



Guide To First Aid in the Workplace



Regulation 3 of the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 states:

'An employer shall provide, or ensure that there are provided, such equipment and facilities as are adequate and appropriate in the circumstances for enabling first-aid to be rendered to his employees if they are injured or become ill at work'.

An employer should make an assessment of need to ascertain the appropriate level of first aid cover for his workplace.

In assessing need, employers need to consider:

- Workplace hazards and risks,
- Size of the organisation,
- History of accidents,
- Nature and distribution of workforce,
- Remoteness of site from emergency and medical services,
- The needs of travelling, remote and lone workers,
- Employees working on shared or multi occupied sites,
- Annual leave and other absences of first aiders and appointed persons.

The selection of first-aiders depends on a number of factors, including an individual's:

- Reliability, disposition and communication skills
- Aptitude and ability to absorb new knowledge and learn new skills,
- Ability to cope with stressful and physically demanding emergency procedures,
- Normal duties. These should be such that they may be left to go immediately and rapidly to an emergency.

Where a first aider is deemed necessary then the person selected must have a valid certificate of competence in First Aid at Work (FAW) or Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW). [EFAW training](#) enables a first-aider to give emergency first aid to someone who is injured or becomes ill while at work.

FAW courses involve at least 18 hours of training and are run over a minimum of three days. EFAW lasts for at least six hours of training and is run over a minimum of one day.

FAW and EFAW certificates last for three years. Before their certificates expire, first-aiders will need to undertake an FAW requalification course or an EFAW course, as appropriate, to obtain another three-year certificate

HSE strongly recommends that first-aiders undertake annual refresher training, over half a day, during any three-year FAW/EFAW certification period.

Where an employers assessment identifies that a first-aider is not necessary, the minimum requirement is to appoint a person to take charge of the first aid arrangements, including looking after equipment, facilities and calling emergency services when required. Arrangements should be made to ensure that an appointed person is available at all times when people are at work. Appointed persons are not qualified first-aiders. However employers are strongly advised to consider giving appointed persons 'emergency first aid training'. These training courses would normally last about 4 hours and cover:

- What to do in an emergency,

- Cardio-pulmonary resuscitation,
- First aid for the unconscious casualty,
- First aid for the wounded or bleeding.

In the regulations, there are suggested content lists covering the contents of first aid containers and travelling first aid kits. The contents of these should be determined after a risk assessment is conducted taking into account the factors in the lists above but as a minimum stock of first aid items would normally be:

- A leaflet giving general guidance on first aid
- 20 individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings (assorted sizes), appropriate to the type of work (dressings may be of a detectable type for food handlers)
- Two sterile eye pads
- Four individually wrapped triangular bandages (preferably sterile)
- Six safety pins
- Six medium sized individually wrapped sterile unmedicated wound dressings – approximately 12cm x 12 cm
- Two large sterile individually wrapped unmedicated wound dressings – approximately 18 cm x 18 cm
- One pair of disposable gloves

Employers should also provide a suitable first aid room or rooms where the assessment of first aid needs identifies this as necessary.

First aid personnel should be provided where there has been an identified need and should be of sufficient numbers and at appropriate locations to enable first aid to be administered without

From your risk assessment, what degree of hazard is associated with your work activities?	How many employees do you have?	What first-aid personnel do you need?
Low hazard e.g. offices, shops, libraries	Less than 25	At least one appointed person
	25-50	At least one first-aider trained in EFAW
	More than 50	At least one first-aider trained in FAW for every 100 employed (or part thereof)
Higher hazard e.g. light engineering and assembly work, food processing, warehousing, extensive work with dangerous machinery or sharp instruments, construction, chemical manufacture	Less than 5	At least one appointed person
	5-50	At least one first-aider trained in EFAW or FAW depending on the type of injuries that might occur
	More than 50	At least one first-aider trained in FAW for every 50 employed (or part thereof)

delay should the occasion, arise.

Suggested numbers of first aid personnel to be available at all times people are at work, based on assessments of risk and number of workers.

A full version of the [Health and Safety \(First Aid\) Regulations 1981 Code of Practice and Guidance](#) can be downloaded free of charge.

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