

FIRST AID



Health and Safety Guidance Note



NFU Mutual
RISK MANAGEMENT SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

The duty to provide adequate first aid is dealt with by the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 [Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1982]. These Regulations apply to virtually all employers and employees.

The aim of first aid is to reduce the effects of injury or illness suffered at work. First aid is given to preserve life, prevent further harm occurring and promote recovery. However the scope of first aid does not extend to administering tablets, creams or medicines.

ASSESSING FIRST AID NEEDS

You are required to provide first aid equipment and facilities that are adequate and appropriate to your circumstances, for enabling first aid to be administered if someone is injured or becomes ill at work.

You should make an assessment of the first aid needs of your business. Although there is no requirement for a written assessment of first aid needs, it may be useful to record the results in order to justify the level of first aid provision you have provided.

In assessing the first aid need, you should consider:

- The nature of the work and workplace hazards and risks;
- The nature of the workforce;
- The history of accidents that have occurred in your organisation;
- The size of the organisation e.g. the number of people on site at any one time;
- Whether your workers are required to travel, work remote and are lone workers;
- Your work patterns;
- The distribution of the workforce;
- The proximity of the site to emergency medical services;

- Workers working on shared or multi-occupied sites;
- Annual leave and other absences of first aiders and appointed persons;
- First aid provision for non-employees.

You should review the first aid needs from time to time to ensure that the provisions remain adequate. A checklist for assessment of first aid needs is included at the end of this guidance document.

MENTAL ILL HEALTH AND FIRST AID

As part of your first aid needs assessment you should also consider ways to manage mental ill health in your workplace and implement control measures that are appropriate for your business, such as providing information or training for managers and employees, employing occupational health professionals, appointing mental health trained first aiders and implementing employee support programmes.

First aid training courses covering mental health, teach delegates how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health and help them to develop the skills and confidence to approach and support someone, while keeping themselves safe.

There is a wide range of training providers offering mental health awareness or first aid training and details of available training that best meets the needs of your organisation can be found by conducting a simple internet search.

FIRST AID PROVISION FOR NON-EMPLOYEES

There is no requirement for employers to provide first aid for anyone other than their own employees. However, many organisations, such as schools, places of entertainment, fairgrounds and shops, provide a service for others and it is strongly recommended that employers include non-employees in their assessment of first aid needs and make provisions for them.

This may require first aiders to receive additional training above the legal minimum requirement so that they are able to act competently, for example additional training in paediatric first aid if operating in a school or within a child care facility.

Where first aid provision is intended to cover both employees and non-employees, employers should check that their liability insurance covers all the activities of first aiders.

FIRST AID PERSONNEL

There are no hard and fast rules on exact numbers of first aid personnel, since you will have to form a judgment, taking into consideration all the circumstances of the business and by carrying out a risk assessment. The HSE website offers guidance to employers on how to determine the level of first aid provision and the numbers of first aiders to be provided.

APPOINTED PERSON

Where the assessment of first aid needs identifies that a trained first aider is not required, the minimum requirement is to appoint a person to take charge of the first aid arrangements for the business, including looking after the equipment and facilities, and calling the emergency services when required. Appointed persons are not required where there are an adequate number of first aiders.

To fulfil their role, appointed persons do not need first aid training, though they may benefit from completion of an EFAW course (or other suitable alternative).

FIRST AIDER

Where an employer provides first aiders in the workplace, they should ensure they have undertaken suitable training, have an appropriate first aid qualification and remain competent to perform their role as a first aider. Typically, first aiders will hold a valid certificate of competence in either 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 training includes EFAW plus additional content to equip the first aider to apply first aid to a range of specific injuries and illnesses.

FAW and EFAW first aid training certificates are valid for three years. Retraining must be arranged before certificates expire. If the first aider does not retrain or requalify before the expiry date they are no longer considered competent to act as a first aider in the workplace. They can requalify at any time after the expiry date by undertaking the two-day requalification course. However, it may be prudent to complete the full three-day FAW course, especially where a considerable period – i.e. in excess of one month – has elapsed since the FAW certificate expired.

