

# How to help people who've had an electric shock

**If people touch things in contact with electricity, a current can run through their body and give them an electric shock. Children and vulnerable people can get electric shocks if they stick fingers, forks or other items in exposed sockets and outlets.**

## What do electric shocks look like?

People with electric shocks can:

- be in a lot of pain
- have tissue, nerve or muscle damage
- have seizures, which can lead to other injuries such as broken bones
- have violent spasms if they are still connected to the electricity supply
- be unconscious, as electric shocks can make their heart stop beating properly or stop them from breathing.

In extreme cases, an electric shock can kill someone.

## Prevent electric shocks

- Keep children and vulnerable people away from power boards and wall sockets.
- Put outlet plugs in all wall power points and power board outlets to stop children and vulnerable people sticking things into them.
- Don't use indoor power boards outdoors or get them wet - wet power boards can cause electric shocks.
- Don't put a power board or lead under a rug - if someone steps on it, they could damage it or any attached power cables and get an electric shock.

## How to help someone who has had an electric shock

Act immediately when you are with someone who has had an electric shock. Follow the procedure **DRSABCD**:

### 1 Danger

Check for danger to yourself, other people and the person.

**If the person is still in contact with the electricity**, do not touch them as you could also get an electric shock:

- **If you can do so safely, switch off the power** at the meter, turn off all power points and unplug all cords – remove all fuses too if you know how. Remove the person from the electrical supply.
- **If you cannot switch off the power**, use something made of wood, rubber or plastic to take the person from the electrical supply without touching them, for example, a wooden or plastic broom handle. Make sure the item is dry.

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## 2 Response

Check that the person can hear your voice and answers simple questions correctly like 'What is your name?' and 'Do you know where you are?'

## 3 Send

Phone 000 and ask for an ambulance, even if the person does not seem to be hurt.

### **If the person has burns:**

- remove jewellery and clothing from the burnt area unless they are stuck to the burn
- hold the burnt area under cool running water for 20 minutes but do not touch it to avoid infection
- cover it with clean, loose, non-stick dressing such as plastic cling film.

Black dots on the person's skin could mean they have serious internal burns so tell medical staff at the hospital about these.

**If the person does not hear your voice, cannot answer simple questions or is unconscious,** tell emergency services and follow their instructions.

## 4 Airway

**If you cannot get to a phone and the person is unconscious,** check they have nothing stuck in their mouth that could block their airway. If they do, place them on their side and remove the blockage with your fingers.

If they don't, lie them on their back, tilt their head and lift their chin, and keep their mouth open so they can breathe.

## 5 Breathing

If the person is not breathing, lie them on their back and do CPR.

## 6 CPR

**If you are on the phone with emergency services,** follow their instructions about doing CPR.

### **If you cannot get to a phone:**

- press on the person's chest 30 times
- blow two breaths into the person's mouth
- repeat the chest presses and breaths until the person wakes up or the ambulance arrives.

## 7 Defibrillator

If there is a defibrillator, follow its instructions and use it.

### **Once the ambulance arrives:**

- go to and stay with the person at the hospital, even if they seem unhurt. Tell medical staff about the incident.