



FIRST AID AT WORK

Every year thousands of people are injured or fall sick at work – some seriously.

A quick first aid response can mean the difference between life and death, or can reduce the severity of the injury. There is also a legal requirement for workplaces to take all practicable steps to provide first aid facilities under the Health and Safety in Employment Regulations 1995, and to have procedures for dealing with emergencies under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 (HSE Act).

First Aid for Workplaces – a Good Practice Guide can help you manage first aid needs in your workplace. This guide takes into account recent regulatory changes, including the withdrawal of the Factories and Commercial Premises (First Aid) Regulations 1985. It can be downloaded from <http://www.osh.govt.nz/publications/booklets/first-aid-2009/>

This fact sheet summarises some key points from the guide, and is particularly relevant to small to medium businesses.

What first aid does my workplace need?

First aid requirements at work fall into three categories:

- Suitably stocked first aid kits and facilities
- Where needed, an appropriate number of trained first aiders
- Information for employees about first aid arrangements.

Below are suggestions to help you organise your first aid kits and facilities, first aiders and information for employees.

But exactly what's needed at your workplace will depend on your individual circumstances.

Some workplaces have greater risks of injury and illness because of the sort of work they do. These risks are important in deciding first aid requirements, because different first aid may be needed for different activities. Circumstances that can affect your first aid needs include hazards common in your industry or workplace, dangerous chemicals or machinery used, dangerous activities like working at heights, the number of employees, and how far away you are from medical help.

You can use the attached *Workplace First Aid Needs Assessment Checklist* to help identify what's needed at your workplace.

What should be in my first aid kit?

Here is a list of suggested **minimum** contents for first aid kits in workplaces with no special risks.

Suggested minimum contents for first aid kits in workplaces with no special risks

- a manual giving general guidance on first aid
- individually wrapped moist wipes or saline solution
- 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
- two individually wrapped triangular bandages (sterile)
- clasps or safety pins to tie bandages
- two stretch bandages
- six medium sized, individually wrapped unmedicated wound dressings – approximately 12cm x 12 cm
- two large sterile individually wrapped unmedicated wound dressings – approximately 18cm x 18cm
- two pairs of disposable gloves
- one resuscitation mask.

Names and contact details for your trained first aiders should be kept with each kit, along with emergency contact numbers.

Completing the *Workplace First Aid Needs Assessment Checklist* will help identify what else should be in your first aid kit.

How many kits do I need and where should they be located?

You need at least one first aid kit in each place where people are working, which includes work vehicles. Additional kits may be required depending on the outcome of your Needs Assessment. There should be at least one kit on each floor of a multi-level workplace. First aid kits should be located close to areas of particular or special hazards and should be clearly visible and accessible to all employees.

First aid kits must be clearly identified using a white cross on a green background.



How many trained first aiders do I need?

How many trained first aiders you need will depend on the hazards in your workplace, the number and location of employees and how close you are to medical services. Think about how to ensure first aid cover is provided on all shifts, and when some of your first aiders are on planned or unplanned absences.

Here are some examples to help you think about what might be needed in your workplace.

- Alex runs a small IT company that employs three people and is based in the city close to a medical centre. His low hazard workplace has no trained first aiders.
- Mark has a small residential company employing five people. He has two trained first aiders.
- Lesley's farm is in a rural area with limited access to medical and ambulance services. She has two first aiders for every 10 employees.
- Flo manages a large telephone contact centre in a suburban area. Her low risk workplace always has two first aiders present for every 50 employees at work.
- David's roading company deals with significant hazards, including machinery, traffic hazards, and chemicals. He always has at least two first aiders present for up to 25 employees.

What training do my first aiders need?

It is recommended that training of workplace first aiders is carried out by people who work for an organisation accredited by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. A list of registered training providers is available at www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/index.do. For further information on first aid training requirements, visit the NZQA website www.nzqa.govt.nz.

What information should employees get about first aid?

All employees must be given clear information about first aid available in the workplace, including the location of first aid kits, the names and locations of first aiders, the location of any first aid room and procedures to follow when first aid is needed. This information should be given:

- when an employee is first employed
- when there is a change in the nature or location of the duties the employee performs
- when there's a significant change in personnel – for example if the first aiders are replaced
- at regular intervals to refresh and remind them – for example annually.

