



News Release



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Quick Actions of citizens and Harbor Police help save life at San Diego International Airport

August 17, 2006 – The prompt actions of two travelers at San Diego International Airport – combined with assistance from Airport Traffic Officers and emergency procedures administered by Harbor Police officers using one of many on-site Automated External Defibrillator (AED) machines – helped save the life of a 55-year old man who collapsed outside of Terminal 1 on the morning of August 15, 2006.

Harbor Police Officers Walter Tucker and Fred Curtis were patrolling the interior of Terminal 1 when a woman approached them and requested assistance for a man who had collapsed near the parking lot at the bottom of the Terminal 1 escalator leading to the pedestrian bridge that connects the terminal to the parking lot. The officers arrived at the scene about a minute later to find two citizens already performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on the man. Officer Tucker called Emergency Services, Airport Traffic Officers and Harbor Police dispatch for backup and an AED unit, then assessed the man's condition and took over CPR administration. Harbor Police Officers Tony Hazard and Joey de Guzman then arrived and assisted Officer Tucker with the CPR.

Because the man was unresponsive to CPR and had no respiration, Officers Tucker and Curtis deployed the AED. After three attempts to deliver a shock prompted by the AED, a faint heart rhythm was detected. Officers continued administering CPR until emergency units arrived. Medic 63, an ambulance permanently assigned to the airport, transported the man to a local hospital, where he received emergency care.

Officer Tucker stressed that without the intervention of fellow travelers at the airport, the patient would have had a decreased chance of survival. "We really need to credit those who took the time to help this man out," he said. "They are really what made a difference, combined with the team effort of all emergency response units."

The save is the fifth at the Airport involving an AED. The AED program was implemented almost five years ago in conjunction with San Diego Project Heart Beat, a nationally recognized Early Access Defibrillation program managed by the San Diego Medical Services Enterprise. The Airport's AED machines have an 83% (5 out of 6) survival rate for deployments on actual cardiac arrest victims.

The San Diego Harbor Police is the law enforcement arm of the Port of San Diego. The department is made up of 146 sworn officers and 27 civilian personnel who provide law enforcement, marine fire-fighting services, airport services, public safety and Homeland Security throughout the tidelands and San Diego Bay. Harbor Police Officers patrol San Diego International Airport under contract with the San Diego county Regional Airport Authority. The department works closely with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and terrorism task forces to develop solutions to a variety of security issues.

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