

# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

KEYSTONE COMMUNITY RESOURCES, INC.

KEYSTONE INDEPENDENT LIVING, INC.



**Policy Title:**  
**Epilepsy**

**Chapter:**

**Effective Date:**  
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**Executive Director**

## SCOPE:

- Chapter 6400 – Community Homes For Individuals With Mental Retardation

## INTRODUCTION:

1. **Epilepsy** Seizure is a symptom of a disorder called epilepsy. Seizures are frightening to the untrained, but they are easily controlled by persons who understand what they are and who remember a few simple actions to help the person who is epileptic. Epilepsy is a disorder of the electrical rhythms of the central nervous system. It causes the brain to lose control over consciousness thinking processes, the senses, and the muscles of the body. A seizure may vary from small lapse of consciousness or minor twitching in some persons to a major convulsion of the body's muscles, the partial or total loss of consciousness, mental confusion, or interference with body functions in others. Persons having epileptic seizures may lose the ability to stand. They may fall down, shake uncontrollably, stop breathing temporarily, or urinate or defecate on the selves. Although there are many different kinds of seizures, they all have one thing in common- in most cases they can be controlled with medicine and other methods. First aid for epilepsy is basically very simple, and is designed to protect the safety of the person until the seizure stops naturally by itself. These are the key items to remember:

- All individuals with a history of seizures must receive continuous supervision while in the shower or bathtub. If you called away to an emergency assist the person out of the shower/tub first and then respond to the other emergency.
- Keep calm and reassure other people who may be nearby.
- Clear the area around the person of anything hard or sharp.
- Loosen ties or anything around the neck that may make breathing difficult.
- Put something flat and soft, like a folded jacket, under the head.
- Turn him/her gently onto his/her side. This will help keep the airway clear. Do not try to force his/her mouth open with any hard implement or with fingers. It is not true that a person having a seizure can swallow their tongue, and efforts to hold the tongue down can injure the teeth or jaw.

- Don't hold the person down or try to stop his movements.
  - Stay with the person until the seizure ends naturally.
  - Be friendly and reassuring as consciousness returns.
  - Inform the nurse on duty and record the type of seizure and duration on an incident report.
  - During a major seizure, a person may stop breathing. Do not institute emergency resuscitation (CPR), except in the event that the person does not start breathing again after the seizure stops.
2. If you know the person has epilepsy, it is usually not necessary to call an ambulance unless the seizure lasts for more than ten minutes, unless another seizure begins soon after the first, or unless the person cannot be awakened after the jerking movements have stopped. There is no need for any first aid if a person has brief periods of staring or shaking of the limbs. If someone has the kind of non-convulsive seizure that involves a dazed state and automatic behavior, the best thing to do is:
- Watch the person carefully and explain to others what is happening.
  - Speak quietly, calmly and friendly.
  - Guide the person gently away from any danger, such as a steep flight of steps, a busy highway, or a hot stove. Don't grab unless some immediate danger threatens. People having this kind of seizure are on "automatic pilot" as far as their movements are concerned, and instinct may make them struggle or lash at the person who is trying to hold them.
  - Stay with the person until full consciousness returns.
  - Inform the nurse-on-duty and record the type of seizure and duration on an incident report.

## **DISCUSSION:**