First on the Scene of an Accident

Safety Talk

Professional drivers see more than their share of motor vehicle accidents as they travel the highways of our country.

They also have the unique opportunity to relieve suffering and save human lives by doing the right things when they are first on the scene of an accident.

With your cellular phone, radio or other communication device, you can call for help immediately and save valuable minutes in alerting police or ambulance crews.

Here’s a quick review of what to do at the scene of an accident:

- Do not endanger yourself in attempting to help. Check for hazards such as traffic, fallen power lines and even violent persons before entering the accident scene.
- It is also vital you protect yourself from contact with blood and other bodily fluids because of the danger of bloodborne diseases such as HIV that causes AIDS, and HBV that causes Hepatitis B. Your first aid kit should be equipped with disposable gloves and a mask to prevent such contact.
- Call for help right away. Use your own communication device. If you instruct a bystander to call the police or ambulance, tell this person to report back to you so you know the job is done.
- Check to see if the victim is breathing and has a pulse. Remember the ABCs of first aid? check the airway for obstructions, check for breathing, check circulation. You may have to start CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation), or

rescue breathing if you are trained to do so. Continue until medical personnel take over.
- Do not move the victim if you suspect a head, neck or back injury.
- Put bystanders to work, rerouting traffic, controlling crowds and directing emergency vehicles to the scene.

Besides traffic accidents, professional drivers are often first on the scenes of other emergencies. They have been the first to spot house fires and have saved people by raising the alarm. They have witnessed assaults and other crimes and have been able to contact the police quickly. They have reported mudslides, ice and other highway hazards so other motorists could avoid them.

Review company emergency response policies regularly, and keep your first aid and CPR skills up to date. Know how to quickly contact emergency responders on your radio or cellular phone. Make sure your first aid kit is stocked adequately—to help you or a stranger in an emergency.