



KENTUCKY
AGC Self Insurers' Fund

Stop the Bleed Basics & What Every Crew Should Carry

Construction sites present numerous hazards that can cause severe bleeding—power tools, sharp metal, heavy equipment, falls, struck-by incidents, crushing injuries and amputations. When life-threatening bleeding occurs, **minutes matter**. A worker can lose a dangerous amount of blood before emergency medical services arrive.

Knowing how to recognize and control severe bleeding can save a life.

Recognize Life-Threatening Bleeding. Treat bleeding as an immediate emergency when you see:

- Blood continuously flowing or spurting from a wound
- Blood pooling rapidly on the ground or soaking through clothing or bandages
- A partial or complete amputation
- A deep wound involving machinery, tools, metal, glass or other objects
- A person becoming pale, confused, weak, drowsy or unresponsive after significant blood loss

Call 911 immediately and begin bleeding control. If multiple people are present, have one person contact emergency services while another begins treatment.

Three Basic Ways to Stop Severe Bleeding:

1. **Apply direct pressure.** Expose the wound so you can identify where the blood is coming from. Using gauze, a trauma dressing or clean material, apply **firm, continuous pressure directly over the bleeding site**. Do not repeatedly lift the dressing to check the wound.
2. **Pack a deep wound.** For a deep wound where a tourniquet cannot be applied—such as the groin, shoulder or other junctional area—pack gauze firmly into the wound, concentrating pressure at the source of the bleeding. Continue packing until the wound cavity is filled, then maintain firm pressure. Hemostatic gauze can be used if available and the responder has been trained in its use.
3. **Apply a tourniquet for severe bleeding from an arm or leg.** Place the tourniquet above the bleeding wound, following the device manufacturer's instructions. Tighten it until the bleeding stops. **A properly applied tourniquet will be painful—do not loosen or remove it while waiting for EMS.** If the first tourniquet does not stop the bleeding, a second tourniquet may be applied above and next to the first.

What Every Crew Should Carry

A standard first-aid kit may not provide everything needed for catastrophic bleeding. Consider supplementing jobsite first-aid supplies with dedicated **bleeding-control kits** that are clearly marked and quickly accessible.

At minimum, a crew bleeding-control kit should include:

- Commercially manufactured tourniquets from a reputable source
- Compressed or rolled gauze for wound packing
- Hemostatic gauze or dressing
- Pressure/trauma dressing
- Nitrile medical gloves
- Trauma shears
- Permanent marker for recording tourniquet application time
- Simple bleeding-control instructions

Consider placing kits in **company vehicles, gang boxes, job trailers, equipment cabs and other readily accessible locations**, especially when crews are spread across a large project.

Equipment Is Only Part of the Solution. A bleeding-control kit is most effective when employees know how to use it. Provide hands-on training so workers can recognize life-threatening bleeding and practice applying pressure, packing wounds and using tourniquets.

Include bleeding-control supplies in routine first-aid inspections. Construction first-aid supplies must be readily accessible, and OSHA requires jobsite first-aid kits to be checked before being sent to a job and **at least weekly** to replace expended supplies.

Be Ready Before the Emergency. Every crew should know **where the nearest bleeding-control supplies are, who is trained to use them and how to summon EMS from the worksite.** On large or remote projects, evaluate whether additional kits are needed so lifesaving equipment can be reached quickly.

TRAIN THE CREW. STOCK THE KIT. KNOW WHERE IT IS. ACT FAST.

This information is intended for general safety awareness and does not replace formal first-aid or bleeding-control training. Employers should evaluate first-aid needs based on the specific hazards, workforce and emergency-response conditions at each worksite.