



The Band-Aid

Over my summer vacation I discovered just how important a band-aid could be. Working for the Health Department and attending all of the extra trainings has made me more prepared for minor emergencies. Before embarking on a 3,000 mile journey through Nevada, California, Arizona and Utah I decided that I should get some water and other provisions, considering the sweltering 117 degrees it was outside. I went to the front desk the evening before to get two important things, 1. the directions to the local mega-mart and 2. the directions to Death Valley National Park.

As the Concierge was looking for my directions a slightly panicked and very frantic person ran up to the counter. She exclaimed, “Someone has been hurt. It’s not too bad but he may need stitches. I am a nurse and I need a butterfly band-aid.” The concierge looks to me and asks again where I was planning to travel to.

I was perplexed. A paying guest took precedence over a minor emergency! I looked at this nicely dressed woman and looked back at the front desk help. Understanding the needs of a bleeding person that may need stitches came well before my directions to Death Valley, I told the front desk person to find the first aid kit.

I learned long ago that the donut glazed over eyes with the blank faced stare is never something you want to see from a person who is supposed to help you. To my utter shock and surprise the clerk walked away and went to the back for what seemed like an eternity.

I spoke with the frazzled woman to help her calm down a bit. I discovered that her boyfriend was the bass player in a band that was playing at the hotel bar. Some

equipment fell and he had a two inch gash on his forehead. Cancelling the concert was not an option, but forehead wounds bleed like crazy and she needed to do something quickly.

We waited a few more moments for the clerk to return. "I am sorry miss, but we don't have a first aid kit". Realizing that the moment needed some decisive action, I switched into lawyer mode. "You mean the front desk does not have a first-aid kit?" He responded with a "Yes." Does housekeeping have a first aid kit? "No", Do the employees have a first aid kit? No. If you fell and hurt yourself who would you call? Security.

Aha! So security was the answer to getting the person help. So security might have a band-aid?

Yes. Some of the guards have been EMT trained.

"Great," I said, you call security and have them report to the café with the band-aids.

In an abundance of caution, I always carry a small first aid kit with me when I travel. I have used it only once, but I feel better knowing it is there. I looked at the woman and said, "I have a first-aid kit in my room. It is small, but at least it is something. I will meet you at the café." Dashing up to my room, I went over to my carry on and after a few seconds of searching I found my trusty kit. I went back downstairs and on the way saw the security guard that had been dispatched with his one band-aid.

The security guard saw me and told me to go back to my room. I headed back toward the elevator, but then my Health Department trainings kicked in. I knew what I needed to do. At the very least I needed to find the woman and let her know that I had come back. I needed to make sure that I was no longer a necessary part of the equation!

After three times through the concepts of Incident Command training and the importance of making sure I was not needed, Security let me into the Club/Café. Within seconds I found the woman. She was still in distress! The Security Guard was unable to help her boyfriend, who was now on stage playing. The large (still bleeding) gash on his head was mostly covered by a folded napkin sandwiched in by a large hat.

When I handed over my first-aid kit complete with alcohol swabs and butterfly band-aids, I thought this woman was going to cry. She gave me a huge hug, bought me a drink and invited me to stay as a guest of the band for the rest of the night. It makes me laugh to think that I was a band aid for the evening!