

First aid in the workplace is something of a minefield to make sense of. To combat this I will endeavour to make it simple to follow. At the outset I would say that employers have a moral, legal and financial duty to ensure adequate first aid provision, we just can't ignore it!

So first aid in the workplace i.e. for your employee's safety is governed by the Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981. To make sense of that you need to examine the HSE Approved Code of Practice and Guidance – ACOPG L74. It's a free [download](#) off my website should you feel the need to study it in depth. (Does have some useful risk assessment questions).

The ACOP puts the duty firmly on the employer to make provision for first aid in the workplace. This means a risk assessment to establish equipment and trained staff needs.

Equipment means - First Aid kits appropriate to your workplace – so assess how many and contents. The British Standard – BS8599 seems to meet the bill. If I was buying now this would form my basis. Equipment could also mean blankets, eye wash, even a first aid room as appropriate. I wouldn't expect a small business wouldn't have the first aid room.

What about trained staff?

Well the absolute minimum provision is for the employer to designate *Appointed Persons*, these are employees who can look after the first aid equipment and call an ambulance in an emergency. Really any sensible adult can take on this role. Such a decision will be based on a risk assessment of your first aid needs, by considering:

- (a) the nature of the work and workplace hazards and risks;
- (b) the size of the organisation;
- (c) the nature of the workforce;
- (d) the organisation's history of accidents;
- (e) the needs of travelling, remote and lone workers;
- (f) work patterns;
- (g) the distribution of the workforce;
- (h) the remoteness of the site from emergency medical services;

- (i) employees working on shared or multi-occupied sites;
- (j) annual leave and other absences of first-aiders and appointed persons;
- (k) first-aid provision for non-employees.

In reality most business will need to appoint some trained first aiders. There are two types:

First Aid at Work and Emergency First Aid at Work awards. Both qualifications are HSE Approved work place first aid awards. The former is the more in depth award and so suitable where more significant hazards are found. Whilst the short one day Emergency First Aid at work would meet the needs of a low hazard environment. Some employers utilise a mixture of both awards as necessary.

I would add if you have specific high hazard workplace then greater provision than first aid at work maybe necessary and should be reflected in your company policy.

The First Aid at Work course is 3 day course with assessment. The award can be renewed on a 2 day re-qualification course during the life of the current certificate.

The Emergency First aid at Work course is a shorter syllabus covered on a one day course.

### **Schools:**

These must meet advice issued by the Department for Education the full advice document can be found [here](#). In a nutshell the previous comments will apply but schools will need to obtain training appropriate for children in addition to the above. The policy recommends HSE Approved training providers who can also provide appropriate other training.

Better still the Early Years Foundation Stage [Practice Guidance](#) provide a syllabus for a 12 hour Paediatric First Aid training, which meets the needs of Early Years provision and so would support younger school members.

A mix of qualifications in schools would seem the logical solution.

### **CPD:**

Finally the HSE strongly recommend that workplace first aiders complete an annual 3 hour refresher course in between renewals.

Richmond Training Associates can support your business with training and advice in first aid, we supply the above awards and AED Operator courses, plus a range of other health and safety awards.

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