Course	Initial training course duration	Certificates valid for	Requalification training course duration
First Aid at Work (FAW)	3 days	3 years	2 days
Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW)	1 day	3 years	1 day

The HSE strongly recommends that first aiders undertake annual refresher training during any three-year FAW/EFAW certification period. Although not mandatory, this will help qualified first aiders maintain their basic skills and keep up-to-date with any changes to first aid procedures.

Employers should also encourage first aiders to regularly review their course manual and any other instructional materials and allocate them time to do this. It will further help to maintain their first aid skills.

It is good practice to keep a record of first aiders and certification dates to help with the timely arrangement of further training.

NFU Mutual provides certificated first aider training via Risk Management Services – for more information about this service please contact your local NFU Mutual Agency or call 0800 132029.

The following table offers guidance to the suggested numbers of first aid personnel to be available at all times when people are at work.

1. From your risk assessment, what degree of hazard is associated with your work activities?	2. How many employees do you have?	3. What first aid personnel do you need?	4. What injuries and illnesses have previously occurred in your workplace?	5. Have you taken account of the factors below that may affect your first aid provision?
Low hazard e.g. shops, offices, libraries	Employer or owner of premises	At least 1 appointed person.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ensure any injuries or illnesses that may occur can be dealt with by the first aiders you provide. · Where first aiders are shown to be unnecessary, there is still a possibility of an accident or sudden illness, so you may wish to consider providing qualified first aiders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Inexperienced workers or employees with disabilities or particular health problems. · Employees who travel a lot, work remotely or work alone. · Employees who work shifts or out of hours. · Premises spread out across buildings/floors. · Workplace remote from the emergency services. · Employees working at sites occupied by other employers. · Planned and unplanned absences of first aider/appointed person. · Members of the public who visit the workplace.
	25-50	At least 1 EFAW trained first aider.		
	More than 50	At least 1 FAW trained first aider for every 100 employed (or part thereof).		
Higher hazard e.g. farming, light engineering and assembly work, food processing, warehousing, extensive work with dangerous machinery or sharp instruments, construction, chemical, manufacture.	Fewer than 5	At least 1 appointed person.		
	5-50	At least 1 EFAW or FAW trained first aider, depending on the type of injuries that may occur.		
	More than 50	At least 1 FAW trained first aider for every 50 employed (or part thereof).		

*Source HSE guidance INDG 214 First aid at work - your questions answered.

FIRST AID FACILITIES

The minimum level of first aid equipment that should be provided is a suitably stocked and properly identified first aid kit. At least one first aid kit should be provided for each work site, supplied with a sufficient quantity of first aid materials suitable for the particular circumstances.

Depending on the findings of the first aid needs assessment, more than one first aid kit might be required on larger sites. First aid kits should be easily accessible and preferably placed near to hand-washing facilities.

They should be protected from dust and damp and should only be stocked with items useful for giving first aid. All first aid kits should be identified by a white cross on a green background.

The contents of first aid kits should be checked frequently and restocked soon after items have been used. Sufficient supplies should be held in stock on site. Care should be taken to dispose of items safely once they reach their expiry date.

There is no mandatory list of items to be included in a first aid kit. The decision on what to provide will depend on the findings of the first aid needs assessment. As a guide, where work activities involve low hazards, a minimum stock of first aid items might be:

- A leaflet giving general guidance on first aid (for example, HSE's leaflet Basic advice on first aid at work INDG347(rev2));
- 20 Individually wrapped sterile plasters (assorted sizes), appropriate to the type of work (hypoallergenic plasters can be provided if necessary);
- Two sterile eye pads;
- Two individually wrapped triangular bandages, preferably sterile;
- Six safety pins;
- Two large sterile individually wrapped unmedicated wound dressings;
- Six medium-sized sterile individually wrapped unmedicated wound dressings;
- At least three pairs of disposable gloves.

The list is a guide only. There may be a need for additional materials and equipment, for example, scissors, adhesive tape, individually wrapped moist wipes, etc.

If mains tap water is not readily available for eye irrigation, eye wash facilities should be provided (at least one litre of sterile water or sterile normal saline (0.9% w/v)) in sealed, disposable containers. Once the seal has been broken, containers must be disposed of and not be re-used. Containers should not be used beyond their expiry date.

