



HEALTH AND SAFETY
AUTHORITY

Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007



Chapter 2 of Part 7:
First-Aid

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Safety, Health and Welfare at Work
(General Application)
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First-Aid**

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Guide to Chapter 2 of Part 7 of the General Application Regulations 2007

Chapter 2 of Part 7: FIRST-AID

Introduction

This Guide is aimed at safety and health practitioners, employers, managers, employees, safety representatives and others to give guidance on Chapter 2 of Part 7 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 299 of 2007) relating to first-aid. The objective of the Guide is to give general guidance aimed at the prevention of occupational accidents or ill health. *It is not intended as a legal interpretation of the legislation.*

From 1 November 2007, Chapter 2 of Part 7 of the General Application Regulations 2007, relating to first-aid at places of work, replaces Part IX, Regulations 54 to 57 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 1993 (S.I. No. 44 of 1993), which are revoked from that date.

In this Guide the text of the Regulations is shown in italics.

The General Application Regulations 2007 are made under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 (No. 10 of 2005).

Employers have a duty to provide first-aid equipment at all places of work where working conditions require it. Depending on the size or specific hazards (or both) of the place of work, trained occupational first-aiders must also be provided. Apart from some exceptions, first-aid rooms must be provided where appropriate and as indicated in this Guide.

Information must be provided to employees or safety representatives (or both) as regards the first-aid facilities and arrangements in place.

Regulation 163: Interpretation for Chapter 2

163. *In this Chapter:*

“first-aid” means –

- (a) in a case where a person requires treatment from a registered medical practitioner or a registered general nurse, treatment for the purpose of preserving life or minimising the consequences of injury or illness until the services of a practitioner or nurse are obtained,*
or

- (b) *in a case of a minor injury which would otherwise receive no treatment or which does not need treatment by a registered medical practitioner or registered general nurse, treatment of that minor injury;*
“occupational first-aider” means a person trained and qualified in occupational first-aid.

First-aid means either:

- (a) Treatment in a life-threatening situation (e.g. heart stoppage or severe bleeding) pending medical help, or
(b) Treatment for minor injury (e.g. cuts or bruises).

In relation to preserving life, the “chain of survival” concept is recognised. This is based on four vital links to save a life:

- (i) Early access
(ii) Early cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
(iii) Early defibrillation
(iv) Early advanced care.

First-aid does not include the administration of drugs or medication.

Regulation 164: Application of Chapter 2

164. (1) *Subject to paragraph (2), this Chapter applies to every place of work.*

(2) *Regulation 166 does not apply to the following places of work:*

- (a) *means of transport used outside the undertaking or a place of work inside a means of transport;*
(b) *a fishing boat;*
(c) *a field, wood or land forming part of an agricultural or forestry undertaking which is situated away from the undertaking’s buildings.*

The requirements for first-aid facilities and equipment and, where appropriate, occupational first-aiders apply to all places of work to which the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 applies and to employers and the self-employed alike. The requirements as regards first-aid rooms in Regulation 166 apply, depending on the level of risk, to all places of work except means of transport, fishing boats and outlying agricultural or forestry land. The requirements for first-aid facilities on offshore installations under the Safety, Health and Welfare (Offshore Installations) (Operations) Regulations 1991 (S.I. No. 16 of 1991) continue to apply.

Where first-aid is provided for both employees and visitors, care should be taken that the level of first-aid provision for employees is not less than the standard required by the Regulations and these Guidelines.

Regulation 165: Provisions for first-aid

165. (1) An employer shall—

- (a) provide and maintain suitably marked and easily accessible first-aid equipment, as is adequate and appropriate in the circumstances for enabling first-aid to be given to persons at every place where working conditions require it, at a place of work under the employer's control,*

Different work activities involve different hazards and, therefore, different first-aid equipment is necessary. Some places of work (e.g. offices, libraries) have relatively low hazards whereas others (e.g. factories, construction sites) often have a greater degree of hazard or specific hazards. Requirements will, therefore, depend on several factors including the size of the undertaking, the numbers employed, the hazards arising, access to medical services, dispersal of employees, employees working away from their employer's premises and workers in isolated locations.

Recommended contents of first-aid boxes and kits

Table 1 and the following paragraphs which qualify it give a broad indication of the type of first-aid equipment and supplies which should be provided. First-aid equipment should be conveniently located and kept up to date.

