



Heart Attack, Cardiac Arrest and Stroke at the Workplace

Introduction

With an aging workforce, more fatalities are occurring at the workplace from heart attack, cardiac arrest or stroke whilst employees are at work.

Under certain circumstances, the Ministry of Manpower may assess such fatality as work-related.



Identify the symptoms early

Spotting the symptoms early enables a prompt medical assistance intervention to save lives.

It is useful for the employees to know the common signs so that they can raise the alarm when they spot their co-workers or themselves to be suffering from a heart attack, cardiac arrest or stroke at work.

- **Common signs of a sudden cardiac arrest**

A cardiac arrest is related to a sudden loss of heart function, breathing and consciousness.

- » Loss of consciousness or sudden collapse
- » Chest discomfort or pain
- » Shortness of breath
- » Palpitations or very fast heart pounding
- » Weakness

- **Common signs of a heart attack**

A heart attack is related to a blockage of blood flowing to the heart.

- » Discomfort or pain in the chest, arms, neck, jaw, back or stomach
- » Cold sweat
- » Shortness of breath
- » Sudden dizziness

- **Common signs of a Stroke**

A stroke is related to a sudden interruption in the blood supply to the brain.

- » Numbness or weakness in a side of the body
- » Confusion with trouble speaking or understand speech
- » Trouble walking with loss of balance
- » Sudden severe headache

- **FAST**

FAST is an assessment to check if a person has a stroke:

- » Face Drooping. Ask the person to smile and check if the smile is uneven or lopsided smile
- » Arm Weakness: Ask the person to raise both arms and check if one arm is drifting downward
- » Speech: Give the person a simple sentence to repeat and check if he cannot repeat it
- » Time: Seek medical treatment immediately for any of the above

Emergency Response Plan

- **For Cardiac Arrest**

When an employee has or appeared to have a cardiac arrest, the emergency response plan should include the following:

1. Call the ambulance immediately
2. Perform Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) until medical assistance arrives
3. Use an automated external defibrillator (AED) if available

- **For Heart Attack**

When an employee has or appeared to be suffering from a heart attack, the [Civil Defence Emergency Handbook¹](#) suggested the following:

1. Call the ambulance immediately
2. Get the patient to stop all activity, sit or lie down
3. Have someone keep watch on the patient whilst waiting for the ambulance

Duties of the Employer

As stipulated on the [MOM website](#)², an employer has to submit a WSH incident Report for the Employee who had suffered from a heart attack, cardiac arrest or stroke at work.

- For “How did the accident happen?”:
 1. Choose “Others”
 2. Choose “Other accident types not elsewhere classified”
 3. Specify “Medical Condition”

- For “What objects or environment lead to the accident?”:
 1. Choose “Others”
 2. Choose “Other accident types not elsewhere classified”
 3. Specify “Stroke hypertension” or “Heart failure” as indicated in the medical document, doctor’s memo or discharge summary

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¹ [https://www.scdf.gov.sg/docs/default-source/scdf-library/publications/publications/5372-scdf-emergency-handbook-\(eng\).pdf](https://www.scdf.gov.sg/docs/default-source/scdf-library/publications/publications/5372-scdf-emergency-handbook-(eng).pdf)

² <https://www.mom.gov.sg/faq/ireport/how-do-i-submit-wsh-incident-report-for-my-employee-who-suffered-a-heart-attack-or-stroke-at-work>