



Road & Transport First Aid

Emergency Information Booklet



Immediate steps to help at accident scenes
on Zimbabwe's roads

PROVIDED BY: **VITAL FIRST AID INTERNATIONAL**
Empowering communities with lifesaving skills

INTRODUCTION

Road accidents are one of the leading causes of injury and death in Zimbabwe. Whether traveling by car, kombi, truck, bus, bicycle, or on foot, emergencies can happen anywhere - often far from medical help.

This booklet gives you simple, practical steps you can use immediately after a road incident to help save lives before professional help arrives.

What you'll learn:

- How to stay safe at an accident scene.
- When calling for medical help and scene support.
- How to check any casualties at the scene.
- What to do for bleeding, shock, burns, and fractures.
- Safe movement and transport of casualties.
- What to include in a small travel First Aid kit.
- Common mistakes to avoid at an accident scene.
- Important contact information

This is not a full training course - it's a quick, Zimbabwe-relevant guide for everyday people and communities.

We highly recommend you attend one of our certified First Aid courses, and purchase one of our top quality First Aid kits to ensure you are fully prepared for any emergency.

STEP 1:

CHECK YOUR SAFETY FIRST

Before helping anyone, protect yourself and others.

Look for dangers such as:

- Fast-moving vehicles.
- Spilled fuel or oil.
- Broken glass or metal.
- Fire or smoke.
- Collapsed structures or electrical hazards.

If it's safe:

- Park your vehicle safely.
- Use hazard lights or warning triangles to warn other drivers.
- Get others to assist you if they can.
- Keep bystanders off the road.
- Switch off vehicle engines if safe to do so

If it is NOT safe:

- Keep yourself and any bystanders at a safe distance.
- Immediately contact the emergency services and describe the situation to them.

Never rush in without checking for danger - your safety allows you to help others.

STEP 2:

CALL FOR HELP EARLY

Even if you start First Aid for any casualties, getting medical support quickly is essential.

Put bystanders to use. They can contact emergency services, help to move onlookers away from the scene, direct traffic or even assist in First Aid with your guidance.

If available, contact:

- Local ambulance service.
- Nearest clinic or hospital.
- Police (for traffic control and rescue).
- Fire department if necessary.

Provide this information:

- Location (road name, nearby landmarks)
- Type of accident (vehicle collision, rollover, pedestrian)
- Number and condition of casualties
- Fire, fuel leak, or blocked road?

If phone networks are down or slow, send someone you trust to the nearest facility or closest network signal area to call for help.

STEP 3:

CHECK THE CASUALTIES

Assess the scene, check one person at a time if there are multiple casualties. Start with the most critical problems you can see. First check:

A – AIRWAY

- Is the person responding? If they are talking or making sounds, then airway is open.
- If unconscious, gently open airway: lift chin with two fingers and tilt forehead back slightly (if no spinal injury suspected).

B – BREATHING

- Look: Is their chest rising?
- Listen: Any breathing sounds?
- Feel: Breath on your cheek?

If not breathing, start CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation).. If you have not been trained in CPR, focus on keeping the airway open and getting help.

C – CATASTROPHIC BLEEDING

- Look for major bleeding first.
- Stop bleeding as quickly as possible (see next page).

If someone is conscious, ask them where they feel pain.

STEP 4:

BLEEDING CONTROL

Severe bleeding can cause death within minutes.

Step-by-step:

1. **Apply firm pressure** over the wound with a clean cloth, bandage, or clothing.
2. If you have a **CHITOSAN product** on hand, fill or pack the wound with the granules or gauze.
3. **Keep pressure constant** for several minutes.
4. **Raise the injured limb** if there's no fracture.
5. **Secure the bandage** or cloth in place if possible.
6. If unable to control the bleeding, use a **tourniquet** if you are trained to do so. Record the time the tourniquet was applied and give that information to the ambulance crew.

If blood soaks through, place another cloth on top - do not remove the first one.