Table 1: Recommended contents of first-aid boxes and kits

Materials	First-aid travel kit contents	First-aid box contents		
		1 to 10 persons	11 to 25 persons	26 to 50 persons ¹
Adhesive plasters	20	20	20	40
Sterile eye pads (no. 16) (bandage attached)	2	2	2	4
Individually wrapped triangular bandages	2	2	6	6
Safety pins	6	6	6	6
Individually wrapped, sterile, unmedicated wound dressings medium (no. 8) (10 x 8 cms)	1	2	2	4
Individually wrapped, sterile, unmedicated wound dressings large (no. 9) (13 x 9 cms)	1	2	6	8
Individually wrapped, sterile, unmedicated wound dressings extra large (no. 3) (28 x 17.5 cms)	1	2	3	4
Individually wrapped disinfectant wipes	10	10	20	40
Paramedic shears	1	1	1	1
Pairs of examination gloves	3	5	10	10
Sterile water where there is no clear running water ²	2 x 20 mls	1 x 500 mls	2 x 500 mls	2 x 500 mls
Pocket face mask	1	1	1	1
Water-based burns dressing small (10 x 10 cms) ³	1	1	1	1
Water-based burns dressing large ³	1	1	1	1
Crepe bandage (7 cm)	1	1	2	3

¹ Where more than 50 persons are employed, pro rata provision should be made.

² Where mains tap water is not readily available for eye irrigation, sterile water or sterile normal saline (0.9%) in sealed disposable containers should be provided. Each container should hold at least 20 ml and should be discarded once the seal is broken. Eye bath/eye cups/refillable containers should not be used for eye irrigation due to the risk of cross-infection. The container should be CE marked.

³ Where mains tap water is not readily available for cooling the burnt area.

Automated external defibrillators (AEDs)

The provision of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in workplaces to prevent sudden cardiac death should be considered. As mentioned in the Guidance related to Regulation 163(a) above, early defibrillation using an AED is one of the vital links in the “chain of survival”. Ideally, wherever there is an occupational first-aider(s) in a workplace, provision of an AED should be considered. The training of other employees who are not occupational first-aiders in the use of AEDs is also encouraged.

Whereas it may be practicable and desirable to have an AED in every workplace, due to cost considerations it would be unreasonable to expect all employers (especially small and medium-sized

enterprises (SMEs)) to have one on their premises, even if there is an occupational first-aider present. These costs not only include the purchase price but also the cost of maintenance of the equipment and refresher training for those trained in how to use AEDs.

However, different employers at the same location, such as in shopping centres and small business enterprise centres, where relatively large numbers of employees or other persons are likely to be habitually present, might find it feasible to co-operate in the provision of shared AED equipment, training and assistance.

Special hazards

Where a workplace has employees exposed to any special hazards such as:

- (a) Risk of poisoning by toxic substances, e.g. certain cyanides or related compounds
- (b) Risk of burns from corrosive or oxidising substances, e.g. hydrofluoric acid
- (c) Risk of accidental exposure to hazardous substances, e.g. toxic, irritant or asphyxiant gases, requiring oxygen for resuscitation
- (d) Other specific risks identified in the safety statement

at least one first-aid kit as set out in column 2 of Table 1 should be provided, together with any special equipment or antidotes. It should be located as close as possible to the site where the hazardous process is carried on.

Employees working away from the employer's premises

Where employees regularly work away from the employer's premises and there are no special hazards or problems of isolation, no first-aid equipment need be provided by the employer. Where the work involves the use of dangerous tools or substances (e.g. agricultural and forestry work, electricity, gas, water and telecommunications services, transport of hazardous articles and substances) the first-aid kit contents listed in column 2 of Table 1 should be provided along with any special equipment or antidotes. It is not considered necessary that all employers should supply a first-aid kit to employees who travel in the course of their duties unless special hazards or isolation factors apply.

Isolated locations

Where employees work in isolation (e.g. on farms, in forests or in mountainous areas) or where medical attention is more than one hour's total travelling time from the place of work, a first-aid kit as set out in column 2 of Table 1 should be provided.

Employees of more than one employer working together

Where employees of more than one employer are working together, the employers, if they wish to avoid duplication, may make an agreement whereby one of them provides the necessary first-aid equipment and facilities. In the absence of such an agreement, each employer must make provision.

Supervision of first-aid equipment and supplies

- (b) *designate at each place of work under the employer’s control the number of occupational first-aiders as is necessary to give first-aid at the place of work concerned,*
- (c) *ensure that the number of occupational first-aiders, their training and the equipment available to them is adequate, taking account of the size or hazards, or both, of each such place of work, and*

In workplaces where there are occupational first-aiders, first-aid boxes and kits should be under their control. Otherwise they should be under the control of a responsible person named in the safety statement.

Recommended numbers of occupational first-aiders

Table 2 gives a broad indication of the numbers of occupational first-aiders that should be provided in different circumstances where the risk assessment carried out as part of the safety statement indicates the need for them. These numbers should be doubled if the workplace is more than one hour away from medical assistance. These requirements do not preclude other employees who are trained to a lower level of skill in first-aid.

