

First Aid

Introduction

The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations (NI) 1982 require that adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel are provided to enable first-aid to be given to employees who are injured or become ill at work. Although these Regulations apply to the provision of first-aid for employees, schools should consider carefully the likely risks to pupils and visitors and make allowance for them when drawing up policies and deciding on the numbers of first-aid personnel.

What is first-aid at work?

People at work can suffer injuries or fall ill. It doesn't matter whether the injury or the illness is caused by the work they do or not. What is important is that they receive immediate attention and that an ambulance is called in serious cases. First-aid at work covers the arrangements you must make to ensure that this happens. It can save lives and prevent minor injuries becoming major ones.

The minimum first-aid provision

- 1 A suitable stocked first-aid box.
- 2 An appointed person to take charge of first-aid arrangements.
- 3 Provision of information to employees on first-aid arrangements.

What is an appointed person?

An appointed person is someone who:

- Takes charge when someone is injured or becomes ill, including calling an ambulance if required; and
- Looks after the first-aid equipment, e.g. restocking the first-aid box.

To fulfil their role appointed persons do not need first-aid training, though emergency first-aid courses are available. Appointed persons are not first-aiders and should not attempt to give first-aid for which they have not been trained.

Remember an appointed person should be available at all times that people are on school premises, and also off the premises whilst on school trips. This may mean appointing more than one, (see Educational Visits-Policy Practice and Procedure).

What is a first-aider?

A first-aider is someone who has undergone a HSENI approved training course in either first-aid at work or emergency first-aid at work and holds a valid certificate of competence. **Both certificates are valid for a period of three years and it is a requirement that a two-day refresher course must be successfully completed for the first-aid at work course and a one day refresher for the emergency first-aid at work course within the three year period. If not the full first-aid course must be retaken.**

A first-aider can undertake the duties of an appointed person. A non-teaching trained first-aider is entitled to an additional payment for undertaking first-aid duties. Information on current rates can be obtained from the Board's salaries and wages section. Following an assessment you may decide that one or more first-aiders are required.

Points to consider

- What size is the school and is it on a split site? Additional provision may be required if there is more than one building.
- The location of school in relation to emergency services? The time that it may take the emergency services to arrive must be considered.
- Consider any specific risks, for example, hazardous substances, dangerous tools and machinery. Adequate provision should be in place for practical departments such as science, technology, home economics and physical education.
- Specific needs. Are there members of staff or pupils with special health needs or disabilities? What age range does the school cater for?
- Accident statistics. Accident statistics can indicate the most common injuries, times, locations, and activities at a particular site.
- School trips. If a first-aider accompanies pupils off site, will there be adequate first-aid provision in the school?
- Out of school hours activities. There should be adequate provision for sports activities, clubs, etc.

If the risks are significant, you may need to have one or more first-aiders.

How many first-aiders or appointed persons do I need?

The regulations do not specify the exact number of first-aid personnel required. Governing bodies and Principals should make a decision based on their own circumstances and a suitable and sufficient risk assessment. **The following table is issued as a guide.** For further advice please contact the Board's Health and Safety Adviser.

Establishment	Number of pupils	Number of first-aiders
Nursery/Primary schools	0-100 pupils	1 first-aider and one relief (to provide cover in the case of absence) thereafter 1 additional person for every 200 pupils
Secondary/High Schools/colleges	0-100 pupils	1 first-aider for each practical department i.e. Technology, PE, Home Economics and Science
Special schools		Contact the Board's Health and Safety Adviser for advice

First aid training

The Board may arrange first-aid at work training (qualified first-aider) for non-teaching staff designated as the school's first-aider.

What should I put in the first aid box?

First-aid boxes should contain only those items which a first-aider has been trained to use. There is no mandatory list of items to be included in a first-aid container. As a guide a minimum stock of first-aid items would be:

- One guidance card;
- Twenty individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings (assorted sizes) appropriate to the work environment;
- Two sterile eye pads;
- Four individually wrapped triangular bandages, preferably sterile;
- Six safety pins;
- Six medium individually wrapped sterile unmedicated wound dressings;
- Two large sterile individually wrapped unmedicated wound dressings; and
- A pair of disposable gloves.

The means assessment may indicate that additional materials and equipment are required, for example, scissors, adhesive tape, disposable aprons and individually wrapped moist wipes.

Where mains tap water is not readily available for eye irrigation, at least one litre of sterile water or sterile normal saline (0.9%) in sealed disposable containers should be provided. Once the seal has been broken, the containers should not be kept for re-use. Sterile eye irrigation liquids should not be used beyond their expiry date.

The administration of tablets and other types of medicine is not a provision under first-aid at work. The only exception is where aspirin is used when giving first-aid to a casualty with a suspected heart attack in accordance with currently accepted first-aid practice. It is recommended that tablets and medicines are not kept in the first-aid container.

Travelling first-aid containers

Before undertaking any off site activities an assessment should be made of what level of first-aid provision is needed. There is no mandatory list of items to be included in a travelling first-aid kit. They might typically contain:

- A leaflet giving general advice on first aid;
- Six individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings;
- One large sterile unmedicated dressing;
- Two triangular bandages;
- Two safety pins;
- Individually wrapped moist cleansing wipes; and
- One pair of disposable gloves.

Additional items may be necessary for specialised activities.

How many first-aid boxes do I need?

Every school should provide at least one fully stocked first-aid container. It is important that first-aid boxes are checked on a weekly basis and restocked as required. The assessment of a school's first-aid needs should include the number of first-aid containers. Additional first-aid containers will be needed for split-sites, distant sports fields or playgrounds, any other high-risk areas and off site activities. All first-aid containers must be marked with a white cross on a green background.

Personal liability

The Board will legally indemnify their staff in the event of a claim arising due to alleged negligence in the administration of first-aid in the course of their duties.