

A-Z Guide

FIRST AID



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Overview

1. Providing first aid in the workplace is an essential aspect of ensuring the safety of employees while at work; the extent to which an organisation must provide first aid training, equipment and facilities is a matter for each organisation to assess on its own circumstances.
2. An employer is required to take all reasonable and practicable steps to ensure the health and safety of its employees, contractors, and customers, as well as anyone else on their premises.
3. WorkSafe's "[First aid at work](#)" outlines specific recommendations about first aid, and should be considered a first point of call when considering what all reasonable and practicable steps means for your business.

Introduction

Providing training, equipment and facilities for first aid in the workplace is not just a requirement of the law, but it is obviously common sense; to a certain extent, what and how much you provide of each is commonsense too. The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and the subordinate legislation (Regulations, Standards, Guidelines, and Guidance Notes) **specify very few mandatory requirements** to meet compliance but rather **require you to undertake your own assessment and risk analysis to determine what training, equipment and facilities will be sufficient and appropriate in your workplace.**

This guide will set out the legislative framework and highlight what you need to consider within that framework in order to undertake an evaluation of your workplace needs.

Other **A-Z Guides** that you may find helpful are:

- **Health and Safety at Work**
- **Hazard Identification and Management**

Legislative Framework

The Act

The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 stipulates that employers must take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the safety of employees while at work, and in particular take all practicable steps to:

- Provide and maintain a safe working environment
- Provide and maintain facilities for employees' health and safety
- Ensure that employees are not exposed to hazards arising out of the use of things or near the workplace



The regulations

The Health and Safety at Work (General Risk and Workplace Management) Regulations 2016 stipulate that every Person Conducting Business or Undertaking (PCBU) must ensure:

- There is adequate first aid equipment provided for the workplace
- Each worker has access to the equipment
- Workers have access to facilities for the administration of first aid

A PCBU must also ensure that an adequate number of workers are trained to administer first aid at the workplace or that workers have access to an adequate number of other persons who have been trained to administer first aid.

In complying with these regulations, the PCBU must have regard to all relevant matters such as:

- The nature of the work being carried out at the workplace
- The nature of the hazards at the workplace
- The size and location of the workplace
- The number and composition of the workforce at the workplace

In addition to this, the PCBU must prepare, maintain and implement an emergency plan (section 14).

The Health and Safety at Work Act Regulations 2016, supported with information and guidance from [WorkSafe New Zealand](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/), are intended to support businesses (particularly small businesses) to understand what they need to do to comply with the general duties of the Act.

The 'First Aid at Work' guide

This guide specifies in detail WorkSafe's recommendations in respect of first aid and compliance with the obligation to take "reasonably practicable" steps under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

The guide sets out recommended work practices or arrangements which represent the agreed best practice to be followed in defined circumstances to comply with legislation.

These notes reinforce the message that you should undertake an assessment of your organisation's first aid requirements, and then you should provide the materials, equipment and facilities that you need to ensure that the level of cover identified as necessary will be available to employees at all relevant times.

Note: Although this guide provides information on the main principles, it may not contain all the terms or duties enclosed in the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

Best practice

The first step in meeting your obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 in respect of first aid is to understand the legislative framework. The second step is to evaluate your organisation's needs. In doing that you will need to undertake a risk assessment process that includes consideration of:

- The number of employees at work
- The nature of the work undertaken
- The degree of risk
- The extent to which employees are working in scattered locations, on or offsite
- The size and location of the place of work
- People other than employees
- The distribution of employees
- Whether or not staff work in shifts
- The distance between the workplace and external medical services

At any one time you may be a PCBU. In assessing your organisation's needs you should understand that the term "employee" includes volunteers, loaned employees, on-the-job trainees and people in the workplace to gain work experience. The other "people" you may also need to consider are contractors, sub-contractors and any other predictable visitors to the workplace, particularly if this represents a significant number.

You should incorporate your organisation's provisions in respect of first aid into your health and safety policy so that they are re-evaluated and updated on a regular basis and your employees have input on it.

Your EMA Advice OSH Consultant will be able to assist you with evaluating your organisation's needs and advising on associated compliance issues.

Remember

- Always call AdviceLine on 0800 300 362 to check you have the latest guide.
- Never hesitate to ask AdviceLine for help in interpreting and applying this guide to your situation.
- Use our AdviceLine employment advisors as a sounding board to test your views.
- Get one of our consultants to draft an agreement template that's tailor-made for your business.

This guide is not comprehensive and should not be used as a substitute for professional advice.

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