



**Extensive
HeartSine AED
News and Media Coverage
in Singapore**

Defibrillators for all SAF camps soon



From June, the life-saving devices will be kept in common areas for easy access. -ST

Jermyn Chow, Defence Correspondent

Tue, Apr 02, 2013
The Straits Times

SINGAPORE - The Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) is planning to put automated external defibrillators in all camps from June this year.

The potentially life-saving devices will be kept in common areas for easy access in emergencies, such as when a serviceman suffers a heart attack.

These include "high human traffic" areas in camps and military bases where physical training is conducted, said

the Ministry of Defence.

The Sunday Times understands about 30 camps will have the devices installed.

Between 2007 and last year, two servicemen died of sudden heart attacks during or soon after their physical fitness tests.

In February this year, a national serviceman had a heart attack and collapsed while training for his fitness tests, but he survived.

The SAF's Chief of Medical Corps, Colonel (Dr) Kang Wee Lee, said having easy access to the defibrillators will improve a first responder's ability to administer basic life support, and is in line with international best practices.

Medics already carry the devices to all training activities with risk of drowning or heart trauma. These include physical fitness tests, route marches and river-crossing exercises.

Having more of the devices and making them available on SAF premises could be critical in improving the chances of survival should a serviceman suffer a heart attack.

Emergency doctors say every minute's delay in treating a heart attack victim reduces the person's chances of survival by 7 per cent to 10 per cent.

This is why it is logical to make defibrillators easily accessible in SAF camps where physical activities are conducted regularly and the risk of cardiac arrest may be relatively higher, said Tan Tock Seng Hospital ambulatory and diagnostic medicine division chairman Eillyne Seow.

"What is most crucial is how fast you can resuscitate and stabilise the casualty," said Associate Professor Seow. "So

instead of waiting for a medic to rush down, anyone should be able to apply CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and use the defibrillator in the first instance."

The defibrillator helps to "jump-start" the heart by evaluating its rhythm and jolting it into action again with an electric current.

The devices are increasingly designed to be more user-friendly and servicemen just have to follow step-by-step instructions to use one.

The number of people suffering cardiac arrests in Singapore rose from 7,242 in 2008 to 7,813 in 2011. But the number of deaths fell from 1,557 in 2008 to 1,102 in 2011.

The latest move by the SAF comes at a time when more defibrillators are being made available in places such as shopping malls, swimming pools and other sports facilities.

It also comes after a series of initiatives rolled out in recent years by the SAF to improve combat medical care.

These include teaching 20,000 recruits each year to perform CPR and use defibrillators, as well as revamping entry-level paramedics' training in 2010, to better handle cases of heat injury and heart attack cases.

jermync@sph.com.sg



For more information about HeartSine AED, please contact:

HTM Medico Pte Ltd

Tel: (65) 6744-5911

Email: sales@htmmedico.com.sg