

Health and Safety Bulletin

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First aid

The aim of a proactive approach to health and safety is to reduce the risk of anyone being harmed as a result of work-related activities. However, in the real world every employer also needs to have procedures and systems in place to mitigate or minimize the consequences of any incident – either by providing instructions on how to deal with it or by providing treatment if it has resulted in personal injury.

How do we assess the resources we need to provide adequate first aid?

Although the HSE provide some guidance on the likely level of resources (e.g. numbers of first aiders, contents of first aid kits etc), the Health and Safety (First Aid at Work) Regulations are structured to reflect most existing health and safety legislation – with risk assessment determining the needs of the organization.

Recent updates to the HSE's first aid webpages indicate that the first aid risk assessment can also be used to determine whether it would be beneficial for the organisation to have mental health first aiders.

The conclusions of the risk assessment should identify the numbers and types of first aiders and the type of first aid facilities required.

Types of first aiders

The number and type of first aiders required by any organisation varies on a number of factors, but the first aid risk assessment should confirm this. Types of first aiders include:-

- Appointed persons – someone who takes charge of first aid on site, but does not have any first aid training
- Emergency first aid at work (EFAW) – qualified to give emergency first aid
- First aid at work (FAW) – Qualified to EFAW but can also provide some first aid treatment
- Mental health first aider – someone trained to identify and understand symptoms and able to support someone who might be experiencing a mental health issue

Unless you are working in an offshore installation, the HSE does not approve first aid training providers. However they do publish guidance on how to choose a provider [geis3.pdf \(hse.gov.uk\)](#).

Although it is relatively easy to identify the provider of a standard first aid course, the first aid risk assessment may indicate that their first aiders require additional training either because of the risks associated with their activities (e.g. action to be taken following exposure to a hazardous chemical) or because employees have specific vulnerabilities that might need specialist treatment.

First aid facilities and equipment

The risk assessment will indicate the nature and extent of the facilities (such as a first aid room) and equipment that should be provided (e.g. size and contents of the first aid kit).

Providing an automated external defibrillators (AEDs) is not mandatory under the regulations, and the Resuscitation Council UK guidance states they can be readily used by untrained bystanders.

Conclusion

Deciding first aid requirements for any organisation is based on a number of factors. Developing a written assessment provides evidence that the resources provided have been chosen as objectively as possible.

Examples of factors to be considered during a first aid risk assessment

- *The nature of the work and the risks associated with it*
- *The organization's history of accidents*
- *The number of employees, their work patterns and the geographical size of the premises*
- *Whether any vulnerable people work on site*
- *The remoteness of the site from the emergency services*

Further information is available in the guidance on the regulations, L74 - [L74.pdf \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)

Recently issued health and safety information:

- L180: A guide to the Gas Safety (Management) regulations 1996 (as amended) [A guide to the Gas Safety \(Management\) Regulations 1996 \(as amended\) - L80](#) (hse.gov.uk)
- HSE – Asbestos and You – Quick guide for trades [HSE - Asbestos & You - Quick Guide for Trades.pdf](#) (pmrs.uk)
- British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) Technical Guidance [Technical Guidance - British Occupational Hygiene Society \(BOHS\)](#)
- HSA - An information pack for managing hazards in the workplace [managing hazards in the workplace information pack 2023.pdf](#) (hsa.ie)
- Worksafe Carcinogens and airborne risk e-book [What are carcinogens and airborne risks? | WorkSafe](#)

Fit note reform: call for evidence

The UK's economic inactivity rate is lower than that of the G7 and the EU (following the COVID pandemic it rose by nearly half a million) – with long term sickness the main cause of inactivity in the working population. In September 2023 in England 93.8% of fit notes were signed off as “not fit for work.”

In light of these statistics, the UK Government Departments for Work and Pensions, and, Health and Social Care are asking for views/experiences of those who currently use the fit note process – the aim is to improve the process so it provides the appropriate support for people to remain in work. For more information, follow the link [Fit Note Reform: call for evidence - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Case Law update

This bulletin's case law focuses on prosecutions involving first aid provision

A company that manufactures absorbent products was fined after an agency worker suffered a life-changing injury to her hand when it was caught in a rotating fan blade. She had been working her second shift ; while removing a blockage inside the filling machine she had been operating when her fingers became caught in an unguarded rotating fan. She lost parts of her fingers on her right hand and sustained extensive scarring to her stomach following an unsuccessful attempt to generate new skin growth to save her fingers. She continues to suffer post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the incident and the injuries sustained. Investigations by the HSE found the fan had not been suitably guarded,

putting employees and agency workers at risk. Additionally, no first aid provision was available on the night shift when the incident occurred, and this contributed to her suffering further, as incorrect first aid was administered. The employer was fined **£28,000** and ordered to pay costs of **£7,771**

A cleaner was killed when a 1.5 tonne pallet of polypropylene bags fell on him. The plastics manufacturer had ignored guidance about double-stacking the material in an outdoor environment provided by the manufacturer, and no one trained in 1st aid was on site to help resuscitate the injured person. The company were fined **£130,000** (£10,000 of which was for not having 1st aid cover) and were ordered to pay over **£10,000** costs.

About Clwyd Associates...

We are a management consultancy, focusing on health and safety, and SAP based in the Midlands.

We employ consultants with at least 15 years practical experience backed up by recognised professional and academic qualifications - ensuring our clients receive first class service.



Driver distraction

RoSPA has recently issued a report focusing on driver distractions and their contribution to road crashes.

Driver distraction is categorized as visual, cognitive, biomechanical or auditory and although it includes the use of mobile 'phones, the report also highlights that studies have

indicated other distraction activities that drivers admit to carrying out while driving include eating and drinking, reading or writing, grooming and manipulating driving controls.

In 2022, the UK's Department for Transport issued data that indicates driver distraction or impairment resulted in

12,246 road traffic collisions.

The report, which is available at [Distraction-factsheet-0524.pdf](#) (rospa.com) includes advice on how to minimize distraction such as recognizing what makes you distracted, planning the route in advance and using technology sensibly.



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