

Epilepsy and Seizure First Aid for Law Enforcement personnel

Epilepsy is a chronic neurological disorder that causes a person to have 2 or more recurrent, unprovoked seizures in their lifetime.

Types of seizures and their symptoms

A seizure occurs when there is brief excessive electrical activity in the brain. **Law enforcement must be able to recognize and respond properly during a seizure and prevent adverse health events or inappropriate law enforcement actions.** While there are more than 20 different kinds of seizures the most common are:

Generalized (affects the whole brain)		Partial (affects part of the brain)	
Absence	Tonic Clonic	Simple Partial	Complex Partial
Characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blank dazed stare Sometimes blinking and chewing motion Lasts a few seconds 	Characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of consciousness Muscle rigidity Convulsions Lasts 1-3 mins 	Characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full consciousness Jerking of one part of the body Sensory experiences Possible feeling of fear or insecurity 	Characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Altered consciousness Being out of touch with surroundings Random and purposeless activities which may include picking at clothing and/or aimless walking Lasts 1 -3 mins
What to do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No First Aid needed Document in Seizure Observation record 	What to do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn person on side Remove objects/glasses Use something soft under head Stay calm & stay with the person Time seizure 	What to do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No First Aid needed 	What to do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay calm and reassure others Track time Check for medical I.D. Do not restrain Gently direct away from hazards Stay until they are fully alert and aware If seizure lasts 5 minutes or another seizure begins before full consciousness is achieved, follow the emergency protocol

A seizure is an emergency in the following scenarios:

- A first time seizure
- A convulsive seizure lasting more than 5 minutes
- Repeated seizures without regaining consciousness
- More seizures than usual or change in type
- Person is injured, has diabetes or is pregnant
- Seizure occurs in water
- Normal breathing does not resume
- Parents request emergency evaluation

While someone is having seizures DO NOT

- Taser the person
- Restrain or hold them
- Put anything in their mouth
- Leave them alone until awake and aware
- Give liquids by mouth until fully conscious
- Keep a person on their back or face down during or after a seizure
- Obstruct or block airway

Important to note when someone with Epilepsy is being arrested:

- They may have medication on them which should not be regarded as evidence of illegal drug use
- If they are being taken into custody they must still have access to their medication to be able to take them on time and as directed by their health care provider
- Use of a Taser may interrupt the normal function of an implanted anti-seizure device
- Depending on the type of seizure the person may be confused, unable to respond verbally, may act agitated, etc. Check their awareness and ability to respond first before aggressive measures