



New Jersey Department of Human Services  
Division of Developmental Disabilities

## Identifying Life Threatening Emergencies

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- ❖ You must call 9-1-1 in the event of a life-threatening emergency.
- ❖ **Ask yourself:**
  - **Could this condition be potentially fatal?**
  - **Could the condition get worse and become life threatening if you drove the person to the hospital on your own?**
  - **Could moving the person on your own cause further injury?**
  - **Does the person require the skills/equipment of emergency medical personnel?**
- ❖ Life-threatening emergencies may include:
  - Unconsciousness, unusual confusion/disorientation or losing consciousness
  - Difficulty breathing, not breathing, or breathing in a strange way
  - Having persistent chest pain, discomfort or pressure which persists for more than 3 -5 minutes or that goes away and comes back
  - Severe bleeding from a body part
  - Broken bone that is showing through the skin or severe disfigurement of body part
  - Severe headache with slurred speech
  - Seizures that are not typical or back-to-back (3 in a row)
  - Seizures lasting longer than 5 minutes
  - Seizure resulting in serious injury; seizure in someone who is pregnant; seizure in someone who is diabetic; seizure in someone for the first time
  - Serious injury to head, neck or back
- ❖ Call 9-1-1 first **before** your supervisor in a life-threatening emergency.
- ❖ If you are unsure whether a situation is a life-threatening emergency, call 9-1-1. If the situation is *not* life-threatening, call your supervisor and provide appropriate care, including obtaining medical attention.