**Safe Airway Position** (LO 3.3, 3.4)

When someone is unresponsive the ability of the casualty to maintain their airway is progressively lost. When conscious we cough and swallow to keep our airway clear – unresponsive casualties lose the ability to do this. If we leave them in a supine position (lying on their back) it becomes difficult for them to maintain their airway. There is a risk their tongue may fall back and block their airway, there is also a risk of the casualty choking on their own vomit or breathing vomit and other body fluids into their airways.

To enable the casualty to manage their own airway and to ensure our casualty has a **STABLE, OPEN, DRAINING AIRWAY** (**SODA)** we need to place the casualty in a position that results in the tongue falling forward and any fluids draining away from the back of the throat.

We call this position the **SAFE AIRWAY POSITION**

* Remove glasses, check pockets and look for Medic-Alerts – loosen off any tight clothing
* Move the arm closest to you away from the casualty – DO not force it into a position it does not want to go
* With your left hand take hold of the casualty’s far hand and bring it over so it is resting back of hand to cheek
* Reach over with your right arm and lift the outside leg under the knee – hold so it does not flop down
* Use the knee as a lever to roll the casualty towards you whilst supporting their head. Pull the knee up so the casualty does not roll onto their front
* Arrange the casualty’s head so you are confident any liquids will drain out of their mouth - if you are outside consider placing something under their head to make them more comfortable
* Call 999/112
* Check for breathing regularly whilst waiting for emergency help

**Considerations:**

* Danger! Do you need to move your casualty first?
* If the casualty is injured is there a better side to roll them onto? Consider chest injuries and broken bones.
* In an outdoors environment you will need to consider the effects of the cold – do you have anything to place under and over the casualty to keep them warm and prevent the situation getting any worse. Outdoor activity providers will be carrying foil blankets, people shelters and bivvy bags but even in an office or industrial workplace you should consider including equipment that keeps a casualty warm in or with your first aid kit.
* Roll pregnant women onto their left side
* If you are waiting for medical assistance, roll the casualty onto their other side after 30 minutes unless other injuries prevent you from doing this



**Swift First Aid**

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