What NOT to do:

- DO NOT clean deep wounds at the scene.
- DO NOT remove deeply embedded objects.

If a casualty has life-threatening bleeding and is not breathing normally, control the bleeding first, and then move on to CPR.

STEP 5:

TREATING

HYPOVOLAEMIC SHOCK

Hypovolaemic shock happens when the body doesn't get enough blood flow to the brain and vital organs. This can be a result of severe bleeding (including internal bleeding), head or spinal injuries, severe burns, dehydration or severe vomiting, diarrhoea or sweating. It can be fatal if untreated.

Signs of hypovolaemic shock:

- Pale, cold, or sweaty skin.
- Fast breathing or weak pulse.
- Dizziness or confusion.
- Weakness or collapse.

What to do:

- Make sure an ambulance is on its way!
- Lay the person on their back.
- Raise their legs (unless spinal injury is suspected).
- Keep them warm with a blanket or jacket.
- Reassure them and keep them calm.
- Do not give them any food or drink.
- Make sure you monitor their breathing continuously.
- If they stop breathing, start CPR.

STEP 6:

FRACTURES / BROKEN BONES

Fractures are common injuries in road traffic accidents and can cause lifelong issues if not treated correctly.

Signs:

- Swelling and/or bruising.
- Severe pain at the site of the break.
- Deformity or inability to move limb.

What to do:

- **Avoid moving the injury** if possible.
- **Support and immobilise** the limb using splints, cardboard, wood or cloth, or anything that could be improvised into a splint.
- Pad between the splint and skin.
- Tie the splint to the limb with bandages or clothing above and below the injury, not directly on the fracture.

Always suspect spine or neck injury in accidents, especially in head on collisions and if:

- Person fell or was thrown.
- Complains of neck/back pain.
- Loss of feeling or movement or presence of tingling.

Keep head and body still. Do not move, twist or sit them up.

STEP 7:

BURNS

Burns often occur from hot engines, flames, or spilled fuel / chemicals.

Immediate steps:

- Cool the burn with **clean, cool (not icy) running water** for 20 minutes.
- Remove tight clothing or jewellery **unless stuck to skin**.
- Cover with a burns dressing and bandage, or cover loosely with a clean cloth or clingfilm.
- Do not apply ointments, toothpaste, butter, or powders to the burns.

Seek urgent medical care if:

- Burn is larger than the size of the palm of the hand.
- Involves face, neck, hands, groin, or chest.
- The burn is caused by fire, chemicals, or electricity.
- Skin is white, charred, or blistered.
- You suspect the casualty is going into shock.

STEP 8:

MOVING A CASUALTY SAFELY

After a road traffic accident, only move a casualty if there is danger, such as fire, traffic or they are still in the vehicle and have stopped breathing and need CPR.

If movement is necessary:

- Get others to help you move the casualty if you can.
- Always support the head and neck.
- Move the head and neck in line with the spine always.
- Use a board or something hard and flat to move the casualty, or multiple people if available.
- Keep the body as straight as possible while moving them.

Never drag a casualty by the arms or legs unless it's the only option for survival.

If the casualty is wearing a helmet, DO NOT remove it.

TRAVEL FIRST AID KIT

ESSENTIALS

A small travel First Aid kit can save lives in an emergency, as well as protect you and the casualty from contamination or infection. Suggested items:

- Sterile gauze pads or trauma pads.
- Bandages (first aid dressings and/or crepe bandages).
- Triangular bandages.
- Plasters.
- Latex or nitrile gloves (highly essential).
- Strong scissors (can help cut seatbelts if necessary).
- Antiseptic wipes or solution.
- Blanket or foil emergency blanket.
- Adhesive tape.
- Notebook and pencil.
- Emergency contact numbers.

Encourage private cars, motorbikes, taxis, kombis, trucks and buses to keep one on board.

If you walk, run or cycle on the roads, always carry a small First Aid kit with you, it can be invaluable for yourself and others.

