



Providing emergency care

First-aid skills are a legal requirement and can save lives. **Andrew Don** reports on a vital ability that can be overlooked

A woman walks into a village pub, starts to feel unwell, collapses and stops breathing. You witness the drama unfold. Do you a) panic b) pour yourself a pint c) phone a friend d) use your first-aid skills and save a life?

This is the scenario that the White Hart Inn in Stanley, Derbyshire, faced last August when villager Rona Ames collapsed.

Fortunately, landlady Simona Cameron, who undertook first-aid training when she worked for the Hilton Group in Romania and teaching assistant Sue Adams, who had received training with the St John Ambulance, were on hand.

The pair took it in turns to deliver chest compresses and rescue breaths (CPR) for several minutes until Ames took a massive gasp of breath.

They put her into the recovery position before East Midlands Ambulance Service crew arrived and took

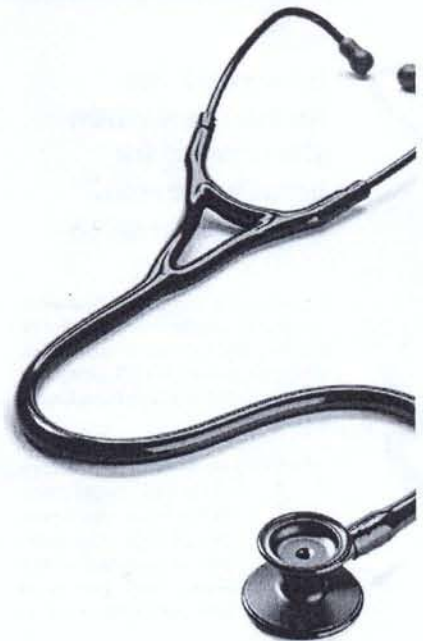
her to hospital. She survived thanks to the early intervention.

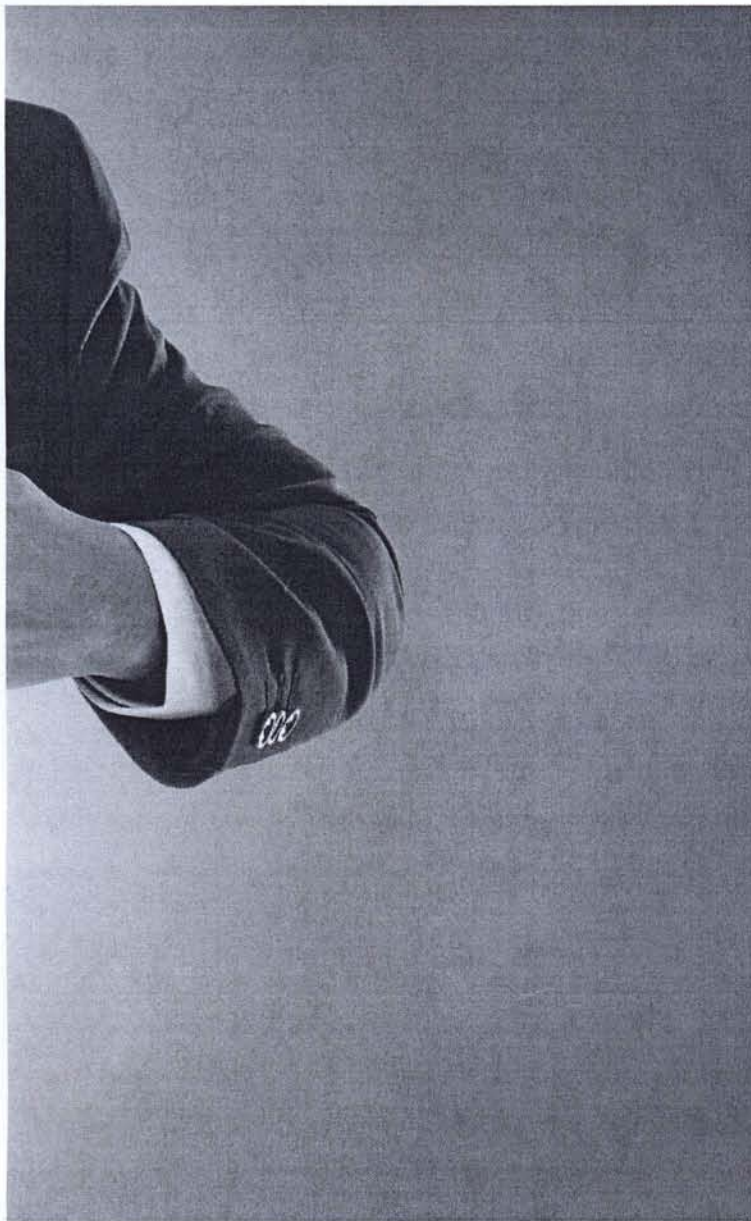
Cameron says: "It seemed like forever, but when she gasped for breath the relief was unbelievable. Our first-aid training instinctively kicked in."

