

rmp

Risk control
Managing First Aid



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Managing First Aid

Introduction

Unfortunately, incidents happen and people may get hurt whilst at work or whilst attending workplaces. Ensuring suitable care provision is in place which provides assistance to anyone that suffers injury or ill health is essential for all workplaces and places where employees work. If something unfortunate occurs you would want to make sure that the person is looked after, not only to prevent them getting any worse, but to also show that they were taken care of in these situations. This may be useful in the event of any claim coming along in the future.

Being an employer or occupier means that certain obligations must be met. As an employer, the organisation has responsibilities to both their employees and also to others that might visit their premises. For example, visitors, contractors doing work on the premises or members of the public who can access your premises or site. These responsibilities are captured within legal requirements for an employer which includes having suitable arrangements in place and available to all those individuals.

Being an occupier means that they have obligations towards anyone who's able to gain access to their premises. The person may be a lawful visitor entitled to go there because of their role, for instance enforcement officers. Or they could also be an unlawful visitor such as a trespasser.

The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981¹ applies to every workplace and to the self-employed.

As a minimum they must have:

- A suitable stocked first-aid kit
- A first aider or appointed person or people to take charge of first-aid arrangements
- Information for all employees telling them about first-aid arrangements.

Accidents Happen

Unfortunately, accidents or ill health occur within workplaces and having suitable first-aid arrangements in place provide assistance to the injured or unwell person, these arrangements may also help with reducing severity or injuries enabling employees to return to work more quickly.

565,000 Workers sustaining a non-fatal injury according to self-reports from the Labour Force Survey 2021/22².

61,713 Employee non-fatal injuries reported by employers under RIDDOR in 2021/22².

3.7 Million Working days lost due to non-fatal workplace injuries according to self-reports from the Labour Force Survey 2022/23².

Assessing your needs

Employers and occupiers need to ensure adequate and appropriate first-aid arrangements are in place, this is dependent on the work undertaken in each location. In complex organisations with multiple buildings and activities this will need to be undertaken for each location including remote ones. For example, a Highway depot or workshop will have completely different arrangements in place in comparison to an Office Building.

The organisation will understand the nature of the work or activities in a location and should assess what the first-aid needs are. Organisations will already have information regarding risks as they must already assess risks in the workplace through their risk assessment processes. To do this, employers need to look at the risks associated with tasks being undertaken, the locations, any equipment or substances used and the people who can be affected by these risks. Taking this approach will enable risks to be identified and suitable arrangements that need to be in place. These arrangements need to include suitable first-aid provision for foreseeable emergencies.

Factors to Consider

Identifying suitable first-aid provision will require the consideration of a number of factors.

The nature of the work should be considered, could injury occur or the person become unwell. For example, could they fall from height, become caught in a piece of equipment, or breathe in fumes from a chemical. First-aid provision in these examples will certainly be different, as injuries from a falls and effects from inhalation of fumes require different types of care.

The workplace hazards need to be accounted for, working in an office environment will generally present less of a risk of injury or ill health than working in laboratories, workshops, kitchens or remote locations. Therefore, any provision will need to reflect the hazards present.

The table below shows potential arrangements needed for differing situations within organisations. It is unlikely that there will be a “one size fits all” solution and each area will need sufficient arrangements put into place. Also, the table provides a suggested level of first-aid provision, any cover identified must be established via risk assessment.

Location / Activity	First-aid Provision
Low Risk Office, Libraries, Classrooms	<50 – 1 EFAW Trained Person >50 – 1 FAW Trained Person for first 100, then EFAW for every following 100. Suitably sized first-aid kit Notices
High Risk Laboratories, Workshops, Kitchens	<50 – 1 FAW Trained Person for first 50, then 1 FAW for every 50. Suitable sized first-aid kit. Notices.
Off-Site / Remote Working	Specific trained person, dependent on locations and type of activities. Suitable first-aid kit. Remote working arrangements.
Specific Risks Cyanide, Hydrofluoric Acid, Confined Spaces, Equipment use	Specific trained person for the risk present. Suitable first-aid equipment to reflect risk. Notices

EFAW – Emergency First-aid Trained (1-Day Course) – Appointed Person

FAW – First-aid at Work Trained (3-Day Course) – First Aider

Any first-aid arrangements should consider the people at risk, taking into account ages, existing medical conditions, new expectant mothers or general public. Considering different people and numbers likely to be present will inform the suitability of any arrangements that are needed to be in place.

