

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, millions of employees are injured on the job each year. Many more receive first aid services that are not recordable on OSHA injury and illness logs. A first aid and CPR program is the most effective way to quickly treat employees injured at work.

First Aid

OSHA's first aid standard requires employers to ensure ready availability of medical personnel for advice and consultation on matters of company health. Compliance with the OSHA standard varies dramatically from company to company. Some companies feel that first aid and CPR duties should be left to the local emergency services personnel, hospitals and clinics, while others have trained first aid, CPR and automated external defibrillator responders on staff.

Regardless of which method is used, adequate first aid supplies should be readily available to all employees. An example of the contents of a generic first aid kit can be found in ANSI Z308.1-2009 "Minimum Requirements for Workplace First Aid Kits and Supplies." Employers should contact their company doctor or other medical professional for information on what specific first aid supplies should be maintained for a particular organization. Employers can use OSHA 300 logs, OSHA 301s or other reports to help medical professionals identify the unique injury problems of their workplace. An inventory of all first aid supplies should be posted inside the first aid kit, so replacement supplies can be ordered as needed.

Duty to Have First Responders

OSHA's Medical Services and First Aid standard states, "in the absence of an infirmary, clinic, or hospital in near proximity to the workplace which is used for the treatment of all injured employees, a person or persons should be trained to render first aid."



In a letter of interpretation, OSHA defines "in close proximity" as follows:

- In areas where accidents resulting in suffocation, severe bleeding, or other life-threatening injury or illness can reasonably be expected, a 3-4 minute response time is required.
- In areas where a life-threatening injury is an unlikely outcome, a 15-minute response time is acceptable.

In many manufacturing and construction environments, the possibility exists for a life-threatening injury to occur. If an outside emergency response team would not be able to respond within three to four minutes, the organization should require several employees per shift to be trained in first aid and CPR.

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First Aid and CPR Training

First aid training may be received through the American Red Cross, the National Safety Council, the American Heart Association and private institutions. The American Red Cross offers standard and advanced first aid courses throughout the United States via local chapters. After completion of the course and successfully passing the written and practical tests, trainees receive two certificates—one in adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the other in first aid. The National Safety Council provides educational materials to train individuals in basic first aid knowledge and skills; however, they do not conduct training courses or certify trainers or trainees. The American Heart Association® Heartsaver First Aid Course provides training in basic first aid procedures, with the opportunity for training in adult CPR and the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs). The American Heart Association offers standard and advanced first aid courses throughout the United States via their training centers. After completion of their course and successful passing of the written and practical tests, trainees receive a certification card in either first aid, first aid with cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or first aid with CPR and AED. Private institutions also teach courses in basic first aid, but most do not have the ability to certify their trainees.

First aid and CPR training certification should be updated according to the following schedule:

- CPR certification—every year
- First aid certification—once every three years

It is best to have a minimum of two employees per shift trained in first aid and CPR. If you only have one trained employee and they are out of the building or if they are the injured person, first aid response times will increase significantly.

For Additional Information

American Red Cross: www.redcross.org

- Preparing & Getting Trained

American Heart Association®:

www.heart.org

Occupational Safety & Health Administration:

www.osha.gov

- Medical & First Aid Standard