



## AUSTRALIAN RESUSCITATION COUNCIL

### GUIDELINE 2.1

#### PRIORITIES IN AN EMERGENCY

In all emergency situations, the rescuer must:

- assess the situation quickly
- ensure safety for the rescuer, victim and bystanders
- call for help
- commence appropriate treatment following the Basic Life Support Flow Chart (P.S. 7.2).

When calling for help, the “**phone first**” approach is recommended. This is because in the vast majority of cardiac arrests, the arrest is due to ventricular fibrillation which is treatable by defibrillation. Outcomes of these patients have significantly improved when the time to defibrillation is short. In cardiac arrests occurring in children, or where the arrest is due to airway obstruction or inadequate ventilation, (eg submersion, drug overdose) there is potential benefit in commencing resuscitation before calling for help. In these cases, the “**phone fast**” approach is recommended. In many situations the call for help will occur at the same time as the commencement of resuscitation.

Where there is more than one victim, **THE CARE OF AN UNCONSCIOUS VICTIM HAS PRIORITY.**

The rescuer should not be distracted by victims who are calling out; their needs are less urgent as they are able to breathe.

#### REFERENCE

- American Heart Association in collaboration with International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation. Guidelines 2000 for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Emergency Cardiovascular Care: International Consensus on Science, Part 3: Adult Basic Life Support. Resuscitation 2000;46(103):29-71.

#### FURTHER READING

ARC Guideline 2.2 When to Move an Injured Victim  
ARC Guideline 7 Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation  
ARC Guideline 8.6 Priorities at the Scene of a Road Accident