

Training Memo: Optional Instructional Changes for Heartsaver® Courses during COVID-19 Outbreak



CPR & Emergency Cardiovascular Care

Date of Release	UPDATED July 1, 2020 <i>NOTE: This AHA Training Memo supersedes the April 30, 2020, Training Memo regarding optional instructional changes for Heartsaver Courses during COVID-19.</i>
Purpose	To provide guidance to AHA Training Centers on amendments to Heartsaver skills training during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Background	<p>The outbreak of COVID-19 has generated questions and concerns about potential exposure during CPR and first aid training. The AHA advises all AHA TCs and Instructors to follow the existing recommendations outlined on the World Health Organization (WHO) website, and in the U.S., refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations, as well as the guidance of national, state, and local public health authorities, which will have the most up to date facts and will provide information on basic protective measures against COVID-19.</p> <p>The AHA's chief concern is the health and safety of the AHA Training Network and those being trained, and we are continuously monitoring all the latest developments of the outbreak worldwide. The best protection from infection from COVID-19 is to follow recommended procedures.</p>
General Information	<p>In accordance with guidelines released by national, state, and local governments, the leadership of the TC should use discretion to evaluate the risk of disease transmission in their area before organizing any training events and take necessary precautions to avoid transmission.</p> <p>Recommendations: The AHA encourages Training Centers to offer breaths practice and testing at a later date for students who are unable to practice and test due to COVID-19-related restrictions.</p> <p>For Training Centers who are able to conduct in-person training, the following adjustments to course management are required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow suggestions of national public health, as well as state and local authorities concerning closures and public gatherings • Follow the AHA recommendations for equipment decontamination during CPR training with the following additional requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All participants should practice good hygiene, including handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after the course, and before and after snack or meal breaks

- Instructors should decontaminate the manikins after each student practices or tests on the manikin using an alcohol-based solution per CDC recommendations
- Face shields should not be used, and direct mouth-to-mouth ventilations should not be practiced
- If available, each student must be provided with a pocket mask and one-way valve when practicing one-rescuer skills. Pocket masks should not be shared during the course.
- When possible, manikins should be spaced apart at least 3 feet (1 meter) during training, based on [WHO guidance on social distancing](#).

Specific guidance for Heartsaver course skills testing is detailed below:

- Compressions Practice and Testing
 - No changes to practice and testing
 - Continue using the guidance above regarding sanitation and spacing
- Breaths Practice and Testing
 - Since the primary spread of the virus is through respiratory droplets, the AHA is allowing TCs to eliminate skills practice and testing for the breaths portion of CPR skills, which includes giving 2 effective breaths over 1 second each with visible chest rise. Continue teaching the cognitive information as usual and modify practice with simulated breaths.
 - Practice simulated breaths: Course participants may demonstrate the actions of placing the mask or other barrier device over the mouth and nose of the manikin, opening the airway manually, then verbally state they are giving 2 breaths for 1 second each and looking for visible chest rise
 - For any student that absolutely needs the Breaths Practice and Testing, the TC has two options:
 - If pocket masks and one-way valves are available, this is the best, most cost-effective way to practice and test a student
 - If pocket masks and one-way valves are unavailable, a CPR Anytime Kit, which has a personal manikin that is only used by that student, may be used
- First Aid Skills Practice and Testing
 - Removing Protective Gloves
 - If non-latex gloves are available, continue practice and testing as usual
 - If non-latex gloves are unavailable, alternatives like plastic gloves are a permissible solution, or simulating the skill with no gloves is permissible

- Finding the Problem
 - Do not have students pair up. Students should practice this skill on a manikin or virtual person and not on another student to eliminate social contact.
- Using an Epinephrine Pen
 - Do not have students pair up. Students should practice on their own leg.
 - Ensure trainers are sterilized between each student
- Controlling Bleeding and Bandaging
 - Do not have students pair up. Students should practice on their own arm or leg.
 - If gauze is unavailable, reusable alternatives like cloth strips may be substituted, but ensure these are sterilized between use
- Splinting (Optional):
 - Do not have students pair up and instead practice on their own leg
 - If gauze is unavailable, use reusable alternatives like cloth strips, but ensure these are sterilized between use

These additional precautions should be practiced until further notice by the AHA. Please continue to check your email and notifications placed on the [COVID-19 CPR and Resuscitation Resources webpage](#) regularly for possible updates to AHA training policies.