

Job site: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Foreman: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 G.C. \_\_\_\_\_

**SMOHIT Safety Sense**

**Toolbox Talks for the Sheet Metal Industry**

**Choking**

- Choking occurs when the airway becomes obstructed. This can either happen when a victim is conscious or unconscious. The most common cause of airway obstruction in an unconscious victim is the tongue falling back into the airway, and can be corrected by pushing the victim's head back, and lifting the chin upward. Generally, a conscious victim begins to choke due to a partially or fully obstructed airway from food, gum, or tobacco.
- When the airway is fully obstructed, the victim will not be able to speak, breath, or cough, and may turn pale, then blue. He/she will usually grab at the throat, which is the universal distress signal for choking.
- To help a conscious victim whose airway is obstructed:
  - Determine if the airway obstruction is partial or complete. If the obstruction is partial, encourage the victim to cough.
  - If there is no air exchange, stand behind the victim and place your arms around his/her waist.
  - Grasp one fist in your other hand and position the thumb side of your fist against the middle of the victim's abdomen between the lower tip of the sternum and the navel. Press your fist into the victim's abdomen with a quick upward thrust.
  - Repeat thrusts if necessary, ensuring that each new thrust is separate and distinct. Repeat procedure until the obstruction is expelled or the victim becomes unconscious.
- To help an unconscious victim whose airway is obstructed:
  - Position victim on his/her back and straddle the victim's hips.
  - Place the heel of one hand against the middle of the victim's abdomen between the lower tip of the sternum and navel with fingers pointing toward the victim's chest. Place your other hand on top of the first.
  - Press into the victim's abdominal area with a quick upward thrust.
  - Open the victim's mouth and grasp the dislodged foreign object to remove it.

**Instructor Tips**

- **Demonstrate the universal distress signal for choking.**
- **Explain to workers that if they are alone, they can use their own fist as described in the talk, or they may bend over the back of a chair and exert downward pressure.**

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