UNIT 1 OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT OF THE SCENE AND THE VICTIM

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1.0 Introduction
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In theory course, Block 1 Unit 1 on “First Aid and Role of First Aid Provider” of this programme, you have already learnt about the importance of First Aid and the role of First Aid provider. You learnt that first aid is the immediate treatment given to the victim in an accident or sudden illness before regular medical help is available. Therefore, when you are providing First Aid and acting as a First Aid provider, you may come across many situations where you need to observe keenly and assess the condition of the victim and the scene which has contributed to the condition that needs First Aid. In Block 2, Unit 1 of the theory course on “Recognizing Emergencies” you learnt about how to recognize emergencies and what to do when an emergency occurs including scene safety. Now, in this practical unit, you will learn the procedure of observing and assessing the emergency situation. So, let’s begin.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- demonstrate how to observe and assess the scene;
- observe the status of victim; and
- perform assessment of the victim.
1.2 RECOGNIZING AND ASSESSING EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

We have already discussed the various indicators which tell that the emergency has arisen in which one needs to act fast in Theory Block 2, Unit I on “Recognizing Emergencies”. Here, we shall be discussing the procedure for recognizing emergencies.

When assessing emergencies, we need to observe and assess the emergency situations. Observation involves focusing keenly and attentively on a particular emergency situation. Observation is the first step to be taken when encountering an emergency situation. In other words, observation stands for the action of closely and attentively watching someone/something.

Assessment stands for inspecting, examining or monitoring someone or something for the purpose of finding out what effect a situation had on someone or something. Assessment usually stands for finding out the impact of a situation and what needs to be done in this situation. It is the next step to observation and more in depth study of a situation.

Purposes

The main reason why we need to recognize and assess emergencies instantly is to act immediately to reduce the complications, prevent further damage and preserve life.

Articles required

For this you will need case scenarios of various emergencies which can be read from the newspapers, magazines, television, seen in form of movies, telefilms etc. which will give you an insight into what an emergency is and how it occurs. You can also enact case scenarios where the victim is in emergency. You can also enact various emergencies which are in your curriculum.

Procedure

Step 1 Look out and be alert for any unusual noises you hear.

**Skills:** Look out for unusual noises and sights like someone screaming, shouting, moaning, crying, large noise like breaking glasses, tyres coming to stop or sounds like something is falling.

Step 2 Look out for any thing you see which makes you realize that emergency is occurring.

**Skills:** Be alert for unusual things you see like stopped vehicle, person suddenly falling, person losing consciousness, fallen utensils or pot, spilled medicines, poisons, short circuit of electrical wires, flames and so on.

Step 3 Be alert for smells that are stronger than usual.

**Skills:** Be alert for any toxic fumes, smell of wood burning, LPG fumes, nauseous smells, smell from septic tanks/sewage tanks or any other smells which are unbearable.
Step 4  Look out for unusual appearance or behaviour of the people around you.

**Skills:** Be alert for people who become unconscious, who show difficulty to breathe, severe chest pain, difficulty in speaking, are confused, sweat excessively, express that they are in agony, are anxious and feel that something is happening and they are doomed etc. Be alert for people around you who scream or shout pointing towards presence of emergency or its development.

Step 5  Look out for bleeding, wounds, and overall look of the suspected person.

**Skills:** Look out for blood spots, active bleeding, wounds, parts of body cut off, presence of articles embedded in the body, burns, fracture, feeling of heat or cold and so on which point towards the suspected condition affecting the victim. Many such situations have been discussed in this or the next Block of this course.

Step 6  After recognizing emergency, look out for the safety of the scene.

**Skills:** Scene safety is first step and for maintaining it you must observe and make it safe, assess the scene, and then take the next step towards helping the victim only if the scene is safe for you and the victim. The procedure for observation and assessment of scene safety has been discussed in this unit in Section 1.3.

Step 7  Call for assistance and approach the victim.

