# First Aid – General



## What is first aid?

First aid is emergency care given immediately to an injured person. The purpose of first aid is to minimize injury and future disability. In serious cases, first aid may be necessary to keep the victim alive.

### What are first aid requirements?

All Canadian jurisdictions have a requirement for the workplace to provide at least some level of first aid. The type of first aid equipment and training required depends on:

- The number of employees
- The types of hazards present in the workplace
- The travel distance to a hospital/availability of professional medical assistance

In addition, each jurisdiction will have specific requirements for reporting injuries (types, length of time to report to compensation board, details that need to be reported, etc.).

### What does the legislation say?

First aid regulations will specify, in detail, your jurisdiction’s requirements. These details will include:

- The need for a first aid attendant
- The availability of first aid attendant during working hours
- The level of training or certification required for the first aid attendant
- The number of first aid attendants required (during operational hours or per shift)
- The type and amount of first aid supplies and facilities (content of first aid kits and room equipment)
- The location of kits and notices (in some cases)
- Emergency transportation
- Incident documentation and reporting requirements

Legislation may also specify that first aid supplies are to be, for example:

- Stocked with required and appropriate items
- Kept clean and dry
- Checked regularly for expiry dates
- Maintained so they meet the regulations
- Requirements, at a minimum (e.g., restocked when supplies are used)
- Stored in a visible and accessible location

A list of which acts and regulations that cover first aid is available on our website. Please note that while you can see the list of legislation for free, you will need a subscription to view the actual documentation.

## What should a workplace do if they choose to have additional first aid procedures available?

If an employer opts to offer additional first aid measures (including over-the-counter medications, administration of oxygen, use of epinephrine auto-injectors, naloxone, etc.), it is suggested that they first seek legal counsel so that they are aware of any liability issues, and to check with your local jurisdiction responsible for health and safety. For example, in some jurisdictions, distribution of over-the-counter medications is not recommended (although an individual who can purchase using a vending machine may be permissible). In other jurisdictions, distribution of over-the-counter medications may be permitted under specific circumstances (including the appropriate training of first aid personnel).

## What documentation is required?

Employers are usually required to maintain written records of all injuries and treatment given in a first aid treatment record book or log. Each event should be recorded and include:

- Worker’s name
- Date and time of injury
- Location and nature of the injury
- Description of how the injury occurred
- Type or description of first aid treatment given
- Time first aid was given
- Patient’s signature
- First aid attendant’s signature
- Date and time of reporting
- Name of the person to whom the injury was reported

Where this book is kept and who has access to it may vary with the need for privacy.

## What should all employees know about first aid?

Only employees trained in first aid should assist a victim. Never give first aid treatment for which you are not trained.

As part of their emergency preparedness training, employees should know how to respond during an injury or illness situation. In terms of first aid, employees should know:

- Procedures to be followed when first aid is required (including what types of injuries should be reported) (e.g., who to call for help, remain with the victim until first aid attendants arrive, etc.)
- Location of first aid room and/or first aid kit(s)
- Location of a list of first aid attendants which indicates where to find the attendant or a telephone number
- Location of a list of nearest medical facilities (name, address, operating hours and telephone numbers)
- Location of a list of the organization's key personnel by name, title and telephone numbers that are prioritized by "call first, call second, etc."

## Do I need to do a hazard assessment for first aid?

While a first aid hazard assessment is not required in all jurisdictions, conducting one will ensure the workplace is prepared for all likely emergencies and the types of first aid treatment that may be needed. It is essential to know the exact hazards in the workplace as being prepared will also help reduce the severity of any events.

For example, if you work in an autobody repair shop, provisions should be made to have training and first aid supplies for:

- Burns and welding flash from welding
- Burns and eye injuries from grinding
- Cuts, scrapes, etc. from general work
- Chemical exposure to the eye or skin from paints, thinners, gasoline, etc
- Muscle injuries from lifting and bending
- Etc.

Depending on the workplace, there may also be need to consider:

- Chemicals that may require a specific sequence of treatment steps, emergency eye-wash stations or showers, or an antidote.
- Crowd control (e.g., at schools, retail stores, music concerts, fairgrounds, etc.).
- Special needs (e.g., persons with disabilities, known medical conditions, age of persons regularly in the workplace – especially children or elderly).
- Allergic reactions to certain medications, foods, insect bites or stings, chemicals, materials or products.
- Employees who work alone.
- Transportation to a medical facility (e.g., need for vehicle, boat or plane, need for a second person to accompany the injured person, etc.).

## What is a sample checklist for a first aid assessment?

Below is a sample worksheet. Customize it for your workplace needs. Alternatively, the information collected in other job safety analysis or hazard assessments may be used.

**Worksheet**

**Name and Location of Workplace:**

**Hazard Assessment: Jobs done at this worksite, work processes, equipment, tools, chemicals, materials, etc.**

**Types of injuries that may occur (include common and rare events)**

**Number of Workers Per Shift**

**Required First Aid (e.g., attendants, first aid kits, supplies as stated in legislation)**

**Barriers to First Aid (e.g., travel distance to nearest hospital or treatment centre)**

**Summary of Findings (e.g., Is there need for specialized training, transportation, etc. which may be above legislated minimum requirements?)**

**Action Required**

**Date:**

**Name and Signature:**

## Is there more information available from CCOHS?

Some common issues for first aid include infection control and chemical exposures.

Infection control from blood borne pathogens is a serious issue while giving first aid. Be sure to have appropriate training.

If your workplace has chemicals, certain treatment steps may be required.

Regulators has prepared the publication The Safety Data Sheet – A Guide to First Aid Recommendations as a source of information for people interested in developing or evaluating first aid recommendations for Safety Data Sheets (SDS). It is also useful for developing first aid programs for responding to chemical

exposures in workplaces.

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