Looking at the potential types of incidents that could occur in different locations, buildings and types of work or activities will enable suitable and sufficient first-aid provision to be identified. For example, when assessing the risks from falls at height, for these types of activities, specific emergency plans and arrangements need to be

in place to allow treatment or evacuation from the work area. These plans must be in place before allowing any working at height activities to proceed.

Training and Information

There are different levels of first-aid training available, these levels need to be matched to risks identified. It is recommended that any training provided needs to be certified.

Type of Training	Duration	Covered in Training
Emergency First-aid – Appointed Person	1 Day	Enable basic first-aid
First-aid at Work – First Aider	3 Days	Workplace first-aid
Specific First-aid – Risks Specific	As Required	Training is appropriate to the risks

Before training begins the suitability of someone to be a first aider or appointed person needs to be considered, for example you wouldn't want anyone who couldn't cope with the sight of blood.

There are a variety of things that require thinking about regarding suitable provision of first-aid cover, below are examples of things to take into account:

- Changes in occupancy and work activity
- Individuals working alone or in small groups
- The ability and experience of employees
- The distribution of the workforce
- Individuals potentially at greater risk (for example, young workers, trainees, and people with disabilities)
- The distance from emergency services
- The needs of travelling, remote or lone workers, especially in remote locations
- The accident history

First-aid training qualifications are time bound and will require refreshing periodically, the recording of training is essential to ensure that training remains current at all times.

Some organisations require first-aid cover as essential parts of their employee roles, such as Security Officers or Life Guards. However, others rely on volunteers to undertake these duties, sometimes with an uplift in pay to be a first aider or appointed person. An organisation needs to ensure sufficient first-aid provision is in place and if there are not enough volunteers then the organisation must consider making the requirement part of people's roles.

It is good practice to make first-aid training available to employees, after all it is a life skill that can bring value outside of their work setting. Making the booking of training clear and easy will encourage employees to volunteer, any such training must be paid for by the organisation.

Many organisations have agile working arrangements in place for employees to take advantage of, this could have significant impact on levels of first-aid covers in such organisations. Arrangements need to be identified ensuring sufficient cover is available as identified in risk assessments and/or first-aid provision assessment.

First-aid arrangements, like risk assessments should be reviewed regularly, if there are any changes within the organisation, or there may be an incident where things do not go to plan. Reviews should be recorded and any changes communicated to anyone that is affected.

Organisations often have one off activities, this may be an event for example, undertaking the required risk assessment alongside a first-aid provision assessment will allow adequate levels of first-aid to be identified and implemented.

Providing the correct information to employees and visitors is essential, consideration must be given to how first-aid provision is communicated to these groups. Keeping information current and correct for complex organisations can be challenging, any arrangements put into place should identify responsible people that collate, communicate and keep up-to-date this information.

The following table suggests information to be provided.

Group	Type of Information
Employee	Inductions, First-aid Notices
Visitors	Inductions, First-aid Notices
Contractors (Contractors are responsible for having sufficient first-aid arrangements in place for their employees)	Inductions, contractor management processes ensuring contractors have their own first-aid arrangements in place
Members of the Public	First-aid Notices

First-aid notices should advise of the names, locations and, if appropriate contact details for first aiders, keeping these notices current is essential as they'll be used in an emergency.

Organisations must have clear emergency procedures, in the case of incidents involving injury or ill health on the organisations premises where medical assistance may be required, an immediate telephone call should be made to the first aider, appointed person or emergency services.

First aiders or appointed persons should:

- Respond promptly to an incident when requested
- Manage the incident and ensure the continuing safety of themselves, bystanders and the casualty
- Provide first-aid assistance within the limits of their training while safeguarding their own health and safety and that of others
- Obtain additional assistance, such as the Emergency Services, without delay, if the nature and degree of injury or ill health is outside the limits of their training

First aiders are advised to report all incidents they attend and the organisation should have arrangements to record these reports.

Provisions

Suitable levels of first-aid provisions as identified through risk assessments and/or first-aid provision assessment of each location or activity.

Identify suitable numbers requiring Emergency First-aid or First-aid at Work training that reflect the present risks is required along with implementing any additional training for specific risks associated with the location or activity involved.