**Skills:** Call for help by activating the Emergency medical services (emergency helpline, ambulance, police, fire etc as required) and also involve bystanders in helping you. If the scene is safe, approach the victim.

Step 8  Conduct the assessment of the victim and Provide First Aid.

**Skills:** The observation and assessment of the victim is done and first aid required must be provided. The procedure for observation and assessment of victim has been discussed in this unit in Section 1.4.

Step 9  Record and Report your findings and Transport the victim.

Thus, in the above steps we learnt how to recognize emergency and the assessment you should do in these situations. You also learnt that you must be alert about your surroundings, emergent situation and also about the complication this emergency situation can bring about. In the next sections, we shall learn how to observe and assess the scene and the victim. So, let’s continue.

### 1.3 Procedure for Observation and Assessment of the Scene

When an emergency has occurred then, the first step is to observe the scene for scene safety. Always remember that the scene safety is the first step in responding to emergencies and then helping the victim.
Purposes

The scene needs to be observed and assessed. An accident can happen anywhere, it can be a confined space, road, river, lake, industry, factory, home, workplace, while travelling and so on. One needs to be vigilant, observe and then assess the scene so that safety at all times can be maintained. The assessment of the scene is essential to safeguard yourself and the victim and others in the emergency situation.

Articles required

For this you will need case scenarios of various emergencies. You can enact case scenarios where the victim is in emergency and scene is unsafe e.g. confined space, fires, radiations etc. You can also enact various emergencies which are in your curriculum.

Procedure

Step 1  Ask the volunteer to act as victim. Ask him/her to lie down.

**Skills:** Be alert for emergency indicators and signals. Check the area.

Step 2  Look out for the situation. Find out what has occurred and what has caused the emergency.

Step 3  Look out for surroundings and the placement of the victim. Inspect the area.

**Skills:** See for your safety in the environment where the emergency has occurred. Use safety measures in order to reach the victim. Do not put yourself in danger in any situation.

Step 4  Look out for your safety. Carefully inspect.

**Skills:** See for the surroundings like deep waters, fire, depth, height and so on. Check to see if the victim is approachable or not. Take risks which are worth taking otherwise you and the victim can both become victims.

Step 5  Proceed when you are sure that the situation is not dangerous or before the situation becomes dangerous.

Step 6  Remove any hazardous articles present in the environment.

**Skills:** See for cylinders, petrol, diesel, snakes, insects, running traffic. If these cannot be removed, remove the victim from the environment.

Step 7  Look out for number of victims.

**Skills:** See for the number of affected persons so that you can carefully judge the level of help required and who requires the priority care as per triage discussed in Theory Block 2, Unit 1.

Step 8  Look out for extent of injury.

**Skills:** See the number of injuries the victim is having, amount of blood loss, areas affected and provide first aid likewise.
Step 9  Assess the victim

**Skills:** After removing the victim, assess the victim. Conduct primary and secondary assessment. This is discussed in upcoming section 1.4.

Step 10  Call for help and provide First Aid.

**Skills:** Call for ambulance or emergency medical services. Give first aid. If the scene is not safe, move the victim and take him to a safe place and then, provide first aid. If the scene is safe, first give the first aid (use first aid box as discussed in Unit 5 of this Block) and then move the victim (discussed in Unit 4 of this Block). Take help of Bystanders.

Step 11  Record and Report. You can record your findings as per the Recording form given in Fig. 1.1 (in the next section).

Step 12  Transport the victim.

Thus, by following above steps the scene can be observed and assessed. Scene safety is important and must be maintained. The detailed discussion on Scene safety is also given in Theory Block 2, Unit 1 on “Recognizing Emergencies”. Now, lets proceed to observation and assessment of the victim.

### 1.4 PROCEDURE FOR OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT OF THE VICTIM

You already know that no accident or emergency situation is identical or same. Every accident or emergency has a different impact and consequence on each and every victim. Therefore, you have to make sure that you observe and assess the condition of the victim.