The provision of travel first aid kits should be considered for all mobile members of staff, e.g. by placing them in vehicles used for business purposes. Depending on the needs assessment, you should also consider whether these employees should undergo first aid training, particularly if they are involved in higher-hazard activities. Travel first aid kits will typically contain the same items as an ordinary first aid kit, but in reduced quantity.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

- HSE First aid at work web page - www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/
- HSE Mental health conditions, work and the workplace www.hse.gov.uk/stress/mental-health.htm
- HSE First aid at Work - Case studies www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/casestudy9.pdf
- L74 - First aid at work - The Health and Safety (First aid) Regulations 1981 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l74.pdf
- GEIS3 - Selecting a first aid training provider - A guide for employers www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/geis3.htm
- INDG347 Basic advice on first aid at work www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg347.pdf
- INDG214 First aid at work - your questions answered www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg214.pdf

These documents are available to download free of charge from www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/

CHECKLIST FOR ASSESSMENT OF FIRST-AID NEEDS

Factor to consider?	Space for notes	Impact on first aid provision
Hazards (use the findings of your general risk assessment and take account of any parts of your workplace that have different work activities/hazards which may require different levels of first-aid provision)		
Does your workplace have low-level hazards such as those that might be found in offices and shops?		The minimum provision is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · an appointed person to take charge of first-aid arrangements; · a suitably stocked first-aid box.
Does your workplace have higher-level hazards such as chemicals or dangerous machinery?		You should consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · providing first-aiders; · providing additional training for first-aiders to deal with injuries resulting from special hazards; · providing a suitably stocked first-aid box; · providing additional first-aid equipment; · precise location of first-aid equipment; · providing a first-aid room; · informing the emergency services of specific hazards etc in advance.
Do your work activities involve special hazards such as hydrofluoric acid or confined spaces?		You should consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · providing first-aiders; · additional training for first-aiders to deal with injuries resulting from special hazards; · additional first-aid equipment; · precise location of first-aid equipment; · providing a first-aid room; · informing the emergency services of specific hazards etc in advance.
Employees		
How many people are employed on site?		Where there are small numbers of employees, the minimum provision is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · an appointed person to take charge of first-aid arrangements; · a suitably stocked first-aid box. · Where there are large numbers of employees, ie more than 25, even in low-hazard environments, you should consider providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · first-aiders; · additional first-aid equipment; · a first-aid room.
Are there inexperienced workers on site, or employees with disabilities or particular health problems?		You should consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · additional training for first-aiders, including mental health first aid; · additional first-aid equipment; · local siting of first-aid equipment. <p>Your first-aid provision should cover any work experience trainees.</p>

Factor to consider?	Space for notes	Impact on first aid provision
Accidents and ill-health record		
What is your record of accidents and ill health (including mental ill health)? What injuries and illness have occurred and where did they happen?		Ensure your first-aid provision (including mental health first aid) will cater for the types of injuries and illnesses that have occurred in your workplace. Monitor accidents and ill health and review your first-aid provision as appropriate.
Working arrangements		
Do you have employees who travel a lot, work remotely or work alone?		You should consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · issuing personal first-aid kits; · issuing personal communicators/mobile phones to employees.
Do any of your employees work shifts or out-of-hours?		You should ensure there is adequate first-aid provision at all times people are at work.
Are the premises spread out, eg are there several buildings on the site or multi-floor buildings?		You should consider the need for provision in each building or on each floor.
Is your workplace remote from emergency medical services?		You should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · inform the emergency services of your location; · consider special arrangements with the emergency services; · consider emergency transport requirements.
Do any of your employees work at sites occupied by other employers?		You should make arrangements with other site occupiers to ensure adequate provision of first aid. A written agreement between employers is strongly recommended.
Do you have sufficient provision to cover absences of first-aiders or appointed persons?		You should consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · what cover is needed for annual leave and other planned absences; · what cover is needed for unplanned and exceptional absences.
Non-employees		
Do members of the public or non-employees visit your premises?		Under the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 [Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1982], you have no legal duty to provide first aid for non-employees but the HSE strongly recommends that you include them in your first-aid provision.

(reference: HSE L74 Guidance Section 3)

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