



First Aid Instructors Conference Report 2011.

Over 120 instructors booked for the second national first aid conference held on HQS Wellington in London on March 3 and most managed to arrive despite the trains!

Changes to the CPR guidelines

Our first speaker was Dr. Anthony J Handley, Chairman BLS/AED International Course Committee, ERC and Chief Medical Adviser RLSS who explained the research and reasoning behind the 2010 changes to the CPR guidelines and why the standard of care has remained full CPR.

There was a great deal of speculation ahead of the last year's announcement that "compression only" CPR would be introduced, following reports from the USA of improved outcomes using this method. However their results were achieved with an EMS response time of 5 minutes or less. This is felt to be unachievable in the UK and almost certainly in the environment in which most of us work. The protocols have therefore remained largely unchanged, except for an increased depth and rate of compressions and more emphasis on minimising any interruptions.

Full details of the 2010 guidelines are included with this report and will also be on the website.

RNLI replace First Aid at Work course for lifeboat crew

Paul Savage, RNLI Clinical Lead and Medical and Survival Training Manager described the course that he has developed for lifeboat crew to replace the First Aid at Work courses that they ran previously.

The RNLI have abandoned the formal theoretical approach used in the past by some FAW trainers for a far more practical, scenario based course to teach the critical care of trauma casualties. They use algorithm cards to assess and treat without background knowledge. They practice with bag-valve-mask and have disposable portable suction equipment, oxygen, entonox, op airways, splints, stretchers and tourniquets in the kits on the ALBs.

Priority on the courses is given to proficiency with the equipment and backed up with just six hours of theory teaching. They combat skills fade by providing the waterproof treatment cards and by running realistic medex on the coast in association with Coastguard Rescue Teams and helicopters.

This was a stimulating presentation and will hopefully encourage RYA FA instructors to take a more practical approach, if they are not already doing so.

RNLI Sea Safety team members who attended as delegates were able to provide a DVD on the effects of Cold Shock. Contact seasafety@rnli.org.uk for details of how to get a copy if you did not make it to the conference.

The afternoon discussion topics produced some very useful feedback from the groups on the day and from over 50 individual responses.

Thank you to all those who returned the forms.

The first discussion topic concerned the training and assessment of new instructors, particularly the entry requirements for the one-day RYA first aid instructor's course.

About 15 instructor courses have been run annually since 2006 in Scotland, the NE, NW, East Anglia, the South and the West Country. The scope and regulations for running the RYA first aid course are explained, the syllabus discussed and potential instructors are assessed on their CPR, theoretical knowledge and teaching skills. The pre-requirements are an FAW (or higher), an SRC radio certificate, an RYA instructors certificate, considerable boating experience and a recommendation to attend a sea survival course.

Should candidates be required to attend an RYA first aid course in addition was the first question discussed.

The general opinion was yes, to give a better idea of the level at which to teach once qualified. The RYA first aid course is not aiming to be a FAW course in one day, or an EFAW course with the drowning CPR protocol, but a basic specialist course designed for the needs of RYA practical instructors and students. Many of those who attend the course go afloat in a variety of boats on different occasions throughout the year and benefit from discussing the first aid problems associated with dinghies, powerboats and offshore yachts with specialist first aid instructors.

One of the significant strengths of our first aid course is that it is taught by instructors who understand the whole RYA scheme, who have experience of teaching afloat and are familiar with radio and rescue procedures. Some groups thought that the instructor course should be 2 days to allow more time to assess practical skills and to develop and advise on teaching skills. There is merit in this, but it would obviously add to the cost for candidates who are already qualified to teach other RYA courses.

In addition some groups felt that newly qualified instructors would benefit from support and mentoring as they run their first few courses. This is likely to be true for any recently qualified instructor and should be provided by the Training Centre principal. It is their responsibility to monitor the quality of instruction at their centre and to check that the FA instructor is keeping their higher qualification in date. Skill level can be kept high by attending the annual half-day updates offered by FAW training providers for those not attending other regular assessments. Other suggestions included a more detailed syllabus to help novice instructors and the list of resources from the instructor course being available on the website.

Should the maximum number be reduced from 12, to 8 or 10?

This was the second subject on the list and there was no great support for a change to our present maximum, although some felt that a smaller number would make it a better learning experience for the students. Some discussion groups felt that reducing the recommended manikin ration from 1:4 to 1:3 would help, but with only

one instructor to monitor 12 novices achieving a high standard of CPR may still be difficult and less effective than reducing the size of the group.

Should teaching about AEDs be part of the course in the future?

The 2010 CPR guidelines state that students should be taught to request an AED when sending for help to emphasise their importance. To include full AED training on RYA courses would be difficult. Not all RYA instructors are qualified in their use or have access to equipment and the course syllabus is extremely full already. The consensus was that awareness of the use and value of AEDs should be included in the course but not full training and this minor amendment will be made to the syllabus. Episode 2 from the British Heart Foundation DVD "Buying Time" is very suitable for this. An updated version will be available soon.

An RTC with an AED on the premises will be organising additional training for staff already and FA instructors are recommended to get some hands on experience by attending a short course to make it easier to answer student questions.

A point made in the open discussion at the end of the day was the length of the syllabus and the wish for some additional teaching resources. Both of these will be looked at but it is difficult to see what subject areas can be left out altogether.

Once subject that can often be omitted is the Category C Medical Stores. It does not need to be taught on every course. It is not an RYA recommended first aid kit but an MCA requirement on coded boats. YMI, CI and other Commercially Endorsed skippers working on these boats must look the contents kit, have its use explained and the separate section on the certificate must be signed. There is a handout on the website.

Many thanks to our speakers, all the instructors who were able to attend and those who did a fantastic job in organising the day.



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