**Purposes**

Observation and Assessment of a victim is done for

1. **Examining** the overall well being of the victim, find out what has happened, what injury/wound has occurred;

2. **Inspecting** for head to toe examination of the victim to find out where the injury/wound has occurred;

3. **Monitoring** the victim for his vital signs, response, airway and breathing and be ready for emergency care;

4. **View** the victim and recognize the changes in his/her well-being in the emergency situation and

5. **Watch** out for any changes or complications.

**Articles required**

When you have to learn about how to observe and assess the victim, you will need case scenarios of various emergencies. You can enact case scenarios where the victim is in emergency. You can also enact various emergencies which are in your curriculum.
Procedure

Step 1  Ask the volunteer to act as victim. Ask him/her to lie down.

Step 2  Look out for the situation. Check the scene safety.

**Skills:** The steps for assessing scene safety and maintaining it have been described in Section 1.3 of this unit and in Theory Block 2, Unit 1.

Step 3  When the scene is safe, approach the victim.

Step 4  Tap the person on one of his shoulders and speak loudly “Hello, Are you Okay?” This will help to know the level of consciousness.

**Skills:** Tapping on the shoulder and speaking, “Hello, Are you Okay?” should be done simultaneously. This is done to check response. If the victim is an infant (age 0-1 year), you should tap on any of the heels of his/her foot.

Step 5  If the victim does not respond, check for pulse and breathing.

**Skills:** The breathing should be checked by observing the chest rise with each effort of breathing in. Gasping should be considered as absence of breathing. Check pulse at pulse sites. This is discussed in Unit 2 of this Block.

Step 6  If the person does not respond but is breathing, place him/her in recovery position.

**Skills:** Recovery Position has been discussed in Unit 7 of this Block.

Step 7  If a victim is not responding, has no pulse and not breathing, CPR should be started immediately. If the person shows signs of Cardiac Arrest, use AED and call for an ambulance.

**Skills:** CPR has been discussed in Unit 7 of this Block and AED has been discussed in Unit 8 of this Block. Continue till the person is revived or help arrives.

Step 8  If the person is responding, check for injuries, bleeding, deformities, swelling, tenderness and open wounds.

**Skills:** Check this as per DOTS format discussed in Unit 1 Block 2 of Theory Course.

Step 9  After this proceed to secondary assessment, check his vital signs.

**Skills:** Checking Vital Signs—Temperature, Pulse and Respiration has been discussed in Unit 2 of this Block.
Observation and Assessment of the Scene and the Victim

**Step 10** Talk to the person. Take his history.

*Skills:* History collection is about victim’s illness, what he feels/thinks happened, how injury occurred, his allergies, any medicine he is taking etc. Note any specific things or changes.

**Step 11** Ask him how he/she feels. Ask for any complaints. Notice any sign and symptoms.

*Skills:* Assess the sign and symptoms. See for pain, anxiety, thirst, dizziness, wounds, burn, vomiting, loss of normal movement, dampness, bleeding, abnormal body temperature, swelling, deformity, fracture, noisy breathing, groaning, chest injuries. This has been discussed in Unit 1 of Block 2 of Theory Course.

**Step 12** Perform Head to toe examination of the victim.

*Skills:* Head to toe examination is given in detail in Unit 1 of Block 2 of Theory Course.

**Step 13** Record and Report. You can record your findings as per the Recording form given in Fig. 1.1.

**Step 14** Transport the victim.

The assessment of emergency situation can be explained with the help of Flow diagram as follows:

Thus, by following above steps the victim can be observed and assessed. This has also been discussed in Theory Block 2, Unit 1 on “Recognizing Emergencies”.

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**Skill Assessment:**
- **Skills:** History collection, sign and symptoms assessment, head to toe examination, record and report, transport.

