



For Immediate Release: 03.04.05

From: David Powers
Communications Director
708.358.5781

Contact: Mark Puknaitis
Deputy Fire Chief
708.358.5609

Discount on Life-Saving Devices May End Soon

Time may be running out to purchase a life-saving Automatic External Defibrillator – or AED – at a steeply discounted price through the Oak Park Fire Department.

A program that allows fire departments in Illinois to purchase AEDs for \$1,250 each instead of the typical \$2,800 and then re-sell them in the community is scheduled to expire at the end of March unless the state legislature approves an extension.

"We are hopeful that the program will be extended," said Deputy Fire Chief Mark Puknaitis who oversees Oak Park's AED program. "But there is no guarantee. Given the uncertainty of the program's future, we are urging any organization that wishes to purchase an AED to contact the Fire Department now."

An AED is a small, portable device that when attached to an individual's chest will administer an electric shock if cardiac arrest is underway. AEDs are designed to allow individuals with minimal knowledge to operate them properly. The devices actually read the heart rhythms of the victim, tell the user how to proceed and will deliver a shock only if symptoms dictate.

"We've had six lives saved in the Village because of the availability of AEDs," Puknaitis said. "They are used quite frequently and their presence in public buildings is constantly growing."

With 105 AED units currently dispersed throughout the Village, Oak Park has more AEDs per capita than any other community in Illinois according to Puknaitis. You can find AEDs in all Oak Park schools, Park District facilities, most municipal vehicles, the YMCA, Township buildings, churches, many businesses, senior complexes and physical fitness centers.

But Puknaitis says the Oak Park Fire Department would like to see even more AEDs in the Village.

"It just stands to reason that the greater their availability, the more lives they will save," he said.

-more-

AEDs
2-2-2

Just having these easy-to-use tools available to treat a heart attack victim is not much good, however, unless individuals know how, and are willing to use them, fire department officials say. That's why the Oak Park Fire Department also offers training to help citizens learn to act during those first few critical moments when an AED can be the difference in whether a heart attack victim lives or dies.

Combined AED and CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) training is offered the first and third Wednesday of the month at Fire Department Headquarters, 100 North Euclid Ave. Training is free to residents, but participants must purchase a \$10 instruction manual. Pre-registration is required.

For more information on AED purchases or training, call 708.445.3300 or email fire@oak-park.us. A training class schedule also is posted on the Fire Department section of the Village website at www.oak-park.us.

###