

# Frequently Asked Questions – First Aid

**For full details on the Authority's provisions for First Aid at Work, please see the First Aid at Work Policy.**

## 1. How many first aiders do we need?

The number depends on the particular circumstances. A risk assessment should be undertaken to assess the risks associated with the workplace and the work undertaken to determine an appropriate ratio. As a guide, there should be at least one first aider for between 50 and 100 people in a low risk environment such as an office. (See table below) The number of people appointed as first aiders should take account of foreseeable absences (e.g. holidays) as well as un-predictable absences (e.g. sickness). Variations in hours of work – shift patterns, flexitime, weekend working, proximity to medical help (e.g. hospital) and accident statistics should also be considered.

Category of risk	Numbers employed at any location	Suggested number of first aid personnel
Lower risk – e.g. offices, libraries	Fewer than 50	At least one appointed person
	50 – 100	At least one first aider
	More than 100	One additional first aider for every 100 employed
Medium risk – e.g. kitchen areas, warehousing, workshops, leisure centres	Fewer than 20	At least one appointed person
	20 – 100	At least one first aider for every 50 employed
	More than 100	One additional first aider for every 100 employed
High risk – e.g. construction areas, work with dangerous machinery	Fewer than 5	At least one appointed person
	5 – 50	At least one first aider
	More than 50	At least one first aider for every 50 employed
	Where there are hazards for which additional first aid skills are necessary	In addition, at least one first aider trained in the specific emergency action

## 2. What sort of training should a first aider have?

To become a qualified first aider at work, the person must complete a course and pass an examination to a syllabus approved by the Health and Safety Executive. This usually takes four full days (or the equivalent).

Re-qualification must take place within three years and consists of a two day refresher course including an examination. If the three year period is exceeded, even by one day, the full four day course must be re-taken.

Where a risk assessment of first aid needs 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 the equipment and facilities and calling the emergency services when required. Where there are low risks and very few employees, appointed persons can be named. An appointed person does not need to be qualified but should have basic training in the principles of first aid.

HSE approval is not required for appointed person training but it is recommended that emergency first-aid training is provided covering the following:

- What to do in an emergency
- Cardio-pulmonary resuscitation
- First aid for the unconscious casualty
- First aid for the wounded or bleeding

## 3. Do we need a first aid room?

Not unless there is a high risk from hazards at work, or where access to accident and emergency facilities is difficult or a long distance away.

The Approved Code of Practice gives advice on the conditions to be met if a first aid room is provided and the sort of equipment that should be supplied. Contact your Directorate Health and Safety Officer if further details are required.

## 4. What should our first aid boxes contain?

There is no mandatory list of items that should be included in a first aid container. As a guide, where no special risk arises in the workplace, a minimum stock of first aid items would normally be:

- A leaflet giving general guidance on first aid
- 20 individual 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 un-medicated wound dressings
- Two large sterile individually wrapped un-medicated wound dressings
- One pair of disposable gloves

5. Is it true that we cannot give an aspirin etc. to a member of staff with a headache?

Apart from antidotes to poisons used in the workplace, no medications are permitted in first aid boxes. In any case, a first aider cannot administer drugs. Medicines (including creams) must not be “prescribed” by someone who is not competent to make a medical diagnosis.

Vending machines can be provided however for purchase of aspirin, paracetamol etc.

6. What about first aid cover for those who travel on business or work away from base?

More about this issue can be found in the Caerphilly County Borough Council policy on First Aid at Work, essentially a risk assessment should be carried out to identify what is required.

7. Can a first aider be held liable if treatment fails?

Not if the action was taken in good faith and to the best of the first aider's ability. The general principle is that a first aider acting in good faith and in accordance with training will not incur personal liability. Where genuine efforts are to no avail, the first aider (if they are acting in accordance with their training) is not responsible for any outcome.

8. Is it necessary to arrange insurance cover to protect first aiders from claims of negligence by those they treat?

The Authority, through its insurers will provide indemnification for any first aider who assists an employee or member of the public who becomes ill or who is injured at work, either on or off the premises.

#### 14. Where can I get further information about First Aid?

You can get further information from your Directorate Health and Safety Officer, telephone the HSE Infoline on 08701 545500 or you can access the following web site. You must have external internet access to view this site:

- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/index.htm>

The following publications may also provide you with further information:

- First Aid at Work. The Health and Safety (First Aid at Work) Regulations 1981 (L74)
- Caerphilly County Borough Council First Aid Policy.

Last updated on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2005