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First aid at work

The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 require you as an employer to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to ensure that your employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work. These regulations apply to all workplaces including those with less than five employees and to the self-employed.

As a minimum, you must have:

- ◆ Suitably stocked first aid kit.
- ◆ An appointed person to take charge of first aid arrangements.
- ◆ Information for all employees giving details of first aid arrangements.

As an employer you are required to carry out an assessment of first aid needs. This involves consideration of workplace hazards and risks, the size of your organisation and other relevant factors, to determine what first aid equipment, facilities and personnel you should provide.

How many first aiders do we need?

From your 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	Less than 25	At least one appointed person
	25-50	At least one first aider trained in emergency first aid at work (EFAW)
	More than 50	At least one first aider trained in first aid at work (FAW) for every 100 employees (or part thereof)
Higher hazard e.g. construction, engineering, warehousing, work with machinery or sharp instruments, manufacturing	Less than 25	At least one appointed person
	25-50	At least one first aider trained in emergency first aid at work (EFAW) or first aid at work (FAW) depending on the type of injuries that may occur
	More than 50	At least one first aider trained in first aid at work (FAW) for every 50 employees (or part thereof)



Other factors to consider;

- ◆ **Inexperienced workers or employees with disabilities or particular health problems** – consider training additional first aiders, having additional first aid equipment and the location of the equipment.
- ◆ **Employees who travel a lot, work remotely or work alone** – consider issuing personal first aid kits and means of communication e.g. mobile phone.
- ◆ **Employees who work shifts or out of hours** – you should ensure there is adequate provisions at all times people are at work.
- ◆ **Premises spread out across buildings/floors** – consider provision for each building/floor.
- ◆ **Workplace remote from the emergency services** – you should make the emergency services aware of your location, consider special arrangements with them and emergency transport requirements.
- ◆ **Employees working at sites occupied by other employers** – make arrangements with other site occupiers to ensure adequate provision.
- ◆ **Planned and unplanned absences of first aider/appointed person** – consider what cover is needed for annual leave as well as unplanned absences.
- ◆ **Members of the public who visit the workplace** – under the regulations you have no legal duty to provide first aid for non-employees, however the HSE strongly recommends that you include them in your provisions.

What is an appointed person?

Your first aid needs assessment may indicate that a first aider is unnecessary, the minimum requirement is to appoint a person to take charge of first aid arrangements. The roles of this appointed person include looking after the first aid equipment and facilities and calling the emergency services when required. They can also provide emergency cover, within their role and competence, where a first aider is absent due to unforeseen circumstances (annual leave does not count).

Do appointed persons need to undertake first aid training?

To fulfil their role, appointed persons do not need first aid training. However, emergency first aid training courses are available.

What should the first aid box in our workplace contain?

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

- ◆ A leaflet giving general guidance on first aid (such as the link below).
- ◆ Individually wrapped sterile plasters (assorted sizes), appropriate to the type of work (hypoallergenic plasters can be provided if necessary).
- ◆ Sterile eye pads.
- ◆ Individually wrapped triangular bandages, preferably sterile.
- ◆ Safety pins.



- ◆ Large sterile individually wrapped unmedicated wound dressings.
- ◆ Medium sized sterile individually wrapped unmedicated wound dressings.
- ◆ Disposable gloves.

You can download a free copy of the HSE's basic advice on first aid at work leaflet using the following link;

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg347.pdf>