

Northern stores install defibrillators

North West Company puts the emergency medical devices in all stores in Canada

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The North West Company has installed defibrillators in all of its Northern Store and NorthMart locations.

The company installed the devices in all 164 of its stores in Canada, which includes its Northern Store, NorthMart and Giant Tiger locations, at a cost of \$150,000. Defibrillators are also being installed in the company's stores in Alaska and the South Pacific.



The North West Company has installed defibrillators in all of its Northern Store and NorthMart locations. (CBC)

A defibrillator restarts a heart with an electric shock. Automated external defibrillators — the kind being installed in large sports centres and other public places across Canada — can tell if a person's heart has stopped beating and deliver a shock if needed.

Michael McMullen, executive vice-president of Northern Canada retail for the North West Company, said all store managers have been trained in how to use the machines, and received additional training in CPR.

"Down here in Winnipeg, we've seen the defibrillators go into all the sports complexes and many public service buildings, and we thought, in the North, we're one of the few major buildings in our communities," he said.

McMullen said this capability is especially important in rural and isolated communities.

"Over the years we've heard of numerous incidents in smaller communities where a defibrillator would have been valuable," he said.

"We've heard of it saving lives; we've also heard where they weren't available and where people's lives were lost and I think that impacted us more."