

Talking of Grading...



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First Aid at Work

In 1709 Alexander Pope is purported to have penned "An Essay on Criticism" from which the phrase 'A little knowledge is a dangerous thing' emanated, and there are many aspects in life to which this maxim can be applied, not least of these is the delivery of **First Aid at Work**.

I will begin by posing the question 'What is First Aid at Work?'. Well we all know that people can suffer injuries of some kind whilst undertaking their appointed tasks, some of which are quite easily treated 'in house' by 'Qualified First Aiders', whilst more serious injuries would need to be treated by specialists.

First Aid at Work covers the arrangements that **Employers must make** to ensure that immediate attention is given to any accident either by treatment or in the case of a more serious injury, by calling an ambulance with 'on-board paramedics'.

The Health & Safety (First-Aid) Regulations require employers to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to enable first-aid to be given to their employees and freelance personnel should they become injured or fall sick at work.

What is considered to be 'adequate and appropriate' will depend on the circumstances of the workplaces concerned of course and in our industry there are three common types of workplace environments namely:

- The walk in base customer establishment, which employs a limited number of permanent staff
- The non base version of the above, which is generally a remote staffed call centre
- The fully staffed office complexes with a significant number of full time personnel or their staff and visitors

It is essential therefore that, whatever level of 'first-aid' is needed, the personnel who are delivering such should be fully conversant with 'what' and equally importantly 'what not to do' in the event of an accident to a work colleague.

Sometimes it may be better to do nothing than to possibly aggravate an injury by applying the wrong procedure through inexperience.

It is therefore essential that whoever might be rendering first aid, beyond the basic needs required, must be qualified to a level commensurate with the nature of the injury or injuries which have been sustained.

There are several aspects to be considered to determine what level of responsibility employers have to observe their minimum first-aid responsibilities set out in **The Health & Safety at Work Act**, these are:

- **The provision of a fully stocked first-aid box**
- **An appointed person(s) to take charge of first-aid arrangements**

Some of our membership are quite small organisations and will only need to make the 'minimum first-aid provision' however there could be factors which might make greater provision necessary.



A quick look at the web-friendly version of the **HSE leaflet entitled INDG214 (reprinted 03/08)** and you should be able to adequately determine where your Company sits in the scheme of things.

As this leaflet sets out a fully comprehensive schedule of requirements we have reproduced it in its entirety on **PAGES 52-53**.

Please bear in mind that the information listed in that table are **suggestions** and are not necessarily definitive.

The leaflet information also gives an indication guide as to what a typical first aid kit should comprise as might be applicable where no special risks would normally be encountered in the workplace and it is thought that this would generally be typical for our industry.

The nature of your activities may require you to have members of your staff who have undergone training courses in administering first-aid at work, such persons being in possession of a **current 'first aid at work certificate'**.

These certifications can be obtained through some of the training organisations in **Private Hire News**. They must all however have been approved by the **HSE** and a list of such organisations in your area is available from them. Such persons would be considered as '**Qualified Basic First Aiders**'

Alternatively you may only be required to have someone who is an '**appointed person**' who would be required to take charge when someone has been injured or who has fallen ill and who would call for an ambulance if required. That person would also look after any **first-aid equipment** and duties would include ensuring that the **first-aid box** is **fully restocked** after use.

Some of our members have **very comprehensive first-aid facilities** with stations being housed on each floor level of their offices with dedicated staff to deal with incidences at every level. One member has recently acquired a heart defibrillator for persons experiencing dangerous arrhythmia or cardiac arrest and has members of staff fully trained in the use of such a device.

Further information on all aspects of first-aid at work is freely available on the **HSE website** at www.hse.gov/firstaid/index.htm but hopefully this article and the **HSE Guidance** published in this magazine will serve to highlight the need for you to observe your minimal requirements and recommendations about this often overlooked but important subject.