

How to carry out a primary survey using DRABC

The primary survey helps you to quickly identify whether there's an immediate threat to the casualty's life, as well as what their needs may be. You should carry out five key steps during the primary survey, which you can remember with the DRABC acronym:

Danger  Assess the area for any dangers that could put you, the casualty, or anyone else at risk, e.g. fire, broken glass, and do what you can to make it safe. Once it is, you can approach the casualty.

Response  Check whether the casualty is responsive by asking if they're okay. If there is no response, gently tap them on the top of their arms and gently shake their shoulders.

Airway  Check that their airway is open and free from obstructions by placing your hand on their forehead and gently tilting their head back. Remove any visible obstructions but do not put your fingers in their mouth if there are no visible ones.

Breathing  Check that the casualty is breathing normally. Look for chest movements and listen for breathing sounds, and feel for air from their mouth or nose on your cheek for 10 seconds. If they are unresponsive but breathing normally, put them in the recovery position. If they are unresponsive and not breathing normally or at all, start CPR.

Circulation  Only move onto this stage if the casualty is breathing independently. Look for any signs of severe bleeding and help to control any bleeding by applying direct pressure to the wound.