

First Aid Requirements

First Aid is covered by the Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981

EMPLOYER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

REGULATION 3(1) STATES:

An employer shall provide, or ensure that there is provided, such equipment and facilities as is adequate and appropriate in the circumstances to enable First Aid to be rendered to employees if they are injured or become ill at work.

REGULATION 3 (2) STATES:

An employer shall provide, or ensure that there is provided, such a number of suitable persons as is adequate, and appropriate in the circumstances, for rendering First Aid to employees.

REGULATION 4 STATES:

An employer shall inform employees of the arrangements that have been made in connection with the provision of First Aid, including the location of equipment, facilities and personnel.

INTERPRETATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

FIRST AID

Regulation 2 (1) defines first aid as being:

- *In cases where a person will need help from a medical practitioner or nurse, treatment for the purpose of preserving life and minimizing the consequences of injury or illness until such help is obtained.*
- AND
- *Treatment of minor injuries which would otherwise receive no treatment, or which do not need treatment by a medical practitioner or nurse.*

Suggested Number of First Aid personnel.

First aid personnel should be available at all times people are at work, based on assessments of risk and numbers of workers.

Where there are special circumstances, such as remoteness from emergency services, shift work, or sites with several separate buildings, there may need to be more first aid personnel than set out below.

Increased provision will be necessary to cover for absences.

| Category of Risk | Numbers employed at any location | Suggested number of first aid personnel |
|---|--|---|
| Lower Risk e.g. shops and offices, libraries | Fewer than 50 50-100 More than 100 | At least one appointed person. At least one first aider. One additional first aider for every 100 employed. |
| Medium Risk e.g. Light engineering and assembly work, food processing, warehousing. | Fewer than 20 20-100 More than 100 | At least one appointed person. At least one first aider for every 50 employed (or part thereof). One additional first aider for every 100 employed. |
| Higher Risk e.g. most construction, slaughter – houses, chemical manufacture, extensive work with dangerous machinery or sharp instruments. | Fewer than 5 5-50 More than 50 | At least one appointed person. At least one first aider. One additional first aider for every 50 employed. |

SUITABLE PERSONS ARE DEFINED AS:

FIRST AIDER *who holds a current first aid certificate issued by an organization whose training and qualifications were, at the time of the issue of the certificate, approved by the Health and Safety Executive for the purposes of the regulations. In certain circumstances a first aider will need additional training to be a “suitable person”.*

APPOINTED PERSON *is a person to be appointed to provide emergency cover in the absence of first aiders but only where the absence is due to exceptional, unforeseen and temporary circumstances. Absences such as annual leave do not count. Remember that if the assessment calls for first aiders to be provided, they should be available whenever the need arises.*

NOTE: In exceptional circumstances during the temporary absence of a first aider, the employer is required to provide an appointed person. Employers should note that appointed persons are not, except in the case stated below, and acceptable full-time alternative to a first aider and it is therefore essential that, other than in exceptional circumstances, there are sufficient numbers of first aiders to provide coverage at all times when the employees are at work.

Foreseeable absences, such as planned annual leave, are not considered to be ‘exceptional and temporary circumstances’ in this respect. The Only exception to the above is in the case of establishments where, because of the nature and location of the undertaking, there are no specific hazards and the number of employees is small.

Source HSE Website www.hse.gov.uk

Compiled by L. Carrington-Smith
Platinum Healthcare Solutions Ltd