How important is CPR training for restaurant staff?

CPR-STAT teaches and certifies healthcare providers, daycares, businesses and the general public in CPR/AED and first aid. A popular restaurant chain contacted me recently due to an incident at their restaurant. Sadly, while eating, a patron choked, went into cardiac arrest, and later passed away. The restaurant contacted me because they felt inadequately trained to handle the situation.

According to Florida Statute 509.213 Emergency first aid to choking victims:

1. Every public food service establishment shall post a sign which illustrates and describes the Heimlich Maneuver procedure for rendering emergency first aid to a choking victim in a conspicuous place in the establishment accessible to employees.

2. The establishment shall be responsible for familiarizing its employees with the method of rendering such first aid.

After further research, I was shocked to learn that many restaurants consider the familiarization process referenced in the statute to be as basic as a manager showing each employee where the illustration is located. Most employees receive no additional training in this area.

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Welcome to the RCS Family of Clients!

St. Augustine Distillery - St. Augustine
SK2 Café - Rosemary Beach
Coast Café & Wine Bar - Grayton Beach
Fort Myers Brewing Company - Ft. Myers
World of Beer - Sarasota
Red Classico Restaurant - Sarasota
Wheat & Water Italian Kitchen - Bradenton
The Backyard Bar & Grill, LLC - Jupiter
Delray Beach Center for the Arts - Delray Beach
Goodrich Seafood & Oyster House - Oak Hill
Captain JB's Fish Camp - New Smyrna Beach
Terra Gaucha - Jacksonville
Q Ball Billiards - Jacksonville
Mellow Mushroom - Ft. Lauderdale
Coppertop Brewing Company - Boynton Beach
Nitrogen Bar,Grill, Sushi - Jupiter
Masa - Tallahassee
Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club - Naples
Grub Burger Bar - Tallahassee
The Salty Crab Bar and Grill - Ft. Myers Beach
Chanticleer Eatery - Santa Rosa Beach
Carmel Kitchen & Wine Bar - Sarasota
Miami Underground M.U.G. - Miami
LaFayette's - Orlando
Ittabena - Orlando
Club Vixens/SVC Joint Ventures - Davie
Merlin Entertainment - Orlando
Viva Saloon - Key West
Santiago's Bodega - Altamonte Springs
Greenwell Bat-A-Ball Inc. - Cape Coral
The Courtyard Wine Bar & Café - New Smyrna Beach
ROW Seafood & Off the Hook - Naples
Spanky's Speakeasy - Naples
The Birchwood - St. Petersburg
Applebee's #103 - Tampa
World of Beer - Ft. Myers
The Shim Sham Room - Jacksonville Beach
Scarlett O’Hara’s - St. Augustine
BurgerQ - Miami
Head Pinz - Ft. Myers
Duffy's Sports Grill - Altamonte Springs
Union Burger - Lake Nona
Total Wine & More - Altamonte Springs
Pulse - Orlando
La Palace - Orlando
Addison Condominium Assoc. Inc. - Boca Raton
Comer Woodford Hospitality Group - Panama City Beach
Corkscrew Bar & Grille - New Smyrna Beach
Treviso Bay - Naples
PK's Play Zone & Grill - Tampa
T.P.C. Tampa Bay - Lutz
Salute Market - Palm Beach Gardens
Red Rock Oasis & Grill - Coconut Creek
Melbourne Greyhound Park - Melbourne
Beach Club - Palm Beach
World of Beer - Bradenton
Postcard Inn at Holiday Isle
Winter Park Racquet Club
Candy Apple Café & Cocktails - Jacksonville
Doubletree by Hilton - Miami
The Woods - Jupiter
The Local Market - Destin
AJ's Seafood & Oyster Bar - Destin
The Hyde Out - Tampa
World of Beer - Tampa
Heritage Pines Community - Hudson
Clark's Fish Camp - Jacksonville

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Each year, over 300,000 Americans suffer an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA). In addition, 4000 people die annually from choking. Choking leads to cardiac arrest if the person's airway is not cleared. Once cardiac arrest occurs, the victim's chance of survival falls 7-10% every minute without CPR. Considering that it often takes EMS well over five minutes to arrive, it is vital that bystanders or staff members perform CPR as soon as possible. Effective CPR provided immediately after sudden cardiac arrest can DOUBLE or TRIPLE a victim's chance of survival, yet only 32% of cardiac arrest victims are administered CPR from a bystander. As a former firefighter/EMT, I am well aware this unwillingness to help is often due to lack of training.

Section 3 of the statute addresses liability if the establishment and/or its employees fail to help a choking victim:

(3) This section shall not be construed to impose upon a public food service establishment or employee thereof a legal duty to render such emergency assistance, and any such establishment or employee shall not be held liable for any civil damages as the result of such act or omission when the establishment or employee acts as an ordinary reasonably prudent person would have acted under the same or similar circumstances.

While Florida’s statute only requires employees to be familiarized with the method of rendering choking assistance and provides an affirmative defense in the absence of action, why not err on the side of caution and ensure that properly trained and CERTIFIED staff could save a life?

Our on-site training and certification is done in a relaxed environment and fits your busy schedule. If you feel that your restaurant or business could benefit from CPR/AED/first aid training, contact me at the email or number below.

~by Ryan Rapp, Owner, CPR-STAT
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