Paul Chase, director and head of UK compliance at CPL Training, says there are various situations that

1981
the year that (first aid) health and safety legislation was introduced

£35,000
the payout awarded after a fall in which little first aid was given





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would call for a qualified first-aider on duty for dealing with injuries or illnesses among staff or customers: an assault, a cut foot, a fall, an injured child or a chef who has cut a finger, for example.

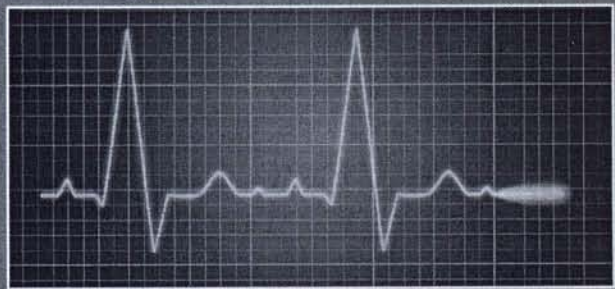
The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 require employers to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities, and personnel to enable first aid to be given to

employees if they are injured or become ill at work.

Chase adds that employees also have responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 for customers, suppliers and other members of the public who might visit.

He says there are two levels of first-aider: someone who can administer emergency first aid, who must undergo a one-day course in Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW), and a fully qualified first-aider who must undergo a three-day First Aid at Work course.

Chase says the big pubcos are well aware of their responsibilities in relation to first aid, but the challenge is to ensure tenants and lessees also fulfil these responsibilities. “Licensees can leave themselves vulnerable to claims and prosecution if someone gets injured on their premises and there is no one qualified to attend to them.”



How to save a life

Airway

To open the airway:

- Place your hand on the casualty's forehead and gently tilt the head back
- Lift the chin with two fingers.

Breathing

- Look, listen and feel for normal breathing for no more than 10 seconds
- Look for chest movement
- Listen at the casualty's mouth for breath sounds
- Feel for air on your cheek

If the casualty is breathing normally

- Place in the recovery position
- Get help
- Check for continued breathing

If the casualty is not breathing normally

- Get help
- Start CPR

CPR

- To start chest compressions,

lean over the casualty and with your arms straight, press down on the centre of the breastbone 5cm to 6cm, then release the pressure

- Repeat at a rate of about 100 to 120 times a minute
- After 30 compressions, open the airway again
- Pinch the casualty's nose closed and allow the mouth to open
- Take a breath and place your mouth around the casualty's mouth, making a good seal. Blow steadily into the mouth and watch for the chest to rise
- Remove your mouth from the casualty and watch for the chest falling
- Give a second breath and then start 30 compressions again without delay
- Continue with chest compressions and rescue breaths in a ratio of 30:2 until qualified help takes over or the casualty starts breathing normally

Techniques taken from Health and Safety Executive leaflet *Basic Advice on First Aid at Work*

Batemans Brewery knows this only too well. Stuart Bateman, managing director, recalls when someone fell down in one of the pubs about 10 years ago and injured themselves. The victim, who claimed there was a lack of light and treatment, was awarded £35,000.

“I believe that if the tenant had been able to administer first aid

properly, there would not have been such a strong case,” says Bateman.

While Batemans has about 15 qualified first-aiders among its 85 head office staff, Bateman says it is up to tenants to take up the company's offer of a free first-aid course, which it encourages.

The British Institute of Innkeeping (BII), recommends first-aid training for all staff wherever possible so that they can spot any potential problems and act quickly.

Tim Hulme, BII chief executive, says: “In light of this, we have included a First Aid Essentials unit in our Level 2 Certificate in Licensed Hospitality”.

So the next time a customer chokes on a fish bone or gets glassed by the local thug, you, too, could save a life and become a local hero into the bargain.

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