treating burns

1. To treat a minor burn:
2. Put on gloves.
3. Use cool, clean water to decrease the skin temperature and prevent further injury. Do not use ice or ice water, as ice may cause further skin damage. Dampen a clean cloth with cool water, and place it over the burn.
4. Once the pain has eased, you may cover the area with a dry clean dressing or nonadhesive sterile bandage.
5. Remove and discard your gloves. Wash your hands.



Treating burns

6. Never use any kind of ointment, salve, or grease on a burn.
7. Report and document the incident properly.

For more serious burns:

1. Remove the person from the source of the burn. If clothing has caught fire, have the person stop, drop, and roll, or smother the fire with a blanket or towel to put out flames. Protect yourself from the source of the burn.
2. Call for help immediately. Put on gloves.
3. Check for breathing, pulse, and severe bleeding. If the person is not breathing and has no pulse, begin CPR if trained and allowed to do so.
4. Do not use any type of ointment, water, salve, or grease on the burn.

Treating burns

5. Do not try to pull away any clothing from burned areas. Cover the burn with sterile gauze or a clean sheet. Apply the gauze or sheet lightly. Do not rub the burned area.
6. Do not give the person food or liquids.
7. Monitor vital signs and wait for emergency medical help.
8. Remove and discard gloves. Wash your hands.
9. Report and document the incident properly.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Define the following term:

epilepsy

a disorder that causes recurring seizures.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

HHAs should know these facts about seizures:

- Involuntary, often violent, contractions of muscles
- Can involve a small area or the entire body
- Caused by an abnormality in the brain
- Can occur in young children who have a high fever
- May also occur in older children and adults who have a serious illness, fever, head injury, or a seizure disorder, such as epilepsy

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Signs of seizures include the following:

- Severe shaking
- Thrusting arms and legs uncontrollably
- Jaw clenching
- Drooling
- Inability to swallow

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Remember:

Your primary goal is to keep the client safe. Do not to try to force anything into the mouth of a person who is having a seizure.

Responding to seizures

1. Note the time. Put on gloves. Remove eyeglasses if the person is wearing them.
2. Lower the person to the floor. Cradle and protect his head. If a pillow is nearby, place it under his head. Loosen clothing to help with breathing. Try to turn the person's head to one side to help lower the risk of choking. This may not be possible during a violent seizure.
3. Have someone call for emergency medical help if needed. Do not leave the person during the seizure unless you must do so to get medical help.
4. Move furniture away to prevent injury.
5. Do not try to restrain the person or stop the seizure.
6. Do not force anything between the person's teeth. Do not place your hands in the person's mouth for any reason. You could be bitten.
7. Do not give the person food or fluids.

Responding to seizures

8. When the seizure is over, note the time. Gently turn the person to his left side if you do not suspect head, neck, back, spinal, or abdominal injuries. Turning the person reduces the risk of choking on vomit or saliva. If the person begins to choke, get help immediately. Check for adequate breathing and pulse. If the person is not breathing and has no pulse, begin CPR if you are trained to do so. Do not begin CPR during a seizure.
9. Remove and discard gloves and wash your hands.
10. Report and document the incident properly, including how long the seizure lasted.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Define the following terms:

syncope

loss of consciousness; also called *fainting*.

orthostatic hypotension

sudden drop in blood pressure that occurs when a person stands or sits up.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

The signs and symptoms of fainting include

- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Perspiration
- Pale skin
- Weak pulse
- Shallow respirations
- Blackness in visual field

Responding to fainting

1. Have the person lie down or sit down before fainting occurs.
2. If the person is in a sitting position, have him bend forward. He can place his head between his knees if he is able. If the person is lying flat on his back, elevate his legs about 12 inches.
3. Loosen any tight clothing.
4. Have the person stay in position for at least five minutes after symptoms disappear.

Responding to fainting

5. Help the person get up slowly. Continue to observe him for symptoms of fainting. Stay with him until he feels better.
6. If a person does faint, lower him to the floor or other flat surface. Position him on his back. If he has no head, neck, back, spinal, or abdominal injuries, elevate his legs eight to 12 inches. If unsure about injuries, leave him flat on his back. Loosen any tight clothing. Check to make sure the person is breathing. He should recover quickly, but keep him lying down for several minutes. Notify your supervisor immediately. Fainting may be a sign of a more serious medical condition.
7. Report and document the incident properly.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Define the following term:

epistaxis

a nosebleed.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Think about this question:

Why is it important to remember to put on gloves before helping a client with a nosebleed?

Responding to a nosebleed

1. Elevate the head of the bed or tell the client to remain in a sitting position, leaning forward slightly. Offer tissues or a clean cloth to catch the blood. Do not touch blood or bloody clothes, tissues, or cloths without gloves.
2. Put on gloves. Apply firm pressure on both sides of the nose, on the soft part, up near the bridge. Squeeze the sides with your thumb and forefinger. Have the client do this until you are able to put on gloves.

