

4 FIRST AID

According to St. John Ambulance, "First aid is emergency help given to an injured or suddenly ill person using readily available materials." It may be as simple as cleaning and bandaging a minor cut on a worker's finger, or it can be complicated, such as providing care for a worker who has been struck by a moving vehicle or piece of equipment.

The objectives are:

- preserve life
- prevent the injury or illness from becoming worse
- promote recovery.

Every employer covered by the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (WSIA)* is required to have a first aid station and trained first aid personnel at the workplace. The specific requirements are found in Regulation 1101: First Aid Requirements under the WSIA. The regulation details the obligations of employers regarding first aid equipment, facilities, trained personnel, and first aid procedures in all workplaces. The Act authorizes the WSIB to penalize employers who do not comply with these requirements. Here is a brief outline.

Equipment

Employers must provide and maintain a first aid station in the workplace (Figure 4-1). Pick a location for the kit that it is accessible at all times. Companies who use service vehicles should ensure that first aid kits are provided for each vehicle. As well, provide a first aid kit when workers are operating heavy construction and maintenance equipment at a distance from the first aid station. The contents will vary according to the number of employees regularly employed in that workplace. Regulation 1101 provides the details of the contents. Inspect each kit at least quarterly, then sign and date the inspection card.



Figure 4-1: First Aid Station

Facilities

In a workplace with few employees, the first aid station may be as simple as a first aid kit placed in an accessible area. Large companies (over 200 employees) are required to have a first aid room.

On construction projects, it's the responsibility of the general contractor to provide the first aid station. It should be located in the site office. On a large project, set up additional first aid stations to ensure timely access to treatment.

In all cases, the regulation requires you to post the WSIB Form 82 ("In Case of Injury at Work" poster), a first aid kit inspection card, valid certificates of the first aid providers in the workplace, and Regulation 1101: First Aid Requirements (Figure 4-2).



Figure 4-2: The First Aid Requirements Regulation

Trained Personnel

Employers must ensure that first aid is provided by trained and knowledgeable workers. Regulation 1101 specifies training either to the St. John Ambulance Emergency or Standard First Aid levels (or equivalent) depending on the number of workers in the workplace.

Emergency-level first aid training generally includes the following mandatory topics

- Emergency Scene Management
- Shock, Unconsciousness, and Fainting
- Choking – Adult
- Severe Bleeding
- One Rescuer CPR – Adult

Standard-level first aid training is a more extensive program that generally includes the five mandatory topics from emergency first aid, as well as elective topics. Some elective topics suitable for first aid providers are

- Fractures
- Head and Spinal Injuries
- Joint Injuries
- Chest Injuries
- Hand injuries
- Eye injuries
- Multiple injury management
- Pelvic, abdominal, and crush injuries
- Burns
- Poisoning
- Medical conditions (diabetes, epilepsy, convulsions, and allergies)
- Environmental illnesses and injuries (exposure to heat or cold)
- Artificial respiration - Adult
- Automated External Defibrillator (additional instruction time must be added to the course to accommodate this component and a separate certification card must be issued for AED certification)

Since procedures may change from time to time, it is important that training be kept up-to-date. Recertification is usually required every three years (check with your training organization for details).

In a workplace with five or fewer workers, the employer must ensure that a worker trained in at least St. John Ambulance Emergency First Aid (or equivalent) is available to provide first aid. This also applies when a crew of two to five workers is working away from their company facility, such as a painting crew working in a vacant office. When six or more workers are employed in a workplace, the regulation requires St. John Ambulance Standard First Aid (or equivalent) training for the first aid provider. Additional workers should be trained in case the designated provider is absent.

First Aid Procedures

To ensure that an injured or ill worker receives appropriate and timely first aid treatment, an employer should have a written first aid procedure as part of their Health and Safety Program. The procedure should cover

- mandatory reporting and recording requirements
- provision of first aid kits
- availability of trained first aid providers and training recertification
- transportation to medical treatment
- document posting requirements.

For resources and templates to help employers develop a first aid procedure for their Health and Safety Program, visit the **Policy and Program Resources** section of the ihsa.ca website.

The First Aid Requirements Regulation requires that each first aid kit contain a current edition of the St. John Ambulance First Aid Manual. The manual contains details of first aid treatment for a worker who is injured or who suddenly becomes ill. The first aid provider can use it as a reference guide.

Learning first aid, CPR, and how to use an AED can help you save a life. Knowing how to recognize the signs of someone who is in distress from a heart attack, stroke, or choking, for example, can help you get them the treatment they need quickly. In those cases where every second counts, prompt treatment can mean the difference between loss of life, life-long impairment, or a full recovery.

If you suspect someone is having a heart attack, look for the four Ps:

1. **Pain** - a continuous pain in the chest that may spread to the jaw, neck, or arms.
2. **Pale** skin
3. **Pulse** is rapid and weak
4. **Perspiration**

The signs and symptoms of a stroke vary depending on what part of the brain has been affected. Usually the symptoms show up on one side of the body.

If you suspect a stroke, think **FAST**:

F - Facial droop. Ask the person to smile and watch the corners of their mouth.

A - Arm Drift. Have the person hold out both arms in front of them and see if one arm drifts back down or can't move at all.

S - Speech. Check if the person slurs their words, says the wrong words, or is able to speak at all.

T - Time. Get medical help immediately. The earlier a stroke is treated, the better the chance of survival and recovery.

For details on signs, symptoms, and treatment of illnesses and injuries related to heat or cold exposure, refer to Chapters 6 and 7 on Heat Stress and Cold Stress in this manual.