



INFORMATION SHEET

WHICH FIRST AID COURSE DO I NEED ?

Changes to Health and Safety Regulations (First Aid) 1981

On 1st October 2009, the HSE revised the guidance to the First Aid at Work regulations, and brought under its control all first aid training for the workplace. There are now only two first aid courses which are accepted and recognised by the HSE as suitable for first aiders in the workplace. These are:

- Emergency First Aid at Work – 1 day course
- First Aid at Work – 3 day course

Changes were also made to the previous industry risk bandings, with the removal of the “Medium” risk category, leaving only two categories – HIGH and LOW

HIGH RISK = manufacturing, assembly, light engineering, construction, agriculture, chemical works, remote working – in fact almost anything that does not come under the LOW RISK banding, will almost certainly now be classed as HIGH RISK

LOW RISK – Offices, small shops, libraries, and some small businesses.

First Aid Risk Assessments

The guidance to this has not changed, inasmuch, that you have always had to complete a risk assessment to determine the first aid requirements for your organisation. This forms part of the requirements under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

However, what has changed, is that the number of first aiders in your organisation, is no longer calculated on the ratio of employees to first aiders. There are now a wide range of aspects to consider such as

- Pre-existing medical conditions of workforce
- Nature of Workforce – young, elderly, disabilities
- Nature of the work – hazards and risks
- Remoteness from receiving emergency assistance – will they take more than 15 minutes?
- Lone workers
- Previous accidents, incidents, near misses and illnesses
- Shift patterns, out of hours working, distribution of workforce
- Annual leave and other absences

- It is strongly recommended you take into account non-employees on your premises as well.

There are many aspects to consider in completing your first aid risk assessment before you can determine the level of first aid training you require, and how many first aiders you need.

You should complete a risk assessment for each area of your workplace, that represents different risk levels. For example, a separate risk assessment should be completed for the Office Area, which is low risk, and the production area which is high risk.

What First Aid Training Course is right for you

As a rule of thumb, you can safely say that if you fit into the High Risk area, you need to attend a 3 day First Aid at Work course. The only exception would be if you have a very small business where there is no history of prior accidents or incidents of a major nature, and where non of the workforce carry existing medical conditions.

Many large construction sites require sub-contractors on site to hold the 3 day First Aid at Work certificate.

The chart below shows the content of both of the first aid courses. You must decide what might occur in your workplace, and ensure your first aiders are adequately trained to cope

	EFAW 1 day	FAW 3 day
Cardio pulmonary resuscitation & Rescue Breathing	•	•
Treating an unconscious breathing casualty	•	•
Choking	•	•
Wounds and bleeding	•	•
Shock	•	•
Minor Injuries	•	•
Fractures	•	•
Sprains and Strains		•
Chest Injuries		•
Severe burns and scalds		•
Eye Injuries		•
Poisoning		•
Anaphylaxis		•
Heart Attack		•
Stroke		•
Epilepsy		•
Asthma		•
Diabetes		•

If your workforce come into contact with chemicals or work in confined spaces, you may find that you need additional training to deal with these types of injuries

How many first aiders do you need

Previously, there was a suggested ratio of employees to first aiders, but since 2009, this is the last consideration you should take into account when deciding on how many first aiders you need.

Once you have decided what level of first aid training you require for your organisation, you must ensure that there is a first aider of that level available at all times there are employees present in the workplace. You cannot substitute a First Aid at Work trained first aider, with someone who has only attended the Emergency First Aid at Work course, when the FAW person is away.

When deciding on how many aiders you need, you need to consider the following:

- Holidays
- Absences from work
- Shift Patterns
- Week end working
- Gender – have you got male and female first aiders
- Culture – do you have first aiders across difference cultures
- Language – if you have a high percentage of employees who do not understand English, then you might need to consider having a multi-lingual first aider
- Visitors to your premises – you are not legally obliged to provide first aid for non-employees, but it is highly recommended you consider them in your figures.

It's better to have too many first aiders, than too few!

Training Requirements

Your first aiders need to be properly trained so that in the event of an emergency they are confident and competent to cope. The right level of training is very important. Certification of both courses lasts for 3 years. Regardless of which level of training has been completed, all first aiders are now strongly advised by the HSE to undertake a minimum of 3 hours refresher training each year, to prevent skill fade and to keep up to date with protocol changes.

FAW qualified aiders are required to complete a 2 day refresher course within 3 months of the expiry date of their current certificate, or within 28 days of the expiry date, to remain in status. The new certificate will run from the date of the old one, so no time is lost on certification if you renew early.

EFAW qualified aiders, are required to complete the entire one day course again at the end of the three year period.

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