

Industry news: Take Heart: Philips has brought essential, life-saving technology to South Africa

Philips Medical Systems has introduced the world-class Philips HeartStart FR2+ defibrillator to South Africa.

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This lifesaving device, which has recently been installed at Cape Town International Airport, enables **anyone** to quickly and easily apply life-saving defibrillation therapy to a victim of sudden cardiac arrest.

For more than a century Philips has pioneered technology that makes life better. Now they are taking their commitment one step further; creating products that not only enhance life but also help preserve it. Optimised for challenging environments (such as airports and supermarkets), the Philips HeartStart Fr2+ Defibrillator is engineered to withstand temperature extremes, wet conditions and harsh use. It combines natural sounding voice instructions that are loud and clear, with text prompts on a large, bright back-lit display, ideal in noisy or poorly lit settings.

But, perhaps the most significant benefit of the HeartStart (aside from having the ability to save lives) is the fact that anyone can use it. The automated external defibrillator (AED) is a computerised medical device that will check the patient's heart rhythm, recognise a rhythm that requires a shock and advise the rescuer what shock is needed. For this reason, the HeartStart FR2+ AED is not only ideal, but essential for all public areas. In fact, it is even perfect for home use.

Statistics show that approximately 120 heart attacks are reported a day in South Africa, one every twelve minutes. Moreover, more than 70% of sudden cardiac arrests happen in the home. Even more frightening is the fact that should you go into sudden cardiac arrest, your chances of survival are reduced by 10% for every minute wasted. With unreliable emergency response times countrywide, are you prepared to take the risk?

Cape Town International Airport isn't. They have installed the Philips HeartStart FR2+ in high traffic areas at the airport so that they are freely accessible to members of the public in the event of an emergency. "As a gateway to the region, we are determined to ensure that we maintain International best practice. We are extremely excited about the AEDs and while we hope there will never be a need to use them, we are satisfied that our airport users can feel a little safer knowing that these machines are available", says Deidre Hendricks, Communications Manager, Airports Company South Africa, Cape Town International Airport.

Furthermore, this world class machine is stored in a specialised cabinet that will set off alarms once activated, immediately alerting any security and/or medical professionals that may be able to offer further assistance. Medical, fire and other key personnel have also been re-trained in new procedure of CPR as the HeartStart is compliant with updated CPR protocols. "Service to our airport users is viewed very seriously at ACSA. This is why in addition to the onsite clinic and our medically trained rescue personnel, we have gone further and had the machines installed. We are simply not prepared to leave anything open to chance", said Hendricks.

Ysterplaat Medical Supplies (YMS) Official distributor of the Philips HeartStart in the Western Cape said that further installations will be made countrywide before the end of the year.

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