

Rochester Fire Protection District

May/June 2010

To Your Health

Randy Romadka, Deputy Chief

According to Shelly Sperry writing in the October 2009 edition of National Geographic, an adult can survive in a burning building for about 10 minutes with a temperature of 300 degrees. So there is a reason to consider rescue as an initial tactical objective on the fire scene. Additionally, when the human body reaches a core temperature of 107.6, heatstroke cannot be reversed and death becomes inevitable. This fact suggests aggressive rehabilitation, cooling and rehydration for anyone exposed to a heated environment. And in the absence of oxygen, a normal healthy human will pass out within two minutes. So airway and breathing are paramount concerns in all pre-hospital patient care interactions.

Interview With Zach Marshall

Zach Marshall joined the Rochester Fire Protection District in February of this year and is currently a probationary member. Zach lives in Springfield and attends Glenwood High School. He works at Wal-Mart as a Sales Associate and is a member of the Police Explorers. Welcome to the department Zach!

Driver's License Information

The State of Illinois offers a service connected to your driver's license. You can click on the link below and add two emergency contacts to your license data. Therefore, if you are incapacitated in some way, your license can be scanned and the emergency contacts retrieved so your loved ones can be contacted. Everyone is encouraged to take advantage of this service!

<http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/drivers/ecd/home.html>



Birthdays

Bob Young—May 4

Kyle Romadka—May 15

David Jostes—June 4

Mark Poffenberger—June 7

Terry Hensey—June 25

Jeremy Johnson—June 25



Word Food For Thought

*Shared grief is half the
sorrow, but happiness
when shared, is doubled.*

—author unknown



HIPPA Gets Pumped Up!

Randy Romadka, Deputy Chief

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has issued an interim final rule to strengthen its enforcement of the rules related to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act, which was enacted as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, modified the HHS Secretary's authority to impose civil money penalties for violations occurring after Feb. 18, 2009. These HITECH Act revisions significantly increase the penalty amounts the Secretary may impose for violations of the HIPAA rules and encourage prompt corrective action.

Prior to the HITECH Act, the Secretary could not impose a penalty of more than \$100 for each violation or \$25,000 for all identical violations of the same provision. A covered health care provider, healthcare plan or healthcare related clearinghouse could also bar the Secretary's imposition of a civil money penalty by demonstrating that it did not know that it violated the HIPAA rules. Section 13410(d) of the HITECH Act strengthened the civil money penalty scheme by establishing tiered ranges of increasing minimum penalty amounts, with a maximum penalty of \$1.5 million for all violations of an identical provision. A covered entity can no longer bar the imposition of a civil money penalty for an unknown violation unless it corrects the violation within 30 days of discovery.

The interim final rule conforms to the HIPAA enforcement regulations and revisions made by the HITECH Act. It may be viewed at: www.regulations.gov.

"The Department's implementation of these HITECH Act enforcement provisions will strengthen the HIPAA protections and rights related to an individual's health information," said Georgina Verdugo, the director of HHS Office for Civil Rights (OCR). OCR is responsible for administering and enforcing HIPAA's privacy, security and breach notification rules.

"This strengthened penalty scheme will encourage health care providers, health plans and other health care entities required to comply with HIPAA to ensure that their compliance programs are effectively designed to prevent, detect and quickly correct violations of the HIPAA rules," said Verdugo. "Such heightened vigilance will give consumers greater confidence in the privacy and security of their health information and in the industry's use of health information technology."

This interim final rule is the first of several steps HHS is taking to implement the HITECH Act's enforcement provisions. The remaining provisions, which have yet to become effective, will be addressed in the next few months in forthcoming rulemakings. Additional information about HIPAA and several related rulemakings may be found on OCR's Web site: <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/>.

