

MEDIA RELEASE

28 September 2007

First aid to save lives on the roads this holiday

On average five people die on Australian roads each dayⁱⁱⁱ and accidents are unfortunately common during the school holidays and long weekend periods. St John Ambulance Australia urges drivers to obey the road rules and ensure they know what to do at a road accident to help reduce the road toll by up to 15%ⁱⁱⁱ.

“Immediate and correct first aid at the scene of road accidents can significantly increase the chance of survival of any casualties,” said Peter Le Cornu, Acting Chief Executive Officer, St John Ambulance Australia.

“As with any serious accident the first few minutes are crucial and the key to saving more lives is to ensure more bystanders and witnesses are equipped with the skills to help others. When it comes to car accidents, often the first on the scene will be another driver,” he continued.

St John is lobbying the government to put forward the case for compulsory first aid training for all new licences following the revelation that only seven percent^{iv} of Australians feel very confident in administering first aid at serious road accidents where people are injured.

St John, Australia’s first aid specialist has developed a simple action plan to follow in the event of a road accident.

What to do when you arrive at an accident where people are injured:

- Direct someone to call 000 for an ambulance.
- Check that there is no danger to you, safely park your car and put the hazard lights on. Light up the scene at night with headlights.

What to do with the injured person:

- Are they conscious or unconscious?
- If conscious ask them to take a big breath to see if they can breathe easily.
- With unconscious casualties it is imperative that they have a clear and open airway. If trapped in the car lift their chin off the chest.
- Stop any bleeding with direct pressure over the wound, use clothing, towels or a first aid pad.
- Look for other injuries and stabilise the head with your hands to protect the head and neck.

Manage the casualty, wherever possible, in the position found unless it is dangerous to do so.

St John recommends that every car should carry a first aid kit in case of emergencies. For further information or to learn first aid, contact St John on 1300 360 455 or www.stjohn.org.au

ENDS

NB: INTERVIEWS AVAILABLE WITH ST JOHN (NSW) SPOKESPEOPLE



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ⁱⁱ http://www.openroad.com.au/safety_roadtoll.asp

ⁱⁱⁱ Mabott, N. (2000), *Harm minimisation for victims of road trauma*, AARB Transport Research

^{iv} Findings are based on responses from 1,460 Australians aged 18 years and over. The research was conducted in November 2006 by independent consultants Stollznow Research.