Table 2: Recommended numbers of occupational first-aiders

Type of workplace	Maximum number of employees present at any one time	Number of occupational first-aiders
Factories, construction sites, surface mines and quarries	Up to 49	1 if safety statement risk assessment shows it to be necessary
	50 to 149	Minimum 1
	150 to 299	Minimum 2
	More than 300	1 extra for every 150 employees or part thereof
Underground mines		1 for every 10 employees or part thereof
Other workplaces	Up to 99	1 if safety statement risk assessment shows it to be necessary
	100 to 399	1
	400 to 699	2
	More than 700	1 extra for every 300 employees or part thereof

- (d) ensure that—
- (i) details of arrangements made for the provision of first-aid, including the names of occupational first-aiders and the location of first-aid rooms, equipment and facilities for or at the place of work are included in the safety statement, and
 - (ii) the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the local emergency services are clearly displayed at each place of work.

In addition to the above arrangements, details of all cases treated by occupational first-aiders should be entered as per Table 3 in a first-aid treatment record book, which must be kept in a suitable secure place, respecting its confidential nature. These records should be readily available and shown to a Health and Safety Authority inspector if requested.

Table 3: Details of first-aid treatment

Name of patient	Type of injury	Treatment given	Name of occupational first-aiders	Date

- (2) Where an occupational first-aiders provided under paragraph (1)(b) is absent in temporary and exceptional circumstances, it shall be sufficient compliance with that paragraph if the employer designates a person, or ensures that a person is designated, to take charge of an injured or ill person.

Where an occupational first-aiders is absent in temporary and exceptional circumstances, the employer may appoint another person to take charge of any injured or ill person until medical assistance is obtained. This person’s functions, if he/she has not received training in basic life-saving skills, would be to obtain medical assistance as soon as possible and to ensure that nothing further occurs which would worsen the condition of the injured person.

Regulation 166: First-aid rooms

166. An employer shall provide—

- (a) one or, as appropriate, more first-aid rooms at every place of work under the employer’s control where the size of the undertaking, the type and scale of activity being carried out and the frequency of accidents so require, without prejudice to—
 - (i) Regulation 165(1)(a), and
 - (ii) existing requirements in the relevant statutory provisions as regards the provision of first-aid rooms, and

All places of work must have one or more first-aid rooms if the risk assessment undertaken for the safety statement shows it necessary based on the following criteria:

- (a) Size of the premises
- (b) Type of activity being carried out
- (c) Frequency of accidents arising
- (d) Existence of special hazards
- (e) Distance from nearest appropriate medical facility.

In accordance with Regulation 164, first-aid rooms are not required for:

- (a) Means of transport outside the undertaking or the establishment, or workplaces inside means of transport
- (b) Fishing boats
- (c) Outlying agricultural or forestry land.

As a general rule, any workplace which presents a relatively high risk from hazards should have a suitably equipped and staffed first-aid room. Where occupational health services exist on the premises, the surgery or accommodation housing that service may be considered to be a first-aid room, provided that the conditions set out below are met.

Where first-aid rooms are required, the following minimum conditions should be met:

- (a) An occupational first-aider should be responsible for the upkeep of the first-aid room so as to ensure that it is kept stocked to the required standard and that it is at all times clean and ready for immediate use
- (b) The room should be large enough to hold a couch, with space for people to work around it, and a chair
- (c) The room's entrance should be wide enough to accommodate an ambulance trolley, stretcher, wheelchair or carrying chair
- (d) The room should be clearly identified as a first-aid room by means of a sign
- (e) A telephone or other suitable means of communication should be provided.

(b) ensure that every first-aid room provided under paragraph (a) is fitted with essential first-aid equipment and facilities and is easily accessible for stretchers.

The following minimum facilities and equipment should be provided in first-aid rooms:

- (a) Sink with running hot and cold water always available

- (b) Drinking water and disposable drinking vessels
- (c) A suitable store for first-aid equipment and materials
- (d) First-aid equipment
- (e) Smooth-topped working surfaces
- (f) Soap
- (g) Paper towels
- (h) Suitable refuse containers lined with a disposable plastic bag
- (i) A couch (with a waterproof surface) and frequently cleaned pillow and blankets
- (j) A chair
- (k) A bowl or basin
- (l) Clean protective garments for use by occupational first-aiders
- (m) A first-aid treatment record book.

As stated previously, the first-aid room's entrance should be wide enough to accommodate an ambulance trolley, stretcher, wheelchair or carrying chair.

Notes

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