Basic First Aid Procedures – Quick Tips



Introduction

In the workplace, it is the job of a first aid responder to assist in stabilizing an injured or ill person until professional medical help arrives. 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1910.151(b) states, “In the absence of an infirmary, clinic or hospital in near proximity of the workplace which is used for the treatment of all injured employees, a person or persons shall be adequately trained to render first aid. Adequate first aid supplies shall be readily available.” The basic purpose of this standard is to assure that adequate first aid is available in the critical minutes between the occurrence of an injury or illness and the availability of professional care.

First aid is medical attention that is typically administered immediately after an injury or illness occurs. It usually consists of one-time, short-term treatment, such as cleaning minor cuts, treating minor burns, applying bandages, and using non-prescription medicine. The overall goals of first aid are:

- Keep the victim alive.
- Prevent the victim’s condition from worsening.
- Give first aid until help arrives.
- Ensure that the victim receives needed medical care.

Good Samaritan Laws

Every state has some form of a Good Samaritan statute. These laws were enacted to encourage people to help others in emergency situations. They offer legal protection to responders who provide emergency care to ill or injured persons. They require that the provider act in good faith with good intentions, use common sense, only provide care that they have been trained to give and act voluntarily. Coverage and circumstances under which care is delivered varies by state. If you’re interested in learning more about the Good Samaritan Laws in your state, contact a local legal professional.

First-aid Training Program

The first step in planning a first-aid training program for any worksite is to evaluate the injuries, illnesses and fatalities that have occurred. Use the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 300 logs, 301 forms, and Workers’ Compensation reports to help identify specific first-aid needs.

Employers should also consult with the local fire and rescue service or emergency medical service (EMS) to obtain response time estimates for all locations and for all times that workers are on duty.

The training program should address:

- Assessing the scene and the victim(s).
- Responding to life-threatening emergencies (establishing responsiveness, shock, controlling bleeding with direct pressure, asphyxiation, poisoning and medical emergencies).
- Responding to non-life threatening emergencies (wounds, burns, temperature extremes, eye injuries, musculoskeletal injuries, mouth/teeth injuries and bites/stings).

If an employee is expected to render first aid as part of his or her job, then they are covered by the requirements of the Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens standard (29 CFR 1910.1030). Learning the importance of universal precautions is a must.

The first-aid training program should be reviewed periodically and kept up-to-date with current first-aid techniques and knowledge.

First-aid Courses

OSHA does not offer first-aid courses or certify first-aid training courses for instructors or trainees. First-aid training is offered by the American Heart Association, the American Red Cross, the National Safety Council and other nationally recognized and private educational organizations.

Unique conditions at a specific worksite may require the addition of customized elements to a first-aid training program.

Mayo Clinic and WebMD are two recognized sources for basic first aid information and suggested treatment procedures.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

In addition to the first-aid requirements of 29 CFR 1910.151, several OSHA standards also require training in CPR. The OSHA standards requiring CPR training are:

- 146 Permit-required Confined Spaces
- 266 Logging Operations
- 269 Electric Power Generation, Transmission, and Distribution
- 410 Qualifications of Dive Team

Although training responders in CPR is not required in 29 CFR1910.151 many employers choose to offer CPR training for their first aid responders.

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)

AEDs are now widely available, effective, portable and ready to use. They provide the critical and necessary treatment for sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) caused by ventricular fibrillation (V-FIB). SCA is a potential risk at all worksites. Each workplace should assess its own requirements for an AED program as part of its first-aid response.

Conclusion

The outcome of a workplace injury or illness depends on the severity of the injury, available first-aid and subsequent medical treatment. Promptly administered first aid may mean the difference between rapid or prolonged recovery, temporary or permanent disability, or even life or death.

Commonly Asked Questions

1. **How can I best prepare my workplace for an emergency?**
2. You can best prepare your workplace for an emergency by establishing an emergency responder program, providing workplace specific first aid training, always having a stocked first aid kit and emergency equipment readily available and always consider safety first. By adopting a safety program, you can keep work-related accidents to a minimum.
3. **Are first aid and CPR courses offered online?**
4. Yes, a variety of first aid and CPR courses are offered online. However an online course must be followed by a skills practice and testing session with an instructor at an additional cost. This is referred to as “blended” learning – it combines the flexibility of online training with hands-on training.

Sources

American Heart Association
American Red Cross
National Safety Council

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