Specialist activities such as confined space works, require specific and specialist arrangement in place to ensure the safety of employees involved in this type of work. Further guidance from a competent Health and Safety Professional should be sort and the arrangements are not covered in this guidance document.

First-aid notices should be strategically placed, listing first aider contact details and location of the nearest first-aid box. First-aid notice must meet the requirements of the Health and Safety (Signs and signals) Regulations 1996³.

Below shows an example of a first-aid notice.

First Aiders		
Name	Room	Tel
Name	Room	Tel
Name	Room	Tel
Name	Room	Tel
Name	Room	Tel
Name	Room	Tel
Name	Room	Tel
Name	Room	Tel
Nearest First Aid Box		<location>
Nearest Defibrillator		<location>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In an emergency (imminent risk to life) call the emergency services on 999 		
<p style="text-align: center;"><Include other relevant information here></p>		

The minimum level of first-aid equipment needed is a suitably stocked first-aid box. At least one box should be provided for each workplace (more may be identified via risk assessment or first-aid provision assessment). Each first-aid box should be stocked with a sufficient quantity of first-aid materials suitable for the particular circumstances of the workplace.

First-aid boxes should be made easily accessible. The contents should be checked frequently and restocked after any use.

Employees working off-site, travelling or in remote locations additional consideration should be given to first-aid arrangements which may include the provision of travel first-aid kits or more specific arrangements.

Defibrillators

Defibrillators are becoming a common sight on or within buildings, consideration should be given by organisations whether they are provided. It is a very good idea to provide defibrillators and the equipment is easy to operate and smart enough to not deliver a shock if a patient doesn't need it. However, like all equipment the main thing is to ensure that it is properly maintained and is easily accessed. Adding defibrillators to the organisations asset lists will allow maintenance to be carried out. Defibrillator batteries and pads require periodic replacement – these must be replaced within the manufacturer's guidelines.

Accidents and Ill Health

It is always a priority to ensure any person suffering an injury or ill health is properly dealt with prior to any reporting procedure.

Under health and safety law, reports of certain injuries, incidents and cases of work related disease are notifiable to health and safety enforcing authorities.

All incidents, including any actions taken should be reported utilising an organisations incident reporting procedure. Promptly reporting incidents will allow for fuller investigations into circumstances of incidents to enable prevention of any reoccurrence of incidents. Keeping records will help to identify patterns in incidents, and will help when completing further risk assessments. Your insurance provider may also want to see records and investigations if a work related claim is submitted.

Incidents can be traumatic and have lasting impact on the people involved. Providing support to the person injured or made ill is beneficial to the organisation as it is likely the person may return to work more quickly. Incidents can also be traumatic to the person providing first-aid, consideration should be given to providing support to any first aider after incidents.

Summary

To summarise the requirements:

- Think about the premises that is controlled by the organisation and whether they are an occupier or employee, or both
- Consider the different people that may be there, and if they could have foreseeable ill health conditions that may need to be treated in a particular way

- Look into risk assessments that have already been carried out to check that there is an understanding what could go wrong and therefore what treatment may be needed
- Based on locations and who might be there, decide on the number of appointed persons or first aiders that are needed
- Pay particular attention when changes are suggested that reduce the number of appointed persons or first aiders who may be around in the premises
- Make sure they are trained, and for first aiders that the training is certified and relevant for the situations they may treat
- Have enough first-aid boxes and equipment to provide treatment needed
- If defibrillators being used, ensure that someone is responsible for the maintenance.

Conclusion

Ensuring suitable and sufficient first-aid arrangements are in place, well known and resourced adequately is essential to meet the requirements of the law and provide important support to employees, visitors or others in cases of accident or ill health. Providing first-aid training should be considered life skills as these may prove important to people away from work.

It is essential to provide any support for first aiders or appointed person after any incident to ensure they are not affected by the traumatic event.

References

1. UK Government, Statutory Instrument, The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/1981/917/regulation/3/made>
2. UK Government, Health and Safety Executive, Health and Safety Statistics 2022:
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/assets/docs/hssh2223.pdf>
3. UK Government, Statutory Instrument, The Health and Safety (Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/1996/341/contents/made>

Further information

For access to further RMP Resources you may find helpful in reducing your organisation's cost of risk, please access the RMP Resources or RMP Articles pages on our website. To join the debate follow us on our LinkedIn page.

Get in touch

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