



## 024: Epilepsy and Seizures

### *Who can have seizures*

People with seizure disorders including, but not limited to, epilepsy.

- A person who has a fever not related to a seizure disorder.
- People with certain diseases, such as diabetes.
- People who are using pharmaceuticals, correctly or otherwise.
- People with no history of seizures.

### *Types of seizures*

A seizure is a condition where a person's nervous system is overwhelmed.

The grand mal seizure that most people associate with epilepsy is the most dramatic, but not the only kind of, seizure.

At the other end of the seizure spectrum is near comatose loss of consciousness.

Seizures occur in varying degrees between these extremes, but are generally characterized as grand mal, petite mal, or psychomotor seizures

### *General seizure response*

Call for help immediately and activate the Emergency Medical System. Remain with the victim until help arrives or until your foreman assigns someone to take your place. If you are the first on the scene, you are in charge until your foreman or emergency response personnel say otherwise.

Look for any blood, vomit, dentures, or other foreign bodies in the mouth of the victim. Do not attempt to remove them as long as the patient is breathing.

If the victim isn't moving, ensure the victim's airway is not obstructed. An easy test is to ask the victim a question. If the victim answers, the airway is open. If you don't get an answer, place your ear over the victim's mouth or nose and listen for exhalation.

If you are trained in CPR, you may need to administer it.

Make someone available to go with the victim if the victim goes to the hospital. You may need to provide separate transportation from the emergency vehicle. Someone will need to help with the victim's personal effects, admissions paperwork, and notification of family or others. That person may be the foreman or someone appointed by the foreman.

### *Removing objects from the mouth*

Generally, by reaching in to pull an object out of the mouth, you are more likely to shove an object farther down the airway than to remove it. Medical personnel have suction equipment for removing such objects.

You can try the Heimlich maneuver if the victim cannot breathe with the object in place.

Clear secretions with a tissue, and try to keep the victim in a side-lying position to prevent choking.

### *Discussion leader duties for this session:*

Read up on your company's medical response policy.

### *What this Safety Talk covers:*

How to help people who have seizures on the job.

### *Discussion notes :*