**Flow Diagram:**
- Scene Safety → Call for help
  - Is the person responding?
    - Responding → Breathing with pulse → Check for DOTS → Provide First Aid
    - Breathing with pulse → Place in recovery position
    - Not breathing/No pulse → Start CPR and Use AED
  - Not responding → Breathing with pulse
    - Not breathing/No pulse → Start CPR and Use AED

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**Diagram Source:**
- *ianou* [Link] (The People’s University)
# First Aid Treatment Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of treating person</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time (24 Hour Clock)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surname</td>
<td>Given name</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Gender: M / F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Number (home)</td>
<td>Phone Number (mobile)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- [ ] Consent to treatment
- [ ] Refusal of treatment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>History of accident or illness: (what happened/what time?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene Safety: (what was seen and what did you do?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First aid assessment: (What is the injury/illness?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Allergies/ Medications/Past Medical History:

### General Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Insert Bold Number)</th>
<th>1st Observation Time</th>
<th>2nd Observation Time</th>
<th>3rd Observation Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Conscious State

1. Fully conscious
2. Drowsy
3. Unconscious

### Pulse


### Pulse Rate

### Respiration


### Respiration Rate

### Temperature (°C)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skin</th>
<th>Right</th>
<th>Left</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### First Aid Provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head to Toe Examination</th>
<th>: 1. Head …… 2. Ears …….. 3. Eyes …… 4. Nose………..</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Other Findings: …………………………………………………..

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospital (Own Transport)</th>
<th>Time of Departure</th>
<th>Expected Destination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambulance</th>
<th>Time of call</th>
<th>Who called</th>
<th>Time arrived</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To own Doctor</th>
<th>Time of Departure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other(e.g. Police, Security)</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Time of call</th>
<th>Who called</th>
<th>Time arrived</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continue Event</th>
<th>Time continued</th>
<th>Who advised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Aid Provider (Name):</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Fig. 1.1: First Aid Treatment Form for recording Observation, Assessment and First Aid given.
1.5 SAFETY AND PRECAUTIONS

Many of the Safety and Precautions have been discussed separately in the Theory Block 2, Unit 1 on Recognizing Emergencies. In addition to these, we must follow the following safety precautions as given below:

1. When a first aid provider is called to deal with the victim he/she must always remember to safeguard him/her and other bystanders and then assess the situation.

2. Make haste without getting panicky in the emergency situation.

3. Observe carefully. Think clearly and Act quickly with calm and composure during an emergency.

4. Check the scene, find if it is safe for you, for the victim and for onlookers.

5. Remove the dangers to make the scene safe.

6. Move the patient to a safe area if it is not safe.

7. Assess the nature of injury or illness, wound, bleeding etc.

8. Set priorities for the care required and prioritize as per the type of injuries to victims if more than one victim is there (Triage).

9. Ask the onlookers to dial for help and call the ambulance.

10. Try to know the history of the problem, time of happening/any other health problems.

11. Avoid unnecessary handling of the victim.

12. Keep a record of the care provided.

13. Use Safe Practices in every situation. (This has been discussed in Theory Block 1, Unit 3 and Unit 9 of this Block).

Thus, by applying the above mentioned safety precautions as a first aid provider, you will be able to maintain your own, scene and victim’s safety in emergency situations.

Check Your Progress 1

You are on your way to work and you have a first aid kit with you. On your way you see a 32 yrs old male, Rakesh, who has been knocked down from his scooter by a car. He is lying in the middle of the road. You move him to the side of the road and assess him. The findings are: He is conscious but looks drowsy, He is complaining of pain in his ankle, Pulse – 112/min., strong, Respiration – 22/min regular, Skin is cold to touch. You do a bandage to the painful ankle. His friend comes and says that he will take him to the nearby hospital.

Now you fill the sample form below and ask any doubts from your academic counsellor.
# First Aid Treatment Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of treating person</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</table>

- Consent to treatment
- Refusal of treatment

- History of accident or illness: (what happened/what time?)
- Scene Safety: (what was seen and what did you do?)
- First aid assessment: (What is the injury/illness?)

