

First Aid Needs Assessment - A guide for employers

- A Guide for Employers



“It is important to remember that accidents and illness can happen at anytime. First-aid provision needs to be available at all times people are at work.”

The Health and Safety Executive.

Introduction

As an employer you are expected to consider the first aid requirements for your workplace (Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981). First aid provisions for your workforce must be "adequate and appropriate in the circumstances". In other words, you should make sure that you have the right equipment, facilities and trained staff to summon professional help when it's needed and give immediate assistance to employees with common injuries/illness and any specific illnesses and injuries that might occur in your particular workplace. The bare minimum provision is:

- a suitably stocked and maintained first aid box,
- an Appointed Person to take charge of first aid provisions, and
- information for staff about first aid arrangements (notices telling staff who the first aiders are and where the first aid box is).

The level of first aid provision needed depends on the nature of your workplace. There is no single fixed level, so you should conduct a first aid needs assessment for your own particular workplace. It is not a legal requirement for this to be a formal process, or even for the assessment to be written down. However, keeping a record of your assessment can be helpful!

What about first aid for people who don't work for me?

The Regulations only requires you to provide first aid cover for employees - not customers, visitors to your workplace or the general public. However, if you provide a service for others and it is a good idea to think about non-employees when you do your assessment. And remember to check your liability insurance covers your first aiders to provide aid.

This guide for gives you basic advice and suggestions based around the October 2009 Health and Safety Executive guidance on completing a workplace First Aid Needs / Risk Assessment. It can help you assess your workplace, but does not in itself fulfil your duty to complete a First Aid risk assessment.

First Aid Needs/Risk Assessments

The following information will help to complete the risk assessment contained within this document.

As a general rule you should think about the following (no one factor should be considered in isolation of the others):

- **The type of work and the workplace:** Does your workplace, and the type of work you do, have any particular hazards?

Potential First Aid Hazard	Possible Injuries Requiring First Aid
Lifting and Handling (people, equipment or stock)	Fractures, cuts, sprains and strains.
Slip and trip hazards	Fractures, sprains and strains, cuts.
Working with sharps (including animal teeth)	Cuts/bites, amputations.
Machinery	Crush injuries, amputations, fractures, cuts, eye injuries.
Work at height	Head injury, loss of consciousness, spinal injury, fractures, sprains and strains.
Workplace transport	Crush injuries, fractures, sprains and strains, spinal injuries.
Electricity	Electric shock, burns.
Chemicals	Poisoning, loss of consciousness, burns, eye injuries.

The table is not comprehensive you should look at each area of the workplace and document the risks and the possible injuries. Don't forget to include possible illnesses.

If your workplace presents specific hazards, you'll need to make sure you think about additional first aid supplies that you might need (saline eye washes, for example) and make sure that your designated first aiders know how to deal with specialist first aid

emergencies. You may also be required to inform the local emergency services, in writing, of the site where hazardous substances or processes are in use.

The table below may help to give you a better idea of how to categorise your workplace. However, don't forget that some workplaces may have different risk levels in the same premises. For example, a warehouse (moderate risk), may have an office attached to it (lower risk). **Remember, lower risk doesn't mean no risk!**

Risk Level	Example of workplace type	Impact on First Aid provisions
Lower Risk	Shops, offices, libraries etc	The minimum provision is an Appointed Person (see Appendix 1) to take charge of first aid arrangements and a suitably stocked first aid kit.
Moderate Risk	Light engineering, assembly work, food processing, warehousing	Consider providing First Aiders (see Appendix 1), additional training for first aiders to deal with specific hazards, additional first aid equipment, a first aid room and informing your local emergency services.
Higher Risk	Construction, chemical manufacture, extensive work with dangerous machinery, chemicals or sharp instruments	

If you work from a location that is remote from emergency medical services, you may need to make arrangements to make sure appropriate transport is available in an emergency. You should let your local emergency services where you are and about any particular hazards.



The size of your premises could affect how quickly first-aid can be accessed. If you have more than one building or you work across several floors of a building you'll need to consider the number and location of first aid kits, as well as the number of first aid trained staff you have.

- **How many people are in the workplace:** On the whole, bigger the workforces increase the level of first aid provision. Even if you only have a small workforce, there is still the chance of an accident or sudden illness. So, it's recommended that employers provide a qualified first aider (see below).

- **Who is in the workplace:** If you have young workers, trainees, pregnant workers or staff with disabilities or special health problems you may need to give their potential first aid needs additional thought.
- **Have you had any accidents in the workplace:** Information collected when investigating previous accidents/ incidents should be used when assessing future first-aid provision. For large multi-site organisations this information could be helpful in determining where first aiders should be located, what geographical area they should be required to cover and what first-aid equipment is necessary.
- **Do any of your workers travel, work remotely or alone:** As an employer, you are responsible for meeting the first-aid needs of your workforce even if they are working away from your main premises (for example, care workers who travel around to clients). It's probably advisable for workers who are 'on the road' a lot to carry a personal first-aid kit and a way of communicating (a mobile phone to call for help in an emergency).
- **How many first aid trained staff do I need?** There are no rules on exact numbers. You will need to take into account all the relevant circumstances of your workplace. The table below is provided as a guide to **minimum** requirements only:



Low Risk		Higher Risk	
Less than 25 employees	At least 1 Appointed Person*	Less than 5 employees	At least 1 Appointed Person*
25 -50 employees	At least 1 Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW)* trained staff	5 - 50 employees	At least 1 Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW)* or First Aid at Work (FAW)* - depending on the type of injuries that might occur
More than 50 employees	At least 1 First Aid at Work (FAW)* trained staff per 100 employees or part thereof	More than 50 employees	At least 1 First Aid at Work (FAW)* trained staff per 50 or part thereof

*see Appendix 1 for the definitions of first aid training.

