



Occupational First Aid



Introduction

This section seeks to give practical guidance to employers on complying with the Occupational First Aid Regulations, which are part of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007. It also gives advice on the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) occupational first aid training standard and certification, and requirements for occupational first aid training providers.

By having first aid equipment and properly trained first aiders in the workplace, both minor and major accidents and illnesses can be treated immediately and in some instances lives may be saved.

Do I need a qualified first aider in my workplace?

The best indicator will arise when carrying out a risk assessment. Consider the numbers employed, the nature of the work, the degree of hazard, the level of accidents, the size and location of the workplace, the distribution of employees, shift working, availability of an occupational health service within the workplace and the distance and duration from external medical services etc. Table 10.1 will help you determine the number required.

How many first aiders should be present in a workplace?

Table 10.1 (see over) gives an indicative number of first aiders required for different types of workplace.

What should I do when the designated first aider is absent from the workplace?

If the occupational first aider is absent in temporary or exceptional circumstances, you may designate a person to take charge of an injured or ill person until medical assistance is obtained. Such a person's functions, if he or she has not received training in basic life-saving skills, would primarily be to seek appropriate assistance as soon as possible and to ensure that nothing further is allowed to occur that would exacerbate the problems of the injured person.

Foreseeable absences such as planned annual leave are not considered 'temporary or exceptional circumstances'. In these situations you must ensure that there is adequate trained occupational first aid cover for the foreseeable absences, if the need for an occupational first aider in the workplace has been identified.

How is a first aider contacted?

There must be effective means of communication to contact the first aider when required, which will include a telephone, mobile phone, pager or radio.

How are the emergency services contacted?

The names, addresses and telephone numbers of the local emergency services must be clearly displayed in the workplace. Emergency plans and procedures must be in place and people designated and trained to implement them. It must be clear who makes contact with the emergency services.



Occupational First Aid

Table 10.1: Number of First Aiders

Type of Workplace	Maximum No. of Employees at any one time	No. of Occupational First Aiders
Factories, construction sites, surface mines and quarries	up to 49	1 if safety statement risk assessment shows it necessary
	50 to 149	Minimum 1
	150 to 299	Minimum 2
	300 or more	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 necessary
	100 to 399	1
	400 to 699	2
	700 or more	1 extra for every 300 employees or part thereof

- Risk of poisoning by toxic substances, for example certain cyanides and related compounds.
- Risk of burns from corrosive or oxidising substances, for example hydrofluoric acid.
- Risk of accidental exposure to hazardous substances, for example toxic, irritant or asphyxiant gases, requiring oxygen for resuscitation.
- Other specific risks identified in the safety statement.
- Additional provisions in other regulations such as administration of oxygen.

What type of a certificate does a first aider receive?

A first aider will receive a FETAC Level 5 certificate in occupational first aid.

The first aider will receive a pro forma letter from the training provider indicating that he or she has attended the course and passed the assessment pending the receipt of the FETAC certificate.

Thereafter, the first aider will receive a certificate from the registered training provider for a one-day, two-yearly refresher training course, as FETAC does not issue refresher certificates.

Will an existing first aider get a FETAC certificate?

Existing first aiders whose certification is in date and who complete the one-day refresher training based on the FETAC Level 5 occupational first aid standard and pass the assessment outlined in the standard will receive a FETAC certificate. They will not need to do the full three-day course.

Where do I find an occupational first aid training provider?

The HSA has appointed an occupational first aid assessment agent (OFAAA) to maintain and assess a register of occupational first aid training providers. You should only use occupational first aid providers registered with OFAAA at www.ofaaa.ie to deliver training.

How long is an occupational first aid training course?

A training course is run over a minimum of three days or twenty-four hours with a two-hour assessment/

exam. Courses can be delivered over a number of weeks.

What is the retraining requirement?

Occupational first aiders must do a one-day refresher and assessment, every two years, to be recertified.

When do occupational first aiders need additional training?

Occupational first aiders may need additional specialised training if a workplace has employees exposed to any special hazards such as:

What happens if a first aider's certificate lapses?

Where certification for an occupational first aider lapses, a one-day refresher training course is required if the lapse is less than three months, otherwise the full three days of training is required.

How long is certification valid for?

Occupational first aid certification is valid for two years, after which refresher training is required.

I am an existing occupational first aider. When I am required to do refresher training?

Whenever your existing certificate lapses. For people trained prior to 1 September 2008, this will be three years from the date the training took place and will be indicated on your existing certificate. For those trained after the 1 September 2008, the period is two years.

Are occupational first aid certificates from other countries valid in Ireland?

No. There are no mutual recognition agreements between Ireland and other countries on occupational first aid.

1: Where more than fifty 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 per cent) 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 risk of cross-infection. The container should be CE marked.

