Evaluation

Check for victim response

No response

Open the airway and check for breathing;
if breathing, perform pulmonary auscultation;
if not breathing,
give 5 initial breaths and check for carotid pulse

Pulse absent

Obvious physical evidence of death
(e.g., rigor mortis, decomposition, hemisection, decapitation)

No obvious physical evidence of death

Pulse present

Response

Perform pulmonary auscultation

Abnormal

Rales in all pulmonary fields
(acute pulmonary oedema)

Hypotension or shock

Normal blood pressure

Rales in some pulmonary fields

Normal

With cough

Without cough

Grade

Dead

Grade 6

Grade 5

Grade 4

Grade 3

Grade 2

Grade 1

Rescue

Intervention

None

Start CPR
(ABC sequence);
after return of spontaneous ventilation, follow intervention for grade 4

Start artificial ventilation;
respiratory arrest is usually reversed after a few imposed breaths;
after return of spontaneous ventilation,
follow intervention for grade 4

Administer high-flow oxygen by face mask or orotracheal tube and mechanical ventilation

Monitor breathing because respiratory arrest can still occur; start crystalloid infusion and evaluate for use of vasopressors

Low-flow oxygen

Advanced medical attention and oxygen should not be required

None

Further Management

Forensic evaluation

Intensive care unit

Emergency department

If no co-existing conditions, evaluate further or release from the accident site