Whatever level of first aid cover you decide is appropriate, you must make sure you have enough first aid trained staff to have ‘cover’ at all times when people are working. Make sure you take into account annual leave, part-time working and other planned absences of your first aid trained staff. Consider how you would cover unplanned and exceptional absences such as sick leave or special leave.

The Regulations allow for an Appointed Person (see Appendix 1) to provide emergency cover in the absence of trained first aiders but **only** where the absence is due to exceptional, unforeseen and temporary circumstances.

Completing your assessment

You are now ready to complete the First Aid Risk Assessment Template supplied with this pack. Don’t forget if you work across a large area, for example a college or large office with many different departments doing different work, it’s a good idea to complete a separate assessment for each area or department.

Reviewing your assessment

You should review your first-aid needs from time to time, particularly if you’ve made any recent changes to your workplace, staffing or the work that you do. Make sure your assessment document states when you’ll review your first aid needs.

To help with the review process, it’s a good idea to keep a record of any incidents dealt with by first aiders and appointed persons.

Further Advice

The Health and Safety Executive provide priced and free publications. These can be viewed online at www.hse.gov.uk, or ordered from HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk, Co10 2WA.

For more information about health and safety, contact the HSE’s Infoline:

- Phone: 0845 345 0055
- Textphone: 0845 408 9577
- Fax: 0845 408 9566
- Email: hse.infoline@natbrit.com

Appendix 1 - First Aid Personnel

If you decide to have people trained and prepared to provide first aid in an emergency, you'll need to understand the different levels of first aid cover and the training needed to be a first aider in the workplace.

Appointed Persons	Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW)	First Aid at Work (FAW)
<p>If your assessment suggests that a first aider is not needed, you must still appoint a person to take charge of looking after equipment and facilities, and call the emergency services.</p> <p>Even in small, low risk workplaces, there's always the chance of an accident or sudden illness.</p> <p>Appointed persons do not need formal first-aid training. However, they should be aware of the required first aid equipment and it is worth considering a short emergency aid course. (These courses are not accredited by the HSE.)</p> <p>Remember, appointed persons are not first aiders and should not give first aid for which they have not been trained. Therefore, we always recommend giving serious thought to providing at least one EFAW trained member of staff, even in low risk work places - you never know when you might be glad you did.</p>	<p>A first aider is someone who has undergone training and has a qualification that the HSE approves. They will hold a valid certificate and are strongly advised to undertake annual refresher training. (This is not compulsory, but it will help first-aiders maintain their skills and keep up to date with any changes.)</p> <p>EFAW training enables a first-aider to give emergency first aid to someone who is injured or becomes ill while at work.</p> <p>EFAW covers key life saving skills and usually looks at some of the most common first aid emergencies.</p> <p>EFAW is usually suited to smaller work places, or areas with low to moderate risks.</p> <p>Course last for at least six hours of training and is run over a minimum of one day.</p>	<p>FAW training includes EFAW and also equips the first-aider to apply first aid to a range of specific injuries and illness.</p> <p>FAW is a more comprehensive course involving a throughout analysis of emergency situations including both adults and children.</p> <p>They are usually necessary in larger workplaces or where greater hazards have been identified.</p> <p>The course involves at least 18 hours of training and are run over a minimum of three days.</p>

First Aid certificates are valid for three years. After this period a FAW requalification course or EFAW course will be needed.

Remember:

- make sure that your first aiders are trained to cover any special hazards that might arise in your workplace.
- further training would be required for personnel who may need to use a defibrillator.
- If the assessment indicates that first aiders should be trained to FAW standard, it is not acceptable to provide first aiders that possess an EFAW certificate instead.

Services Available from McCrudden Training:

- **First Aid Training**

In association with NHS Hastings and Rother (a training organisation approved by the Health and Safety Executive), McCrudden Training can provide a full range of First Aid Training courses.

- **First Aid Course Assessors**

McCrudden Training can provide a certified First Aid Assessor to examine delegates at the conclusion of First Aid at Work Training.

- **FREE Basic First Aid Leaflet**

A basic first aid leaflet suitable for inclusion in workplace First Aid Kits, and compliant with 2005 Resuscitation Council Guidelines can be downloaded free of charge from our website.

- **Range of first aid supplies**

A small range of first aid supplies, including basic first aid manuals, single-use resuscitation face shields and workplace accidents are available to order from the McCrudden Training website.

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