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

Table 10.2: Contents of First Aid Boxes and Travel Kits				
Materials	First Aid Travel Kit Contents	First Aid Box Contents		
		1–10 persons	11–25 persons	26–50 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 cm)	1	2	2	4
Individually wrapped sterile unmedicated wound dressings large (No. 9) (13 x 9 cm)	1	2	6	8
Individually wrapped sterile unmedicated wound dressings extra large (No. 3) (28 x 17.5 cm)	1	2	3	4
Individually wrapped disinfectant wipes	10	10	20	40
Paramedic shears	1	1	1	1
Examination gloves (pairs)	3	5	10	10
Sterile water where there is no clear running water ²	2 x 20 ml	1 x 500 ml	2 x 500 ml	2 x 500 ml
Pocket face mask	1	1	1	1
Water-based burns dressing small (10 x 10 cm) ³	1	1	1	1
Water-based burns dressing large ³	1	1	1	1
Crepe bandage (7 cm)	1	1	2	3

Therefore occupational first aid certificates obtained in other countries are not transferable and are not valid in Ireland. In order to be a valid occupational first aider in Ireland, you must do the training in Ireland.

What should be in a first aid box or travel kit?

Table 10.2 shows the recommended contents of first aid boxes and travel kits.

Is there some flexibility on the contents of boxes and kits?

Table 10.2 provides a general guide on the recommended contents of occupational first aid boxes and kits based on numbers employed. Quantities indicated are minimum numbers and can be increased.

The requirements for sterile water and water-based burns dressings, as per notes 2 and 3 above, only apply where there is not a wholesome supply of tap water available.

Also, a single paramedic shears and single pocket face mask are considered adequate.

Occasionally the quantities indicated in Table 10.2 will be insufficient and the actual amounts required should be based on a risk assessment. An obvious example is that drivers of dangerous goods vehicles would require a quantity of 2 x 500 ml of sterile water for eye irrigation in their travel kits due to the risk of contact with hazardous chemicals.

What first aid records and documentation should I keep?

The names of occupational first aiders must be recorded in the safety statement along with the location of the first aid rooms, equipment and facilities.

Written records of the dates of all first aid training, including refresher training, should be kept at the workplace and be made available on request to the health and safety inspector.

Records of all cases treated by the first aider should be kept in a suitable secure place, respecting their confidential nature, and be made available on request to the health and safety inspector. Table 10.3 shows the details to be recorded.

Can a first aider give out painkillers/headache tablets?

First aid does not cover the administration of drugs or medications and they should not be kept in the workplace first aid box or kit. In certain circumstances first aiders can assist in the administration of aspirin if available for suspected cardiac chest pain.

What is an AED?

An automatic external defibrillator (AED) is a portable defibrillator designed to be automated such that it can be used by persons without substantial medical training who are responding to a cardiac emergency. A defibrillator is a device that delivers an electric shock to the heart muscle through the chest wall in order to restore a normal heart rate.

Are occupational first aiders trained in the use of AED?

Yes. AED is part of the cardiac first response (CFR) unit of the new FETAC Level 5 occupational first aid standard and first aiders are trained in its use.

Are all businesses required to have an AED?

No, but it would be good practice to have one. There are good examples of a number of small businesses combining in a shared arrangement particularly where they operate in close proximity.

Table 10.3: First Aid Record

Name of Patient	Type of Injury	Treatment Given	Name of Occupational First Aider	Date

Does my business have to have a first aid room?

Premises must have one or more first aid rooms if the safety statement risk assessment shows that it is necessary and based on the following criteria:

- Premises size.
- Type of activity being carried out.
- Frequency of accidents arising.
- Existence of special hazards.
- Distance from nearest appropriate medical facility.

What should be considered when planning and designing a first aid room?

A number of factors need to be considered when planning, designing and equipping a first aid room:

- Location to take account of proximity to work areas and access for transport to hospital.
- Sufficient size to include equipment.
- Entrance wide enough to accommodate an ambulance trolley or stretcher.
- Impervious floor covering, with easy-to-clean surfaces.
- Sink facilities with hot and cold running water.
- Provision of telephone.

Where do I get information on the requirements for becoming a first aid instructor?

This information is available from the occupational first aid assessment agent (OFAAA).

What are the requirements for becoming a first aid instructor?

- You must be a qualified first aider, having achieved a merit rating in the FETAC Level 5 occupational first aid standard.
- You must be a Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) recognised cardiac first response (CFR) instructor.
- You should have attended an instructor's training course, although this is not mandatory.
- You must be assessed by the OFAAA or an OFAAA-registered organisation that is going to employ you.
- You must achieve a merit rating in the FETAC Level 6 occupational first aid instruction standard.

How long is an instructor's certificate valid for?

Five years, but you must also keep up your PHECC CFR certification every two years.

What are the options for an instructor?

You can be assessed by the OFAAA and if successful your details will be entered on to the register of occupational first aid training providers.

If you are going to work solely for an organisation registered with the OFAAA, you can be assessed by that organisation.

What is the maximum number of learners/trainees to an instructor?

Ten is the maximum number for the present. This is to ensure that learners have sufficient time to develop first aid skills. The instructor is required to have a mannequin and training AED for every four learners.

Who does the first aid assessment?

For the three-day course, a separate instructor must do the assessment. For the one-day refresher course, the same instructor or a different instructor can do the assessment.

Contacts/References

See the HSA's website (www.hsa.ie) for copies of:

- Guidelines on First Aid at Places of Work, 2008.
- Safety Toolkit and Short Guide to General Application Regulations 2007, Small Business Edition.

Further information is available from:

- Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC). Website: www.fetac.ie.
- Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC). Website: www.phecc.ie.
- Occupational first aid assessment agent (OFAAA) and register of occupational first aid training providers. Telephone: Lo-call 1890 223223. Website: www.ofaaa.ie.

Occupational First Aid