Check out our website for essential travel First Aid kits to make sure you are prepared for journeys.

IMPORTANT NOTE

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

1. Rushing in without checking safety

- Always assess for traffic, fuel leaks, fire and electricity before approaching the scene.

2. Moving casualties unnecessarily

- Avoid moving anyone unless there's immediate danger - spinal injuries are easily worsened.

3. Neglecting your own safety

- Stay visible, use hazard lights or warning triangles, and wear reflective gear if possible.

4. Forgetting to call for help early

- Contact emergency services immediately with clear details of the location, what happened and the number of casualties.

5. Panicking or losing focus

- Stay calm and organised - panic spreads quickly and delays care.

6. Handling injuries incorrectly

- Don't remove helmets, give food or drink, or use dirty materials on wounds.

7. Ignoring hidden or internal injuries

- Watch for signs of shock, internal bleeding, or head injury even if the person seems fine.

8. Allowing crowding or chaos

- Keep the scene controlled and limit bystanders to protect privacy and safety.

9. Leaving too soon

- Stay until help arrives or it's unsafe to remain, and share any information with the emergency services.

TRANSPORTING CASUALTIES

WHEN TO RUSH TO HOSPITAL

If you are in a remote location and cannot wait for emergency services to arrive, you may have to transport casualties to the nearest hospital or clinic yourself. Seek medical attention immediately for:

- Unconscious or unresponsive person.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Severe, life-threatening bleeding.
- Major burns.
- Suspected fractures or spinal injury.
- Head injury with vomiting, confusion, or drowsiness.
- Shock symptoms that are not improving.
- Multiple casualties.

Whilst transporting the casualty, continue monitoring their breathing and responsiveness during transport.

Keep in contact with the ambulance services, and meet them along the route if possible so they can attend to the casualty as soon as possible.

NATIONWIDE EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

MEDICAL AIR RESCUE SERVICES (MARS)

TOLL FREE (Econet): 182

Harare Base: 0787135951

Bulawayo Base: 0787135950

Gweru Base: 0787135946

Marondera Base: 0787135943

Mutare Base: 0787135947

Vic Falls Base: 0787135945

- MARS will be able to assist in contacting FIRE and POLICE services in each region if necessary.
- Each ambulance carries an AED.
- Air Rescue Services are available on any of the contact numbers above.
- All medical aids (inc. local) are accepted.

OTHER AMBULANCE SERVICES NATIONWIDE:

ACE: 464 (toll free) / 0782999901-4

EMRAS: 0772141610 / 08677008210

CIMAS RESCUE: 922 / 0242700070 / 08080300 (toll free)

DISCOVERY: 991 (toll free) / 0718682555

ST JOHN (Harare only): 0242783980 / 0783112112

CITY OF HARARE FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Fire department: 0242 783985-7 / 0783112112

POLICE OPERATIONS:

Harare: 0242 7748836 / 0242 777651

Bulawayo: 0292 2273547 / 0292 288393

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION:

PERSONAL CONTACT INFORMATION:

Your Name: _____

Contact Number: _____

Preferred Ambulance: _____

Emergency Contact Name: _____

Emergency Contact Number: _____

Medical Aid Number: _____ - _____

EMPLOYERS CONTACT INFORMATION:

Company Name: _____

Company Contact Number: _____

Preferred Ambulance Provider: _____

Emergency Contact Name: _____

Emergency Contact Number: _____

Company Medical Aid Number: _____ - _____

VITAL FIRST AID INTERNATIONAL

Supporting Zimbabwean communities with:

Top quality First Aid kits

Training & awareness programmes

Workplace, school, and community safety resources

Contact us:

Phone / Whatsapp: **0773289601**

Website: **www.vitalfirstaidint.com**

Other free resources available:

Fire Safety Training for Kids

First Aid Posters

Essential Checklists

BE PREPARED. ACT QUICKLY. SAVE LIVES