



November 2011

New First Aid at Work Guidance

From 1 September 2011, the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland introduced changes to the First Aid at Work Training Regime.

The new guidance reduces the mandatory four day First Aid at Work training courses to three days and there is also an option for a one day course for smaller low risk businesses.

Those who have completed the three day course can maintain their certificate by attending a two day requalification course every three years. These changes bring HSENI in line with the Health and Safety Executive in Great Britain.

First-Aid Needs Assessment

An employer should make an assessment of first-aid needs appropriate to the circumstances of each workplace.

The aim of first-aid is to reduce the effects of injury or illness suffered at work, whether or not caused by the work itself. First-aid provision must be 'adequate and appropriate in the circumstances'.

There is no requirement for the assessment of first-aid needs to be formal or written down although it may be useful for employers to record the results as they might need to justify their level of first-aid provision.

In assessing their needs, employers should consider:

- the nature of the work and workplace hazards and risks;
- the size of the organisation;
- the nature of the workforce;
- the organisation's history of accidents;
- the needs of travelling, remote and lone workers;
- work patterns;
- the distribution of the workforce;
- the remoteness of the site from emergency medical services;
- employees working on shared or multi-occupied sites;
- annual leave and other absences of first-aiders and appointed persons;
- first-aid provision for non-employees.

First-Aiders

Where the first-aid assessment identifies a need for people to be available for rendering first-aid, the employer should ensure that they are provided in sufficient numbers and at appropriate locations to enable first-aid to be administered without delay should the occasion arise.

Appointed Persons

If an employer decides a first-aid is not required in the workplace, a person should be appointed to take charge of the first-aid arrangements. The role of this **appointed person** includes looking after the first-aid equipment and facilities and calling the emergency services when required. They can also provide emergency cover where a first-aid is absent due to unforeseen circumstances.

First Aid Training

Before taking up first-aid duties, a first-aider should have undertaken training and have a recognised qualification. This means that they must hold a valid certificate of competence in either:

- **First-Aid at Work (FAW)**, issued by an approved training organisation; or
- **Emergency First-Aid at Work (EFAW)**, issued by an approved training organisation.

Extra, specialised training and provision may be needed for hazards such as chemicals, dangerous machinery, working in confined spaces etc.

A list of approved training organisations and Awarding Bodies is available from the HSENI website.

First Aid at Work (FAW) and Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW) certificates are valid for three years. Employers need to arrange retraining prior to the certificate expiry date.

Annual Refresher Training

An employee's competence will decline over time if skills are not used regularly and therefore training needs to be repeated periodically to ensure competence. **HSENI strongly recommend** that first-aiders undertake annual refresher training during any three year certification period. Although not mandatory, this will help qualified first-aiders maintain their basic skills and keep up to date with any changes to first-aid procedures and protocols.

Duty of Employer

It is the employer's duty to inform his employees of the arrangements that have been made in connection with the provision of first-aid, including the location of equipment, facilities and personnel.

For more information on the New First Aid at Work Guidance or any other health and safety services, please contact us on 028 9042 3222 or email enquiries@quadraconsulting.com.

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