

TOOLBOX TALK #6

WATCH FOR AND KNOW HOW TO TREAT SHOCK

Shock is a medical emergency that may result from trauma, heat stroke, blood loss, an allergic reaction, severe infection, poisoning, severe burns or other causes. A person experiencing shock is not receiving enough blood or oxygen to their organs. Without proper treatment, permanent organ damage or death can occur.

The National Safety Council (NSC) lists the following as signs of shock:

- Agitation, anxiety and confusion
- Light-headedness or feeling dizzy
- Skin that is cool and clammy, bluish or ashy
- Fast and shallow breathing
- Feeling thirsty
- Vomiting or feeling sick
- Fluctuation levels of responsiveness

If you suspect someone is experiencing shock, NSC advises following these 9 steps:

1. Check the victim over. Is the person responsive and breathing normally? Injured or severely breathing?
2. If the victim is not responsive or is bleeding severely, call 911.
3. Be prepared to provide basic life support.
4. If you do not see evidence of trauma, place the victim on his or her back and raise the victim's legs so that the feet are 6 – 12 inches above the ground. If the victim is unresponsive but breathing and no spinal injury is suspected, place the victim in the recovery position.
5. Loosen restrictive clothing.
6. Watch for vomiting. If the victim vomits, turn his or her head to drain the mouth.
7. Regulate the victim's body temperature with a blanket or coat.
8. Do not allow a victim of shock to eat, drink or smoke.
9. Remain with the victim until help arrives.

