

THE HEALTH AND SAFETY (FIRST AID) REGULATIONS 1981

These regulations, made under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, came into force on 1 July 1982. The regulations apply only to "persons at work" and there is no statutory duty to provide first aid for students or members of the public. There is, however, both a moral and civil law duty towards persons who are not employees and, when deciding on the level of provision, it is sensible to include them in the arrangements. This is permitted in the regulations providing the minimum statutory requirement for employees is in no way diluted.

Below are the minimum requirements, for statutory provision, together with the recommended levels to cater for both employees and students.

First Aiders

For every 100 employees regularly working at a site, a minimum of one qualified first aider must be appointed. Where there are less than 100 employees regularly attending a site it is recommended that the following minimum numbers of qualified first aiders should be appointed, taking into account all regular site users.

Number of Regular Site Users (employees and students)	Number of First Aiders (non-statutory)
Up to 349	1
350-699	2
700-999	3
1000-1499	4
1500-1999	5
2000-2499	6
2500 or more	7

Where there are variations in the number of persons regularly attending a site, the average number over a typical four hour period, including part-time employees and day release students, will apply.

Key managers should endeavour to spread first aid cover across the main areas of activity in their establishments. Wherever possible persons who work in a fixed location should be selected for training as first aiders. The choice of teaching and peripatetic staff should, therefore, be avoided.

In civil law, an employer is vicariously liable for negligent actions of employees who are acting within the scope of their employment. If an employee, whether trained in first aid or not and acting in good faith, gives negligent treatment as part of their duties, it is the employer who is liable.

First aiders trained to a higher standard will be required in areas of special hazard. Such areas include, for example:

- work with dangerous chemical e.g. hydrofluoric acid, phenol;
- work with unsealed radioactive sources;
- places where breathing apparatus is worn;
- large scale industrial type processes.

In such hazardous areas the minimum ratio of first aiders to members of staff shall be 1 to 50.

Appointed Persons

The regulations require that where there is no qualified first aider e.g. because the number of staff on site does not warrant the appointment, or there is an unforeseeable absence of a first aider, then an "appointed person" must be designated to act in the event of an injury occurring. This person, either the key manager of a responsible person to whom the duty is delegated, shall be responsible for:

- a) Taking charge of a situation in the event of a serious injury or illness occurring e.g. making sure the victim is in no further danger, arranging for an ambulance to be summoned and obtaining casualty details, ensuring that the accident reporting procedures are followed.
- b) The maintenance of the contents of first aid boxes, if this has not already been delegated to a trained first aider.

It is not necessary for an "appointed person" to have had first aid training in order to fulfil this role.

The key manager must ensure that there are sufficient persons nominated to provide coverage at all times when employees are on the premises and a trained first aider is not available. This is of particular importance outside normal working hours when evening classes or other activities are taking place.

First Aid Boxes

All premises must have adequate numbers of first aid boxes in accessible locations. They must also be provided in each area where there is a laboratory, workshop, gymnasium, art/pottery studio or catering facility.

Boxes are intended for emergency use by all employees, not just trained first aiders, for treating minor injuries to themselves, other staff, students and members of the public.

First aid boxes should contain the following items and nothing else:

Item	1-5	6-10	11-50	51-100	101-150
Guidance card	1	1	1	1	1
Individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings	10	20	40	40	40
Sterile eye pads, with attachment	1	2	4	6	8
Triangular bandages	1	2	4	6	8
Sterile coverings for serious wounds (where applicable)	1	2	4	6	8
Medium sized sterile unmedicated dressings	3	6	8	10	12
Large sterile unmedicated dressings	1	2	4	6	10
Extra large sterile unmedicated dressings	1	2	4	6	8
Safety pins	6	6	12	12	12

The purpose of restricting the contents of first aid boxes is so that an untrained person can use them, without the risk of exacerbating an injury, until further skilled help is obtained.

Where tap water is not available, eye wash bottles containing at least 300ml of sterile water must be provided in all areas where there is a risk of chemical splashing into the eye and should be in close proximity to the first aid box.

The key manager must ensure that notices giving details of the location of first aid boxes and first aiders are placed in prominent positions throughout the establishment.