

First Aid in the Workplace: *Be Ready When It Matters*

Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 — first aider ratios, kit requirements, appointed persons, RIDDOR reporting and your right to prompt first aid.

 Last reviewed: August 2026

 HSE · First Aid Regs 1981

 England, Scotland and Wales

ukworkrights.co.uk

In Northern Ireland, similar duties come from Northern Ireland's own health and safety law. Contact HSENI (Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland), not the HSE.

First Aid Regulations — your employer's duties

- Employers must provide **adequate and appropriate first aid equipment, facilities and trained personnel**
- What's adequate depends on the **size and nature of the workplace** — assessed by risk assessment
- Every workplace must have at least an **Appointed Person** — someone responsible for calling emergency services
- Higher-risk workplaces must have **trained First Aiders** — HSE guidance gives recommended ratios
- First aid kits must be **stocked, accessible and checked regularly**
- Employers must inform workers of **first aid arrangements** — where the kit is, who the first aider is
- First aiders must complete **HSE-approved training** and renew every 3 years

KNOW YOUR FIRST AIDERS

All workers should know who the first aiders are and where the first aid kit is. Check the notice board or ask your manager.

How many first aiders do you need?

ENVIRONMENT	EMPLOYEES	REQUIREMENT
Lower risk (office)	<25	Appointed person
Lower risk (office)	25–50	At least 1 First Aider
Lower risk (office)	>50	1 per 100 employees
Higher risk	<5	Appointed person
Higher risk	5–50	At least 1 First Aider
Higher risk	>50	1 per 50 employees

▲ SHIFT COVER

First aid cover must be available during all working hours — including night shifts, weekends and remote locations. One first aider trained but only on Monday–Friday is not adequate cover.

If someone is injured or collapses

1

Assess the situation — is it safe to approach?

Do not put yourself in danger. Make the area safe before approaching the casualty.

2

Call for a first aider

Shout for help, send someone for the first aider. Do not leave the casualty alone if avoidable.

3

Call 999 for serious incidents

If unconscious, not breathing, or seriously injured — call 999 immediately. Give your location, the number of casualties and what happened.

4

Start CPR if needed

If trained — begin CPR. If not trained, 999 call handlers will guide you through hands-only CPR. Use a defibrillator (AED) if available.

5

Record the incident

Every incident must be recorded in the accident book — however minor. RIDDOR-reportable incidents must be reported to HSE.

Frequently asked questions

Q Is a first aid kit a legal requirement?

Yes. The First Aid Regulations require employers to provide an adequate first aid kit. The contents depend on the risk assessment — a construction site kit needs more than an office kit. Kits must be regularly checked and restocked.

Q Does my employer have to provide a defibrillator?

There is currently no legal requirement to provide an AED (automated external defibrillator), but HSE strongly recommends considering one — particularly in larger workplaces or those far from emergency services. AEDs are designed to be used by untrained bystanders safely.

Q Can I be held liable if I give first aid and something goes wrong?

Not if you act in good faith and within your training. There is no UK law that specifically protects Good Samaritans, but the courts consistently recognise that a person acting reasonably in an emergency, without negligence, should not face civil liability. Always act — delay is usually far more dangerous than a well-intentioned attempt at first aid.

Q Who pays for first aid training?

Your employer. First aid training required by the employer's risk assessment is a business cost — not something workers should pay for or contribute to. First aiders should also receive paid time off to attend training.

Delivery notes & attendance record

Before you start

The point of this talk is recall under pressure. If people cannot name a first aider in under five seconds, the arrangement is not working.

Questions to ask the team

1. Name a first aider on this site right now, without looking it up.
2. Where is the nearest first aid kit and when was it last checked?
3. Where is the accident book, and have you ever filled one in?
4. What counts as an injury we must report under RIDDOR?

The law behind this talk

Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981; Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)

Employers must give workers comprehensible information, instruction and training on the risks they face — Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 s.2(2)(c) and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 reg. 10. Keep the record below as evidence that you did.

Attendance record

Topic

First Aid in the Workplace: Be Ready When It Matters

Date

Site / location

Delivered by

Actions agreed

Next talk due

Attendees

Name

Signature

Use the Print handout button to print this record. General guidance only, not legal advice. This toolbox talk is generic material and is not a substitute for a suitable and sufficient risk assessment by a competent person. Employers remain responsible for their duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

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HSE ADVISORY TEAM

0300 003 1747

hse.gov.uk

ACAS

0300 123 1100

acas.org.uk

CITIZENS ADVICE

0800 144 8848

citizensadvice.org.uk

UK WORK RIGHTS

First Aid

ukworkrights.co.uk/toolbox-firstaid.html

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