

Road Traffic Accident

If you have called the Police and/or the RSPCA and you realise that their response may be too late, then attempt the following advice only if you have familiarised yourself prior.

- Approach the animal with caution; even your own pet may bite if it is in pain or shock.
- Talk to the animal, reassure it.
- If the animal is not having breathing difficulties, then you could muzzle an aggressive patient. A scarf will do for this, but remember to approach from behind the animal's head to avoid a nasty nip.
- If it is necessary to move the animal; use a blanket or a coat as a stretcher to carefully move the animal to safety.
- Assess the situation and take the ABC approach, as in human First Aid.

AIRWAY

Check that the airway is clear, and the tongue is forward.

BREATHING

If the airway is clear but you can hear a 'sucking' noise, air is coming in and out of the wound. Apply a moistened pad to the wound and gently press on the area to prevent air entering and the lung collapsing.

CIRCULATION

If the heart has stopped beating, attempt gentle heart massage.

SHOCK

...is inevitable. Try to keep the animal warm and talk reassuringly.

BLEEDING

Cover open wounds. If the blood is bright red coming in spurts, a major artery may have been severed.

Do not apply a tourniquet!

Cover with a pad, do not remove soaked cloths, add layers to the pressure pad, and maintain firm pressure until you get to the surgery or the Vet arrives.

There are some important do's and don'ts when dealing with something as serious as a road traffic accident.

- Don't panic!
- Don't move the patient unless you must!
- Don't give the animal anything to eat or drink!
- Don't raise the animal's head or prop it up, even if it is unconscious, as saliva, blood or vomit may run down and block the airway!
- Do gently talk to the animal all the time!
- Do carry a pet first aid box, and your Vet's telephone number with you, always! Please read our page First Aid Kit

In general, being equipped with a 'pet' first aid kit at home and in the car is essential, but it is only useful if you have familiarised yourself with the basic procedures in advance of anything happening, by then, there's no time to refer to a book!

Overcoming panic and keeping the animal calm are vital steps in any emergency. Once you have control, even the basic pet first aid skills will help anyone deal confidently with the patient.

SO BE CONFIDENT AND BE PREPARED

However, as previously stated, only intervene if you know what to do!

And remember to ensure the animal is scanned for an Identification chip.

FACTS...

- Call 999 and they will divert you to the correct department.
- A road traffic accident if involving a stray dog must always be reported to the police.
- A stray dog is no longer the responsibility of the police.

For more information... www.askthe.police.uk