

First Aid – An Introduction

First aid is a vital part of every organisation's provision for health and safety. The information sheet offers a summary of the requirements placed upon an employer by the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981.

This document aims to give a short guide to the standard and level of first aid provision to be expected within Council establishments and on Council activities.

Purpose of First Aid

The purpose of first aid is twofold:

- a) In cases where a person will need help from a medical practitioner or nurse, to give treatment for the purpose of preserving life and minimising the consequences of injury and illness until such help is obtained.
- b) To treat minor injuries which would otherwise receive no treatment or which do not need treatment by a medical practitioner or nurse.



It is on this basis that facilities and arrangements for first aid should be provided in Council establishments.

Assessment of first aid needs

The Council is required to carry out an assessment of first aid needs for each workplace or for events/activities that are organised by the Council. This involves consideration of workplace hazards and risks, the size of the undertaking and other relevant factors all these elements taken together will help determine what first aid equipment, facilities and personnel should be provided.

Responder Team

A first aid responder team will be established for each location/event this will consist of a mix of trained individuals having access to the equipment identified as necessary through the assessment of first aid needs outlined above. This responder team will consist of people holding at least one of the following designations:

First Aider - A first aider is an adult who has successfully completed and holds a current first aid at work certificate (normally attained via a 3 day course)

Emergency First Aider in the Workplace – An adult who has completed a 1 day course in basic first aid and holds a current Emergency First Aider at Work certificate

Appointed Person – An adult appointed to take control of emergency first aid situations. They will also regularly inspect the first aid kit keeping it suitably stocked and available. An appointed person should participate in some form of formal training and have a basic knowledge of some simple first aid. It is suggested that such a course may last around 4 hours.

As a minimum each location must have an appointed person (an emergency first aider or a full first aider can undertake the role of an appointed person)

Some Simple First Aid Techniques (not intended to replace formal training)

Compression Only CPR (adult)

If you see someone collapse, lay them flat. If they do not recover, check their response by tapping the person on the shoulders and asking if he or she is alright. “Are you okay? Can you hear me?”

If there’s no response and the person does not appear to be moving or breathing immediately, or breathing is less than 5-6 breaths per minutes, have someone **dial 999** (or go yourself) and call for an ambulance and start some chest compressions straight away.

Place the palm of your hand directly on the center of the chest, lock your fingers together, keep your elbows and your arms straight, press straight down on the midline and centre of the chest on the sternum bone, doing at least **100 compressions-per-minute**, going at least **two inches down** with each compression.

Continue your compressions hard and fast over and over again and if you get tired swap with another person but continue until help arrives or someone who is more qualified can take over.

Note: Inflations can be introduced to this technique by placing the responders mouth around the casualty’s nose, pushing the mouth closed, tilting the head back to open the airway and blowing hard for around 2 seconds (the chest should rise). Give 2 of these inflations then give 30 chest compressions, repeating this cycles until help arrives and takes over from you. A resuscitation mask or shield should be used.

Bleeding

If someone has a major cut, apply direct pressure to the cut immediately and try and get them to sit down. Get someone to locate the first aid kit for you and then wrap an unmedicated dressing or field dressing around the cut (placing the absorbent pad over the cut), towels, t-shirts or scarves, for example, could also be used in an emergency. Seek medical assistance.

Small cuts should be cleaned with water and gently dried, being careful not to introduce dirt into the wound. Once dry apply a plaster.

Choking (Adult or Child)

Your aims are to remove the obstruction and to arrange urgent removal to hospital if necessary.

If the obstruction is mild:

- Encourage them to continue coughing
- Remove any obvious obstruction from the mouth.

If the obstruction is severe:

- **Give up to five back blows**
- Check the mouth and remove any obvious obstruction.

If the obstruction is still present:

- **Give up to five abdominal thrusts**
- Check the mouth and remove any obvious obstruction.

If the obstruction does not clear after **three cycles** of **back blows** and **abdominal thrusts**:

- **Dial 999** (or 112) **for an ambulance**
- Continue until help arrives, if the person collapses and becomes unconscious administer CPR.

Benefits of First Aid training

No one can predict when first aid will be required and we cannot always guarantee someone with first aid knowledge will be immediately available. It is therefore beneficial for everyone to learn some basic first aid techniques. You can attend a range of training courses provided by community groups and voluntary organisations and learn a wide range of such skills. Organisations normally charge for these courses (although a few do not)

The Council will often look to train a number of employees in first aid primarily to provide some level of first aid cover in the workplace however the skills learnt through this training can, of course, be applied at home. Such training will give you the skills to deal with situation such as an elderly relative having chest pains, a teenager choking on some food or a child drowning in a pond or bath.

If you are interested in learning more about first aid and would like to see how you can help your colleagues and your family then speak to your line manager about attending one of the first aid responder courses provided by the Council.

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