

# INDIAN FIRST AID MANUAL

2016 (7<sup>th</sup> edition)

AUTHORIZED MANUAL – ENGLISH VERSION



*Indian Red Cross Society*

St. John Ambulance Association (India) – Indian Red Cross Society National Headquarters

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## PREFACE

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First aid training is a low cost, but highly effective strategy to reduce morbidity and mortality. With the help of Belgian Red Cross Centre for Evidence Practice (CEBaP), Belgian Red Cross-Flanders and a multi-disciplinary expert panel, Indian Red Cross Society prepared the evidence-based Indian First Aid Guidelines (IFAG) in 2014 which were used to update the sixth edition of first aid Manual prepared for the general public by the St. John Ambulance (India) and the Indian Red Cross Society.

First aid has been practised in the world since antiquity. There is enough evidence that it was used to give relief to the injured and sick persons in wars and calamities in India since the times of Mahabharata. The use of first aid techniques expanded and improved with time, but it got the real fillip when the Red Cross Movement started in the world about 150 years ago. Consequently, The Indian Red Cross Society was established in 1920 through an Act of the Parliament. Until then, the St. John Ambulance carried out Red Cross work in addition to its normal activities.

To provide the right and effective help before a trained health worker is available or the victim reaches a health facility, it needs to be given by the laypersons who happen to be present wherever a person suffers from an injury or illness. This will only be possible when a large number of laypeople are trained in evidence-based first aid techniques. Presently, about 6 lakh persons are trained in India every year in the basic first aid. The number looks impressive, but is not adequate considering the huge population and vast area not having good communication facilities.

This seventh edition of the Indian First Aid Manual (IFAM) has several new and updated features. A brief on anatomy and physiology has been provided on each system. The chapter on cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) has been completely revised. More emphasis has been put on chest compression to ensure improvement in the blood supply to heart and brain, and use of direct pressure to the site of bleeding to control further bleeding. A chapter on handwashing has been added to prevent the transmission of infections between the victim and first aiders. Guidelines related to snake bites have been totally revised considering the after effects of tourniquet binding. Useful guidelines have been added for important public health problems such as diarrhoea, fever, diabetes, emergency childbirth etc. which still claim many lives.

I hope, the new Manual will be immensely useful for the laypersons as well as healthcare workers to understand the evidence-based techniques of first aid which are becoming more and more crucial in saving life in this era when the country is facing an epidemic of roadside accidents.

Dr. S.P. Agarwal

Secretary General

Indian Red Cross Society &

St. John Ambulance (India)

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## USING THIS MANUAL

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This manual is offered by the Indian Red Cross Society and the St John Ambulance Association India for use by their members and the general public. Being laymen in the field of medicine, it is expected that they will practice the basic principles of first aid and render such aid needed by the casualty (casualties) till medical aid arrives or the person(s) has (have) been transported to the hospital. The basic characteristic of this manual is to make the layman fully competent practically in the subject.


The first aid guidelines in this manual have been based on the latest available and accessible scientific and medical knowledge. In 2014, a team of Indian medical and first aid specialists publicised the Indian First Aid Guidelines (IFAG). These guidelines are developed using a rigorous and transparent methodology to overcome potential biases; are based on extensive research, data analysis and reviews; and are specifically adapted to be implemented within the Indian context. These guidelines are further complemented by the 2015 guidelines on resuscitation and first aid as published by International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR) and the American Heart Association (AHA). The editorial board reviewed the applicability of available first aid guidelines into the specific Indian context and rephrased or adapted them accordingly. For interventions where neither IFAG nor international first aid guidelines existed, or in case sufficient or scientifically evidence was not available, the editorial board decided to include the commonly applied first aid practices.


In the first chapter, this manual specifies in detail what “first aid” is about and how to deal with an emergency. It further includes basic first aid techniques the first aider should master, i.e. observing vital signs and consciousness; cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR); recovery position, the first assessment of a casualty; and handwashing.

The subsequent chapters describe a more in-depth first aid approach and techniques.



The structure of these chapters is:

- Each chapter begins with a short overview of the anatomy and physiology.
- For specific situation or condition, a list of signs and symptoms a lay person may observe and recognize are included in the section ‘*What do I see and enquire?*’
- This section is immediately followed by ‘*What do I do?*’ listing a sequence of first aid guidelines and techniques appropriate for that situation or condition. Drawings support the student/reader in understanding specific positions, techniques or signs.
- The list of guidelines and techniques is completed with a section on ‘*When to refer the casualty to a healthcare facility?*’

Please note all casualties should best consult a medical caregiver in all cases. If (urgent) patient transport is required, this is indicated by .

If the casualty normally does not require organized (ambulance) transport for further treatment, it is marked with the sign .

However, depending on the specific situation, condition of the person and severity of the injury or sickness, (ambulance) transport or even urgent transport might be required: the first aider needs to consider all elements on when and how a casualty needs to seek further medical help. In case of doubt, it is always better to arrange (urgent) transport to the healthcare facility for further medical treatment.

Important remarks are highlighted in grey text box and preceded with a  sign. Supplemental information is marked with  and printed in a smaller font.

- The contents of a first aid box are listed at the last few pages of the manual.

Throughout the manual we opted to use the terms 'injured person', 'casualty' or simply 'the person' as a person who got injured or even killed by some event. If the reason is a disease or illness, the term 'sick person' is used.

The guidelines and instructions are intended to be applied on both male and female casualties. To make the reading easier, and instead of writing 'he/she', we opted to use the pronoun 'he' meaning that the guideline or instruction is applicable both for male and female victims. Only if the intervention is specifically applicable to females, we use 'she' in the instructions.

This manual is limited in describing the guidelines, interventions and techniques in words and pictures only. To acquire a practical knowledge, it is important to practice the specific techniques, i.e. basic first aid techniques e.g. cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), how to put a person into recovery position, etc. First aid course organized by the Indian Red Cross Society and the St John Ambulance Association India are ideal opportunities in achieving a clear insight in the techniques and allows to exercise the theory into practice via simulation and on dummies.

It is advised the trained first aider to refresh their first aid knowledge by reviewing the guidelines and techniques regularly in this manual and to practice them very frequently.

The medical science is constantly in evolution. Newer scientific insights might have an influence on the approach of casualties by lay people and on the first aid guidelines and techniques. This manual is scheduled to be reviewed and updated every five years; the next review is scheduled in 2021.