FIRST RESPONDER - WHAT TO DO?

Responding quickly and appropriately to injured or ill persons before Emergency Medical Services (EMS) arrive may help save a life. Do you know what to do when an emergency strikes?

Be prepared for emergency situations. Use this guide from the American Red Cross:

Check the scene and the victim/s:
Don't put yourself or the victim/s in danger. Before you respond, assess the scene and the person and then establish:

- If it's safe to enter/proceed
- What happened
- How many people are involved
- The nature of the victim's injury/illness (i.e. life-threatening bleeding, burns, etc.)

Call for EMS whether the person appears responsive or nonresponsive.

If the person is awake/responsive with no severe, life-threatening bleeding:
- If the person is conscious, use them to help assess the situation by asking questions about what happened
- Get their consent to provide first aid skills as you keep them conscious. Shout their name to get their attention

- If there's no response, tap the person's shoulder (adults/children) or bottom of their foot (infants) and shout again, while checking for normal breathing. Check for responsiveness and breathing for no more than 5-10 seconds.

If the victim is not conscious:
- Proceed to care within your scope of knowledge/certification while awaiting medical assistance
- Ensure that the person is face-up on a firm, flat surface (floor or ground)
- Check for signs of obstructed breathing
- Unless you are trained in giving CPR, follow the instructions of the EMS over the phone on how to administer CPR.

If the person is bleeding:
- Use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (disposable rubber gloves) to lower the risk of infection
- Locate the injury and place strong, direct pressure on the wound to slow bloodflow
- Apply a tourniquet (compressing elastic with a clip) above the bleeding area to slow bleeding until help arrives.

Remember to stay calm, heightened emotions may hamper critical thinking skills and your ability to act quickly.

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