

First Aid Equipment & Training

Your organisation has a legal obligation to provide and maintain a safe environment for your volunteers, customers, and visitors – *you can read more on this in the previous [Sector Brief – Safety Responsibility and Accountability](#).*

Under the Duty of Care requirements, you should have in place suitable and sufficient First Aid equipment and people who can administer first aid. What is suitable and sufficient will vary from one site/organisation to the next, depending on the nature of the activities completed, the types of hazards, the site size and location, as well as the number of people at the site.

There are four steps in managing First Aid equipment and training:

- 1) Identify the hazards
- 2) Assess likely injuries and outcomes
- 3) Provide first aid equipment and trained personnel
- 4) Review first aid provision

Important

For most organisations first aid in the workplace involves the ‘preservation of life’. Simply put, you should have in place suitable and sufficient First Aid Equipment and First Aiders to maintain life until emergency services can take over. Typically, an organisation will not be required to have specialist equipment or extremely well trained First Aiders.

1) Identify the Hazards

Complete a review of your site and identify hazards that could result in injury or illness, consider:

- **The type of activities/work being completed** – Overexertion can cause muscular strain.
- **Electricity** – Potential ignition source—could cause injuries from fire. Exposure to live electrical wires can cause shock, burns and cardiac arrest.
- **Chemicals** – Toxic or corrosive chemicals may be inhaled or may contact skin or eyes causing poisoning, chemical burns, irritation. Flammable chemicals could result in injuries from fire or explosion.
- **Height of work** – Slips, trips and falls can cause fractures, bruises, lacerations, dislocations, concussion.
- **Temperature** – Hot surfaces and materials can cause burns. Working in extreme heat can cause heat-related illness. It can also increase risks by reducing concentration and increasing fatigue and chemical uptake into the body. Exposure to extreme cold can cause hypothermia and frostbite.
- **Radiation** – Welding arc flashes, ionising radiation and lasers can cause burns. Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun can cause sunburn, skin cancers and eye damage.
- **Violence** – Behaviours including intimidation and physical assault can cause both physical and psychological injuries.
- **Biological** – Poor drainage/sewerage facilities, rising damp/mould can cause infections & allergic reactions.
- **Animals** – Bites, stings, kicks, crush injuries, scratches.

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IMPORTANT

Certain work environments have greater risk of injury and illness due to the nature of the activities being carried out and the nature of the hazards at the workplace. For example, workers in factories, motor vehicle workshops and forestry operations are at greater risk of injury requiring immediate medical treatment than workers in offices or libraries. These workplaces will therefore require different first aid arrangements.

2) Assess Likely Injuries and Outcomes

By assessing the likely injuries, you can identify what suitable and sufficient First Aid equipment and people who can administer first aid you require.

Once you have identified the hazards at your site you should then assess the type of injuries and illnesses that may occur, their severity and likelihood. In assessing the likely injuries, you can use past performance as an indicator. For example, if you've previously had a significant number of foreign objects in volunteers and/or visitors eyes this type of injury should be considered quite likely.

While assessing the likelihood that injuries could be sustained, you should consider the number of people on site. A heavily populated site will intrinsically have a higher likelihood of injuries occurring.

To assess the likely outcome resulting from any sustained injuries, the sites' location should be considered, specifically the distance (response time) for emergency services. A site where high risk work is being completed, that is some distance from emergency services, may require a fully equipped First Aid Room supported by personnel who have a greater level of training.

3) Provide first Aid Equipment and Trained Personnel

You should provide appropriate First Aid equipment and facilities, based upon your assessment of the likely injuries and outcomes.

Appropriate First Aid equipment may include:

- **Basic Kit** – This is the minimum for any workplace and should be placed in an easily accessible location. Consider having multiple kits if your site is large
- **Automated External Defibrillators (AED)** - Depending upon the demographic of your workers/visitors and the distance (response time) for emergency services
- **Outdoor module** - If work is performed outside and there is a risk of insect or plant stings or snake bites
- **Remote module** - Where people work in remote locations, the appropriate contents will vary according to the nature of the work and its associated risks
- **Burn module** - If workers are at risk of receiving burns
- **First Aid Room** – Where the site is some distance for emergency services

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To meet the expectation of the quality of first aid training, as a minimum your First Aiders should hold the national unit of competency [HLTAID011 - Provide First Aid](#). This training and the associated certificate of assessment must be provided by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and is valid for 3 years. In addition to this, your assessment may also identify that you should have First Aiders that are trained to [HLTAID009 - Provide Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation \(CPR\)](#). This would be considered a minimum if you typically have visitors or workers who are at higher risk.



TIP

Allocating one person within your organisation to being responsible for the management of First Aid will likely have a better outcome than if it is a shared responsibility.

4) Review First Aid Provision

On a regular basis, or as circumstances change (scope of operation or new tasks being completed), you should review your first aid provision to ensure there continues to be suitable and sufficient First Aid equipment and First Aiders.

This review can take the form of:

- Inspection of your first aid kits to replace used items and those that have passed their expiry date
- Formal audit, although this is not essential
- Review by the responsible person for first aid
- Review following an associated incident or near miss
- Review during a site inspection
- Review following feedback from a volunteer or stakeholder
- As a result of an incident (during the incident investigation)

If you have more questions or queries, contact:

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