

# Managing a Motorcycle Crash -101: Part III

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Here's the story. . . you're out for a ride and stopped to render first aid to a downed rider. While awaiting the ambulance you've said your ABCs. A is for airway, B is for breathing, and: C is for circulation. You can look for problems with circulation just by looking at the injured party. Do you see any bleeding? If yes, put a dressing on it (from your first aid kit) and apply direct pressure to the wound through the dressing (or shirt or bandana). This is where the trauma shears come in handy to cut off clothes in the way so that you can expose any injury. Don't forget your non-latex gloves! Tourniquets used to be highly discouraged from use but are starting to make a comeback in first aid. However, they should only be employed as a last resort if you are unable to control the bleeding with direct pressure, elevation (if it's an arm or leg injury) and use of pressure points (all of which you learned about in a first aid class, right?). As gruesome as it sounds, if there are pieces missing from the rider gather them for EMS when they arrive. To keep them clean you may place them in your one gallon first aid kit (if they fit). With the miracles of modern medicine you'd be amazed at what can be reattached these days.

Not bleeding you say? Okay, look at their skin. Is it pink? Is it pale? Is it grey? Pink is good; the other two aren't so good. If they're pale or grey and covered in cold sweat they're most likely going into shock; unless of course it's raining and chilly out then everyone will be pale, cold and wet. But, let's assume it's a nice day out, the temperature is in the low 80's. The injured person is pale and covered in cold sweat, what do you do now? Cover them with something to keep them from losing any more body heat and try to find something to elevate their legs (a detachable saddlebag?). What is happening is the body is trying to save itself by shutting down the blood flow to the extremities and keeping the heart and brain and other vital organs oxygenated with whatever blood is not leaking out from their injuries. Elevating the legs assists the body with this. There's not much else you can do now until help arrives, but be aware the person may vomit without warning at some point due to the this very process of the body trying to save itself. If this happens return to A and roll them to their side to keep their airway clear.

Now take another deep breath and pat yourself on the back for a job well done! Or, stumble away from the injured cyclist before you revisit your last meal! Hey, it's happened to the best of us on occasion - including the professionals!

Part I of this article started out discussing first aid kits. There is so much more to managing the scene of a motor vehicle crash than just bandaging wounds. The most important items that need to go in your kit are not listed in the initial inventory. These are training and practical know how. Be prepared for the worst, but expect the best! Take a CPR class and recertify every two years because as research continues the rules do change. Take a first aid class. It's unfortunate that these are not required courses in high school and for obtaining any degree in college. You owe it to yourself, your family, your riding buddies, and the stranger in need that you may happen to cross paths with one day to know what you can do to help. My wish to you is: May you never need to use this training! But be prepared just in case!  
Ride Safe!

Disclaimer: The purpose of this article is not to teach the layperson the skills mentioned above. This should be done in a professional class setting as it involves skills that may cause harm if performed incorrectly. Seek an organization in your area like Accident Scene Management, Inc. (<http://www.accidentscene.net/>), the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association or your local hospital to learn more.

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