

THE AED BUYER'S GUIDE

by Chip Georges

The following is a list of various question and factors to consider when purchasing an AED and/or implementing your AED Program:

There are TWO critical questions to ask when purchasing an AED. Quick research on the web or simply asking for documentation from the salesperson will suffice.

Is the company/person you are purchasing from an AUTHORIZED DISTRIBUTOR, SUB-DISTRIBUTOR, or Direct Representative of the AED Manufacturer?

This concern needs to be put at the top of the list because more and more people are selling AEDs. I hear more and more stories of that “guy” that can get his hands on a few AEDs if you need them. There are even several websites that are not Authorized Distributors of all of their AED brands. They buy certain AEDs from other distributors without any type of written and signed documents establishing their relationship. AEDs are FDA regulated devices. Distributors and direct representatives are held to strict guidelines when it comes to tracking, maintaining, and paperwork filing for the sales of AEDs. Furthermore, if a person purchases AEDs and then resells them to you, that can nullify the indemnification policy that comes with an AED Purchase. Please purchase from AUTHORIZED Providers only. Marelly AEDs & First Aid is an authorized distributor for ZOLL Medical Corporation. We will be happy to show you our documentation.

Is your sales rep that you are working with, not only knowledgeable about their AED, but also the steps that go into a complete and compliant program?

What I have said in several articles is still true: Most Safety Directors/Purchasers spend most of their time listening to one-sided sales conversations from sales reps telling them how much better their AED is than the competition and when you are going to place the order for their AED. But what about the behind-the-scenes steps involved in a complete and compliant program? The majority of AEDs require a doctor's prescription to purchase. On top of that, your state may require medical direction, medical oversight, EMS notification, and maintenance tracking of the unit. Furthermore, there may even be local ordinances you need to be aware of. Marelly AEDs & First Aid always talk about these aspects, typically before we get into the fun part: showing you our line of AEDs. We want you to feel comfortable when moving forward with your program.

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The following are more questions and facts to consider when purchasing your AED:

- 1) What is the initial cost of the AED?**
- 2) What is included in that price?** (soft carrying case, pads, batteries? Rescue accessories kit? (scissors, razor, barrier mask, gloves, washcloth)
- 3) What is the cost of adult and pediatric pads?**
- 4) What is the cost of replacement battery(s)?**
- 5) What is the true “cost of ownership” of the device?** This aspect is often overlooked. I always stress this to the buyer when I am meeting with them. How often do the pads and batteries have to be replaced? How much will it cost to upgrade the AED when newer CPR/AED guidelines come out? What seems like a good deal in the beginning can come back and haunt you with expensive maintenance costs.
- 6) What is the cost to upgrade the device when new guidelines are released?** (Every 4-6 years, the American Heart Association updates the guidelines for CPR/AED administration. Therefore, AEDs have to be upgraded with new software. Find out if the upgrade can be performed onsite at your location or if it has to be sent in.
- 7) What type of pads come with the AED?** i.e. traditional two-piece pads, or a one-piece pad?
- 8) How durable is the AED?** (All AEDs have what is called an IP (Ingress Protection) Rating. Usually labeled somewhere on the back of the AED, this rating tells you the AED’s resistance to natural elements like water and dirt/dust. The higher the rating the better. For more info, simply contact us and we can send you information on IP Ratings.
- 9) Does the AED provide audio, or audio AND visual prompts for the responder(s)?**
Hint Hint: A sudden Cardiac Arrest is not exactly a nice, calm, quiet event. Hearing an AED can be tough based upon the environment it is used in. The more audio AND visual prompts the better. The less a responder has to “pull” from memory the better.
- 10) What type of additional support will the AED provide if no shock is needed?**
FACT: 50% of the time an AED is used, the person does not initially have a shockable rhythm. However, 100% of SCA victims will need HIGH QUALITY CPR in order to survive.
- 11) What type of CPR support does the AED Provide?** None, Minimal, CPR Prompting, or real-time CPR Coaching/Feedback? The more support the better. Don’t just settle on any two-button “shock box.” The chance of a lay responder providing high quality CPR to a victim is very low, simply because that person has probably never performed CPR on a victim before. Make sure your AED provides as much support as possible, including CPR support. This will increase the chances of a successful rescue, cut down on confusion, and provide the closure that a Good Samaritan needs after a SCA event.

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