

First Aid at Work: Management Briefing

What Is First-Aid?

The HSE says: "In the event of injury or sudden illness, failure to provide first aid could result in a casualty's death. The employer should ensure that an employee who is injured or taken ill at work receives immediate attention." The basic need is to provide suitable first-aid personnel and first aid materials for employees.

Recommendations for employers

- Arrange for a first aid needs assessment in business locations and wherever employees work and travel for work.
- Ensure that suitable first aiders are trained, and that their training and certification is maintained, or where first aiders are not required, there is an appointed person.
- Appoint a coordinator to manage first aid and maintain the provisions and information.
- Ensure that public liability insurance covers the provision of first aid to non-employees, if this is to be allowed.
- Arrange for first aid materials to be provided and maintained.
- Ensure effective cooperation and coordination with managers of sites not controlled by the employer, but where employees may work.
- Provide first aid rooms if the risk assessment highlights a need.
- Provide information for employees on first aiders and materials.

Legal duties

- The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Key considerations for the risk assessment

- Size, nature and distribution of the, work, workplaces and workforce.
- Whether appointed persons are sufficient in some cases, and the level of training required for first aiders and emergency first aiders.
- The numbers of appointed persons and first aiders required, and the provision of reserve first aiders in case of absence, or to cater for shifts.
- Whether first aid rooms are required
- Whether workers are remote, travelling or working alone
- Shared occupancy buildings, customer sites and other locations not controlled by the employer.

Specific management actions

- Carry out risk assessments to identify first aid needs, including personnel, and materials (and first aid rooms if necessary).
- Coordinate first aiders so that they receive appropriate training which is refreshed at least every three years to remain valid with interim refresher training every 12 months.
- Provide first aid materials according to the first aid needs assessment.
- Coordinate with managers of sites where employees may work, such as customer sites.
- Provide tools for first aiders to record first aid treatment.
- Implement a system to ensure that first aid materials are monitored and kept fully stocked and within date.
- Provide signs or other information on the first aiders and location of first aid materials.
- Maintain first aid information and signs to keep it up to date.

Whilst not a legal requirement, consider the provision of automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) and train staff in their use.

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