

## **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU WITNESS AN ACCIDENT**

One should know what to do if one comes across an accident even though one may hope that one never witnesses one. Very often there is confusion at scene of accident, every one tries to help, fright over rules good judgement and this often contributes to further patient injury. It is very important to extricate the patient properly from the site of accident, provide first aid and then transfer the accident victim in an appropriate transport to the nearest major accident and emergency centre while repeatedly assessing him/her enroute. This should be done by trained personnel. The importance of this prehospital management is evident from US Statistics which reveal that establishment of proper services reduced mortality rate in severe accidents from 33% in 1972 to 4.2% in 1986.

If you witness a car accident and there is an injury, immediately contact an ambulance service like Centralised Accident and Trauma Services (CATS), Highway Road Traffic Patrol or a nearby hospital. You could inform the local police patrol which also evacuates many such victims. If you don't have a cell phone, ask others on the scene to call, or try to find a phone in a nearby house or shop.. If you cannot locate a telephone at or near the accident, drive to the nearest phone and then return to the scene. Here are some tips on what you could do till such time help is available:

- ◆ Try to determine if there are any injured people without putting yourself in danger. Make victims as comfortable as possible, cover with a blanket or sit with him/her. Do not move them since moving an injured person can turn a minor injury into a serious one.
- ◆ Try and get someone else also to help
- ◆ Warn oncoming vehicles about the accident by using something such as a flag and direct traffic past the accident scene. At night, use car headlights or a flashlight to illuminate the area and direct traffic
- ◆ Stay out of the way of the emergency staff and leave the scene as soon as possible. You've done all you can.

You could keep a flashlight, a first aid kit, a notepad ,a pen, a blanket, and a cell phone in your car at all times - just in case you witness an accident. These items are, of course, useful for other situations, too.