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Automated Defibrillator Helps Save Georgia-Pacific Worker

May 19, 2000
Washington State

Georgia-Pacific purchased an automated external defibrillator (AED) 2 years ago, hoping to never have to use it. But last month, in the first successful industrial use of an AED in Whatcom County, the immediate efforts of co-workers and the Bellingham Fire Department helped save Stephen Batterberry's life.

On April 11, the 54 year-old Batterberry was in the steam plant at GP talking to Craig Bertucci, a fellow employee. He turned to walk away and immediately collapsed from cardiac arrest. Bertucci heard him fall, started CPR, and called for help. The Georgia-Pacific Emergency Response team arrived and applied their new AED to Batterberry. The AED analyzed Batterberry's heart rhythm and directed them to give it an electrical shock. Bellingham Fire Department emergency crews arrived just in time to hear someone yell, "Clear!" as Batterberry was shocked for the first time. He regained a pulse as a result of the defibrillation, but before he was taken to the hospital, he had to be shocked twice more by the paramedics, intubated, and given cardiac medications. By the time the ambulance arrived at the hospital, Batterberry was breathing on his own and had regained a pulse for good.

"Early electricity is where it's at," said Bellingham paramedic Dave Tveit. "This was exciting to see the AED used successfully by citizens outside the fire department. That kind of early response gives us as paramedics many more chances to save lives."

Batterberry is now recovering from the incident at home and hopes to make it back to work soon. "I'm just very thankful for the excellent response and to be alive," said Batterberry. "This was so close. If I had taken 3 or 4 more steps around the corner, no one would have seen me collapse."

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