

OH&S Occupational First Aid

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is First Aid?

First aid is “treatment for the purpose of preserving life and minimizing the consequences of injury until medical treatment is obtained and/or treatment of minor injuries that would otherwise receive no medical treatment or that do not need medical treatment.” [\[OHS Reg.3.14\]](#)

2. Where are the requirements for first aid found?

The requirements for first aid can be found in the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation Part 3 (the “OHS Regulation”) [\[OHS Reg.3.14–3.21: Occupational First Aid\]](#).

3. What does an employer need to do to satisfy the first aid requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation?

An employer must:

- a. Conduct an assessment to determine the level of first aid service that must be provided for a workplace.
- b. Provide adequate and appropriate first aid equipment, supplies, facilities, attendants, and services.
- c. Develop written first aid procedures. [See OHS Guideline G3.17](#)
- d. Keep and maintain adequate first aid records. [See OHS Guideline G3.19](#)

4. Can the employer change the number and/or level of first aid attendant available?

Employers are required under [OHS Reg.3.16\(2\)](#) of the OHS Regulation to conduct an assessment of the worksite to determine the level of first aid and whether a first aid attendant is required.

In assessing the level of first aid the employer must determine:

- *The number of workers who may require first aid at any time*
- *The nature and extent of the risks and hazards in the workplace, including whether or not the workplace as a whole creates a low, moderate or high risk of injury*
- *The types of injuries likely to occur*
- *Any barriers to first aid being provided to an injured worker*

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- *The time that may be required to obtain transportation and to transport an injured worker to medical treatment*

The second step of a first aid assessment is to determine the hazard rating. This is done by applying the ratings as assigned by the OHS Guidelines. According to the OHS Guidelines hospitals and rest homes are designated as low risk. However, a rating should not be applied until a determination is made with respect to whether the rating in the OHS Guidelines is appropriate. [\[OHS Guidelines G3.16–Part 3–Hazard Rating\]](#)

5. I am a nurse; do I need specific training to be a First Aid Attendant?

Yes. Specific training is required. First aid attendants are “persons who hold a valid first aid certificate issued by the Board or by persons recognized by the Board and who are designated as first aid attendants by the employer.” The employer is responsible to ensure that individuals who are designated as first aid attendants have the appropriate credentials as required by OHS Regulation. [\[OHS Reg.3.15\(d\)\]](#)

The employer may request in writing that a Level 2 certificate be issued to nurses who have “at least 6 months experience in an emergency department, or successfully completed a recognized course of training in emergency procedures.” The experience or training required must have been completed not more than 24 months before the request for certification. If granted, the Level 2 certificate is “restricted for use in health care facilities and is not transferable to other industries.” [\[WCB Standard OFA1: Certification of Occupational First Aid Attendants\]](#)

6. How often do first aid requirements need to be reviewed? Who conducts the assessment?

Within 12 months after the previous assessment or review and whenever there is a significant change affecting the assessment occurs in the employer’s operations, the employer is responsible to review the assessment. It is the BCNU’s position that these assessments should be done in consultation with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC). [\[OHS Reg.3.16\(3\)\(a\)\(b\)–Basic Requirements\]](#)

7. What first aid procedures are required by my employer and what should those procedures cover/include?

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The employer must keep up to date written procedures for providing first aid at the worksite. Refer to the [Occupational First Aid – Procedure Checklist](#) to find out what the employer needs and what those procedures should cover. [\[OHS Reg.3.17 First Aid Procedures\]](#)

8. I'm a nurse on a busy unit. Sometimes I don't even have time for lunch or breaks. My employer has asked / assigned me to be a first aid attendant too. Is that ok?

The employer must not assign, and first aid attendants must not undertake, employment activities that will interfere with the attendant's ability to receive and respond to a request for first aid. The first aid attendant must be ready to receive the injured worker or to depart to where the worker is situated without delay, usually within 3 – 5 minutes. If you have concerns about your ability to provide first aid as a result of other work you have been assigned, bring it to your employer and JOHSC's attention right away. [\[OHS Reg.3.18\(s\)–Communication & Availability\]](#), [OHS Guidelines–Availability of First Aid Attendant–3.18\(2\)\]](#)

9. Is it necessary to have a separate first aid kit since my unit has everything required to provide first aid?

Yes. Based on assessment under OHS Regulation 3.16(2) and described if it is determined that a first aid kit is required, in order for an employer to be compliant with OHS Regulation 3.16 Basic Requirements, a first aid kit must be available for staff. For details about supplies to be contained in the kit, please see [OHS Reg.3.16–Basic Requirements](#), [OHS Guidelines–First Aid Kits: Recommended Minimum Contents](#)

10. Does WorkSafeBC have a contact number for any additional inquiries?

Yes, they do. WorkSafeBC safety or hygiene officers can be reached at the Prevention Information line (604) 276–3100 or toll-free at 1–888–621–SAFE (7233).