The Rochester Fire Protection District supports safeguarding and protecting the security and confidentiality of all health care information. Every member is held to the standards as detailed in HIPAA and HITECH laws. The easiest method to assure compliance with the law and avoid problems is to remember every patient, and their family, deserve their privacy. The Rochester Fire Protection District, as a health care provider and all its members are subject to penalties based on HIPAA and HITECH. Additionally, in the event of a violation of HIPAA or HITECH, every member of the Rochester Fire Protection District is subject to disciplinary action related to the violation. During World War II, there was a saying related to the war effort, "Loose lips sink ships". The same concept applies to us today. Remember not to discuss patient care issues in public. If you have any questions or concerns related to HIPAA and the HITECH Act's enforcement provisions, please contact Randy Romadka.

How Can I Be of Service?

Randy Romadka, Deputy Chief

This month I am just showing off for the HCIBOS column. I was interviewed for a story on first aid kits that was published by *The State Journal Register*. The story is consistent with my belief in delivering serious service to all our patients. Additionally, the

story also says a great deal about being responsible for our actions. Hopefully you will find some information in the story that is useful, thought provoking or both. Let me know what you think. This story is being printed with the permission of *The State Journal Register*.



Always Keep A First-aid Kit At Hand

BY LAURA MICHELS

Correspondent

Published March 19, 2010 @ 10:42 p.m.

The old adage about an ounce of prevention equaling a pound of cure may ring true, according to medical experts - if you have a first aid kit on hand.

Home kits

It's pretty simple and cheap to put your own first aid kit together according to Randy Romadka, a registered nurse with Memorial Health System's North Dirksen ExpressCare Clinic, located at 3220 Atlanta St.

Romadka said a homemade kit should contain antibiotic ointment, tweezers, Band-Aids, splinter forceps and scissors. If you break the skin, wash the wound, apply antibiotic cream and then apply a bandage.

"Anytime you break the skin you run the risk of infection," Romadka said. "You only get so many sets of hands to work with. You want to try to take care of them as best you can."

If a wound gets infected, the results could cause significant problems. Infections, if left untreated, could spread to other parts of the body and contaminate the bloodstream causing swelling, pain, and loss of range of motion in the joint. Certain people, like diabetics, are more prone to infection, he said.

Romadka recommends keeping a first aid kit in places where a person would work with his or her hands such as a tool shed, or in the garage.

"I'd have one there so if you nick a finger or ... get a piece of metal in it, or a sliver, you can get it out," Romadka said.

Emergency kits

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency recommends people include a first aid kit as part of a disaster preparedness plan.

"Things that would, if you have medical needs that you needed to tend to because you weren't able to get to a hospital or clinic quickly," said Patti Thompson, the spokesperson for the IEMA.

Thompson also urges people to have supplies on hand that would help sustain them and their families in the case of natural disasters, weather emergencies or even terrorism attacks. She said people should have enough provisions on hand to feed a family for up to three days.

"They just can help you fend for yourself," Thompson said.

Some of the items she suggests people include in a disaster kit include: a weather radio, plenty of non-perishable food, at least one gallon of water per person per day, a flashlight and batteries. Thompson said having these kinds of supplies on hand could make a tough situation more bearable. For example, take a look at what happened during Hurricane Katrina, she said.

"Those people that were stranded for days on end - the difference that having some of these items in their house could have made," Thompson said.

In central Illinois, the notorious 2006 ice storm that enveloped the area put many people in precarious situations.

(continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3)

"We actually sent the National Guard out, and they did door-to-door checks on people, and they actually found people that were starting to suffer the effects of a sitting in a home with no heat and not enough provisions."

Car kits

Experts also urge people to keep safety supplies in their cars. A car first aid kit should be a smaller version of a home first aid kit. It should include items such as Band-Aids, gauze pads, burn cream packets and Tylenol, said Romadka.

The IEMA also urges people to have a disaster kit in their cars - particularly in the winter months.

"They slide off the road because the weather conditions are so bad. It takes people a long time to be able to get to them," said Thompson.

She recommends people have water, snack foods, blankets, extra clothing, jumper cables and a tool kit in their cars.

"They need to have things that will help them stay warm, stay dry and stay nourished," she said.

During the ice storm of 2006, more than 100 people were stranded at two different rest areas on Interstate 80. The food in the vending machines ran out quickly, according to Thompson.

"We actually had to fly in food on helicopters and use snowmobiles to be able to get it to the rest areas," Thompson said. "They were lucky they were in a nice warm place, but that doesn't always happen."