### Allergies/ Medications/Past Medical History:

#### General Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insert Bold Number</th>
<th>1st Observation (Time)</th>
<th>2nd Observation (Time)</th>
<th>3rd Observation (Time)</th>
<th>Assessment Injuries/Symptoms &amp; Signs (Tickmark)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Abrasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bleeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Burn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Conscious State

- Fully conscious
- Drowsy
- Unconscious

#### Pulse

- Slow, 2. Rapid,
- Strong, 4. Weak,
- Regular, 6. Irregular

#### Pulse Rate

#### Respiration

- Deep, 2. Shallow,
- Absent,
- Gasping, 5. Rapid,
- Slow

#### Respiration Rate

#### Temperature (° C)

- Hot, 2. Warm,
- Cool, 4. Cold

#### First Aid Provided

**Head to Toe Examination**

1. Head ……
2. Ears ……..
3. Eyes ………
4. Nose………
5. Mouth ………
6. Skin ……………
7. Neck ………
8. Shoulder ……………
9. Trunk ………
10. Hands/Arm ……………
11. Legs/Feet ……………

**Other Findings**: ………………………………………………

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospital (Own Transport)</th>
<th>Time of Departure</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Time of Departure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Service</td>
<td>Time of call</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continue Event</th>
<th>Time continued</th>
<th>Who advised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**First Aid Provider (Name)**: __________________________
**Date**: __________________________
**Signature**: __________________________
**Time**: __________________________
Observation and Assessment of the Scene and the Victim

1.6 LET US SUM UP

In this practical we have discussed about recognizing emergencies, observation and assessment of the scene and the victim in detail. The observation and assessment is common step which must be completed prior to giving the first aid in any situation. Hope, you would practice this procedure and utilize the acquired skills whenever and wherever you encounter the emergency situation.

In the next unit, we will learn about the procedure to assess vital signs. So, let's continue.

1.7 KEY WORDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discomfort</th>
<th>Painful feeling in the body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scene</td>
<td>Describe the place where you are at the moment is referred as scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvised</td>
<td>You make use of whatever is available in place of the actual thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscious level</td>
<td>Awareness of the surroundings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruise</td>
<td>An injury that does not break the skin but causes rupture of underlying small blood vessels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Aid</td>
<td>Immediate care given to the injured or seriously ill person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keen</td>
<td>With interest, actively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing</td>
<td>Pay attention to something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attentively</td>
<td>With full concentration and energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encountering</td>
<td>Facing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspecting</td>
<td>Watching or observing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examining</td>
<td>Assess closely, monitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-depth</td>
<td>In great detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Result, consequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unbearable</td>
<td>Which one cannot bear or out of one's control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excessively</td>
<td>To a great extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express</td>
<td>Tell what one feels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agony</td>
<td>Severe or great pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Feeling of being under stress, extreme emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doomed</td>
<td>Likely to have an unfortunate or bad result or outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embedded</td>
<td>Implanted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activating</td>
<td>Starting, Informing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emergent : Immediately arising condition
Vigilant : Active and Alert
Safeguard : Save from problems or complications due to emergency
Approachable : Which can be reached
Worth taking : Which bears result and should/must be taken
Hazardous : Dangerous/ Risky
Judge : See according to situation and find what’s right and wrong
Simultaneously : Happening along-with one another
Gasping : Difficulty breathing
Absence : Not present, not there

1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1
Refer Sections 1.2 and 1.3

1.9 ACTIVITIES

Activity 1
Enact a case scenario where your friend is fallen down and has become unconscious in a confined space. Assess the scene and the victim in this situation. Record in your Log-Book.
(Supervised Activity)

Activity 2
Fill up the First Aid Treatment chart form for a victim who has been hit by a car from behind as per your Log-Book.
(Self Activity)

1.10 REFERENCES

1. www.st john.org.nz/First Aid