
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health
BC Ambulance Service

B.C. PARAMEDICS LEADING THE WAY WITH NEW CPR GUIDELINES

VICTORIA – The BC Ambulance Service (BCAS) is among the leading emergency medical service agencies in Canada to adopt and provide its paramedics with training on the new cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and defibrillation guidelines.

“I am proud to see BCAS continually take the lead to advance the skills and training of its paramedics,” said Health Minister George Abbott. “The training paramedics have undergone will help us witness more positive cardiac arrest outcomes for patients treated and transported in British Columbia.”

The new guidelines were announced by the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation and the American Heart Association in November 2005 and are endorsed by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada. Since that time over 80 per cent of BCAS paramedics (approximately 2700) have completed the training program.

BCAS is taking a leading role in promoting CPR education for paramedics and the public. Each year there are between 35,000 and 45,000 cases of cardiac arrest in Canada. Research shows that for every minute that passes without help, a person’s chance of surviving drops by about 10 per cent, but with good CPR odds of survival and recovery may triple.

“We see the value of CPR every day and have more and more evidence that demonstrates that good CPR works” said Dr. Jim Christenson, Vice President of Medical Programs for BCAS. “We believe that optimizing the basic approach to resuscitation will see improved results for patients.”

Since training began in June 2006, BCAS has held over 270 CPR/AED courses at locations throughout the province from remote areas such as Bella Coola and Gold Bridge to urban centres such as Prince George and Victoria.

In addition to concluding new CPR training for its own paramedics, BCAS has worked with first responder agencies in B.C. to provide updated CPR training under the new international guidelines. To date, BCAS has provided direct CPR instruction to 785 first responders and 125 first responder instructors, who are taking this training back to their own teams throughout the province.

BCAS is also in the process of updating the software in its automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) to reflect the new CPR protocols. In some cases AED prompts are out of sync with paramedics performing CPR. Paramedics are already working under the new protocols even before the software voice prompt are updated.

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