Kits for the elderly

Kids heal quickly from things like cuts and scrapes, according to Romadka. However, he said the same rules apply when it comes to treating wounds: wash the cut, apply antibiotic cream, and then a bandage. Continue checking the wound to ensure that it's healing.

In the case of an elderly person, Thompson said people should have extra medicine available in case something happens and they can't get to the store. In addition, people on special diets should have those food supplies on hand, and diabetics should have extra insulin stored away, she said.

According to Thompson, when it comes to crisis situations, a little preparation can make a big difference.

"The more you take control of things, the more control you have when an actual emergency happens."



Website

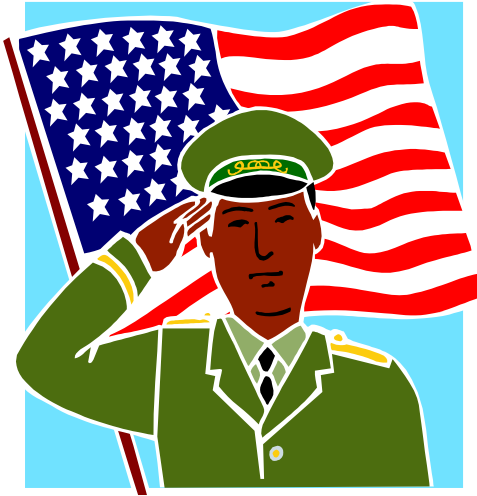
Linn Downey, Admin. Asst.

Each member of the RFPD has a company email address and access to the training section of the website.

Please take a few moments to login to your account to get it set up.

Under the "members" section, select webmail. Your user name is your first and last name (all lower case) separated by a period (jane.doe). Your password is the same as the four digit keycode you use at the alarm panel (9999). This same information will also log you into the RFPD training module.

After you are logged in, you will be in the webmail section of the RFPD website. You will see a link (mail.rochesterfirerescue.org) that will take you to webmail. Your user name for your webmail is your first and last name again (jane.doe in lowercase) and the password is rfpd2009. You will be prompted to change your password the first time you log into your account, your password must be at least six characters. On the first screen, you will also see the instructions for setting up your rfpd email to go to your cellular phone or personal email application. Please take the time to set this up, as the department will be communicating with you via email in the future. **Please send a test message to linn.downey@rochesterfirerescue.org so that I can verify your account is working.** If you have any questions, or need assistance, please call me and I will try to help you.



Things You Ought To Know

Randy Romadka, Deputy Chief

This article is printed with the Permission of Karen Trimberger, Director of Disease Control at Memorial Medical Center, on April 2, 2010. Memorial Medical Center is the Resource Hospital for the Rochester Fire Protection District.

FLU SEASON DRAWS TO A CLOSE

Each year the influenza season typically falls between October 1st – March 31st. This past season we witnessed an extended season due to the emergence of the H1N1 novel influenza virus starting back in April 2009. Even though it's now April, we are still seeing some patients presenting at our MHS sites with flulike symptoms. The volume of patients being seen however is low. Illinois did a great job of providing and administering vaccinations to many people across the state and often led the efforts in vaccinating as many people as possible within our communities. Because of this effort, many individuals in Illinois are healthier and are protected from the risk of developing influenza illness.

At Memorial Health System there were many individuals that worked very hard to gather information, coordinate efforts, provide vaccinations and make decisions necessary to implement measures to protect the health and safety of our patients, visitors, volunteers, staff and partnering physicians during the H1N1 and flu season. I want to thank everyone for your hard work and quick response during this challenging year. While the worst of the season has past, we will continue to evaluate and monitor patients presenting with influenza-like illness and take necessary precautions if the situation would warrant us to do so.

Please remember to "*Protect Yourself & Others*" by following these simple rules:

Wash your hands often

Cover your cough

Stay home when you are sick

Stay healthy.....Get Vaccinated!

If you have any questions related to vaccination availability, contact Deputy Chief Romadka.

The calendar for the RFPD is available on the website. Go to "Public Info" and "Department Calendar."

