



First aid fact sheet

Rescuing a drowning person

The goal is to safely remove the drowning person from the water as soon as possible.

If you do not have the swimming abilities or strength to rescue the person from the water, attempt a 'non-contact' rescue technique such as reaching out with your hand or a sturdy stick, or throwing a float. At the same time, shout for help and get another bystander to call **Triple Zero (000)** for an ambulance.

Providing oxygen

Following successful initial resuscitation, oxygen may be given if available and trained to do so.

What to do

- 1 Follow DRSABCD. Send for help.
- 2 Remove the drowning person from the water as soon as possible. Do not endanger your own safety.
- 3 If the person is conscious, help the person to sit or lie down in a comfortable position and give reassurance.
- 4 If the person is unconscious:
 - a. assess the person on their back with their head and body at the same level
 - b. assess the airway without rolling the casualty onto their side unless the airway is obstructed with fluid (water or blood) or matter (sand, debris, vomit). Clear any foreign matter from the airway.
 - c. if unresponsive and not breathing normally, start CPR.
- 5 If vomiting or regurgitation occurs during CPR, roll the person onto their side to clear the airway and reassess for signs of life. If breathing normally, leave the person on their side and monitor closely. If unresponsive and not breathing normally, roll the person onto their back and recommence CPR.
- 6 Avoid delays or interruptions to CPR. Do not empty a distended stomach by applying external pressure. It is not necessary to drain clear water or frothy fluid that can build up in the upper airway during CPR.
- 7 People who appear to have been successfully rescued and resuscitated need to be closely monitored. They should be referred for medical assessment.
- 8 Call **Triple Zero (000)** for an ambulance for all drowning casualties, even if the event is seemingly minor or the casualty appears to have recovered fully.

In a medical emergency call Triple Zero (000)

DRSABCD Danger ► Response ► Send for help ► Airway ► Breathing ► CPR ► Defibrillation

You could save a life with first aid training • www.stjohn.org.au • **1300 360 455**

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