Responding to a nosebleed

3. Apply pressure until the bleeding stops.
4. Use a cool cloth or ice wrapped in a cloth on the bridge of the nose to help slow the flow of blood. Never apply ice directly to skin.
5. Remove and discard gloves. Wash your hands.
6. Report and document the incident properly.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of first aide procedures

Remember:

Falls can be minor or severe. All falls should be reported to your supervisor and incident reports should be completed. In the case of a severe fall, call emergency medical services immediately.

Helping a client who has fallen

1. Assess client's condition. Determine if client is unconscious, not breathing, has no pulse, or is bleeding severely. Get emergency medical help if any of these conditions exist.
2. Look for broken bones. Pain, body parts lying in an unnatural position, or bones protruding through the skin are indications. Look at both sides of the body to check for differences.
3. If client seems unhurt, encourage her to stay down until you can check her thoroughly.
4. Ask client to move each body part separately to be sure there are no strains, sprains, or fractures. A person with a serious sprain or fracture may complain of pain, have difficulty moving, or may not be able to move the affected area at all. Swelling and bruising may be present.

Helping a client who has fallen

5. If you suspect a sprain or fracture:
   - Call your supervisor and report the fall immediately.
   - Keep the injured area in one position.
   - Do not move the client.
   - Cover the client with a blanket to prevent chills.

   b) If you find no evidence of injury:
   - Make the client as comfortable as possible.
   - Call your supervisor and report the fall immediately.
   - Do not move the client until you have spoken with your supervisor.
6. Report and document the incident properly.

3. Identify emergency evacuation procedures

Define the following term:

evacuation

leaving in an emergency.

3. Identify emergency evacuation procedures

Remember:

Because you may not have time to think or plan in an emergency, know how to evacuate each client's home.

3. Identify emergency evacuation procedures

Evacuation planning includes the following tasks:

- Locate all the doors and windows that could serve as exits in an emergency
- In an apartment building, know where fire stairs are located. Elevators may be unsafe in an emergency
- Know the location of disaster supplies if they are available in the home. These include fire extinguishers, ladders for escape from upper floors, first aid kits or supplies, and utility shut-off points

3. Identify emergency evacuation procedures

Evacuation planning (cont'd):

- Discuss a plan for evacuation with your clients and their family members, emphasizing that everyone should keep calm in an emergency
- Know who will be responsible for helping children and people who are disabled
- Agree on a place outside the home for everyone to meet after evacuation

3. Identify emergency evacuation procedures

Think about this question:

Why is it important to remain calm during an evacuation?

4. Demonstrate knowledge of disaster procedures

Remember:

Disasters can include fire, flood, earthquake, hurricane, tornado, or severe weather. Acts of terrorism and bomb threats may also be considered disasters. The disasters you may experience will depend on where you live.

4. Demonstrate knowledge of disaster procedures

These guidelines apply to any disaster:

- Remain calm
- Use the internet to stay informed or listen to radio or TV for updates
- Wear appropriate clothing and be prepared
- Keep in touch with supervisor, especially regarding where you are going to be
- Locate disaster supplies

4. Demonstrate knowledge of disaster procedures

Think about these questions:

What types of disasters have happened in your area? Have you had an experience with disasters? If yes, what actions did you take that were good and which could have been better?

4. Demonstrate knowledge of disaster procedures

Remember:

Know your agency's policies regarding emergencies and disasters when you are out in the field.

4. Demonstrate knowledge of disaster procedures

These items should be in any disaster supply kit for evacuation emergencies:

- Three-day supply of water
- One change of clothing and footwear
- First aid kit, including prescription medications
- Emergency tools

4. Demonstrate knowledge of disaster procedures

Disaster supply kit items for evacuation emergencies (cont'd):

- Extra keys and credit card, cash, or debit card
- Sanitation supplies
- Special items that may be needed
- Extra eyeglasses
- Important family documents

4. Demonstrate knowledge of disaster procedures

Think about these questions:

How much time do you think you would have to prepare for evacuation in a disaster? Why is a disaster supply kit so important?

Critical Thinking: Case Studies

You arrive at a client's home and find the client on the bathroom floor.

- What is your first response?
- How would you determine whether the client is conscious or unconscious?
- What information would you be expected to give when calling 911?
- What would you do if you are not trained to do CPR and the client was not breathing?
- Do you feel that you have an ethical obligation to do CPR anyway if the client's life were in danger?
- How could you avoid finding yourself in a situation such as this where you were not able to offer the emergency care necessary to save a life?

Critical Thinking: Case Studies

You and your friend are at a baseball game. Your friend begins to complain of shortness of breath and sudden pain and pressure in his chest.

- What do you immediately suspect is happening?
- What other medical information is important to observe at this time?
- What questions should you ask your friend?
- What is the appropriate emergency action at this time?
- If your friend says he is thirsty, should you give him a drink of water?
- If your friend stops breathing and you cannot find a pulse, what should you do next?
- If you are not properly trained to handle this situation, what should you do?

Critical Thinking: Case Studies

You are in a client's home, and a family member is very upset because she just read online that a tornado is headed your way. The local authorities are asking everyone in that area to take shelter.

- Do you have a responsibility to assist the family and the client in this emergency situation?
- What is the most appropriate emotional response
- for you to have at this time?
- What are the guidelines that apply to this situation?
- Should you call your supervisor? When?
- What supplies should you assemble?

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