Employees have useful information about the hazards people face at work and circumstances that can affect access to first aid. So it's recommended that you involve them in the planning and provision of first aid at work.

Do workplaces need a first aid room?

First aid rooms aren't required in every workplace. But employers in large workplaces, for example those with more than 100 employees, should consider providing a first aid room to cope with the higher likelihood of an accident occurring. Employers should also consider the need for a first aid room if their workplace is located somewhere where access to medical facilities is difficult, or where there are significant hazards in the workplace.

Should pain relief be in first aid kits?

It is recommended that over-the-counter pain relief medicines, such as paracetamol or aspirin, should not be given to people who have been injured at work, unless the person dispensing the medicine is medically qualified to do so.

Employers may decide to make over-the-counter pain relief medicine available for employees to administer themselves, so employees don't have to leave work to get medical help for relatively minor symptoms such as headaches. This may be relevant for workplaces located a long way from medical services or pharmacies, or that operate when medical services and pharmacies are closed.

How do I record and report accidents?

By law, employers, the self-employed and principals (people who hire contractors) must keep a register of all accidents and near misses, and all incidents when someone is seriously harmed at work.

The register must be kept in a certain way, and the Department of Labour's Form of Register or Notification of Circumstances of Accident or Serious Harm meets these requirements. Copies of the form should be kept in or near the first aid kit. It can be downloaded from <http://www.osh.dol.govt.nz/order/catalogue/forms.shtml>.

If someone is seriously harmed at work, the employer, self-employed person or principal (someone who hires contractors) must tell the Department of Labour as soon as possible. They must also send a completed copy of the Form of Register or Notification of Circumstances of Accident or Serious Harm to the Department within 7 days of the accident, or as soon as possible after they find out about it. For more information on reporting accidents go to: <http://www.osh.dol.govt.nz/services/notification/accident.shtml>.

Where to get more information

For more information see the *First Aid for Workplaces – a Good Practice Guide* located at <http://www.osh.govt.nz/publications/booklets/first-aid-2009/>

Workplace first aid needs assessment checklist

This checklist will help you work out what first aid is needed in your workplace.

Issue	Suggested Impact on First Aid Provision	Action
What likelihood is there of injury and ill health arising from work?	Higher likelihood: train more first aiders and expand first aid stock.	
Are there any job or task-specific significant hazards, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazardous substances • Hazardous tools • Hazardous machinery • Hazardous loads • Hazardous animals • Working at height • Large industrial sites • Commercial diving • Adventure tourism 	Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific or advanced training for first aiders • Extra first aid equipment • Precise locations of first aid equipment • Making prior arrangements with emergency services • A first aid room. 	
Are there parts of the workplace where different significant hazards can be identified, e.g. an office compared with a processing factory?	Alternative levels of first aid provision for different parts of the organisation.	
Are large numbers of people employed?	Extra first aiders, more equipment and possibly a first aid room to cope with the higher likelihood of an accident occurring.	
Are there employees with reading, hearing or language difficulties?	Provide specialised training to ensure that they know how to access first aid provisions when required.	
What sorts of accidents and illnesses have occurred and where did they occur in the workplace?	Locate first aid provisions in areas where accidents are more likely to happen, and stock specific items of first aid equipment.	
Are there inexperienced workers on site, or employees with disabilities and special needs?	Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • special equipment • locating equipment to ensure ready emergency access by people with restricted mobility. 	
Is the workplace spread out over a wide area, e.g. are there several buildings or multi-floor buildings?	Provision should be made for each building and each floor. First aid rooms should be located on ground floors where practicable for disability and emergency access.	
Is shift work, overtime or out-of-hours work provided?	First aiders and first aid equipment must be available when people are at work.	
Is the workplace remote from emergency services?	Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • informing medical services of your location and the types of injury and work-related illness that may be expected. • prior special arrangements with emergency services. 	
Do employees travel for work in company-supplied vehicles or work alone?	Issue first aid kits and train staff in their use; consider communication issues.	
Do employees work at sites occupied by other employers?	Determine first aid provisions for employees with the other employers.	
Do members of the public or non-employees visit or spend time at the workplace?	It is recommended that workplace first aid provisions are adequate to cover their needs.	
Does the workplace have any work experience employees, apprentices or volunteers?	Workplace first aid provisions must cover these people.	

