

# Workplace Health and Safety Bulletin



## Developing a First Aid Plan

### Introduction

Health and safety programs at the workplace aim to prevent injuries and illnesses. But sometimes, despite the best prevention efforts, injuries and illnesses occur. Planning for emergencies and having a First Aid Plan is not only the right thing to do legally and morally, it makes sense from a business point of view.

The purpose of this Safety Bulletin is to describe the basics of a First Aid Plan, which is one component of an overall Emergency Response Program. The Bulletin describes the factors to consider when developing and implementing a First Aid Plan, and includes explanations of what should be included in terms of first aid services, equipment, supplies, records, communication and transportation.

### Developing the plan

#### General considerations

When planning for first aid at a work site, the first step is to review the hazards and the types of injuries and illnesses likely to occur. Consider information such as the number of workers at the work site, the type of work that is done, and hazards to which workers are exposed. This helps determine the potential injuries and illnesses and the extent of the first aid that may be required. How close medical treatment services are to the work site will also help determine the services and supplies needed. When developing a First Aid Plan, keep in mind the worst-case scenario.

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## First aiders

Alberta's *Occupational Health and Safety Code (OHS Code)*, Part 11 First Aid, specifies the number of first aiders and the level of first aid training required at work sites, based on three criteria:

- (1) how hazardous the work is,
- (2) the time it takes to travel to a health care facility, and
- (3) the number of workers per shift.

When assessing a particular work situation, you may find that the supplies and services required by the *OHS Code* are insufficient to meet the needs of that situation. Employers are encouraged to exceed the minimum requirements in such circumstances.

For more information

 [www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/OHSC-1.pdf](http://www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/OHSC-1.pdf)  
*Occupational Health and Safety Code*


The *OHS Code* states that designated workplace first aiders must have approved training. Approved training courses are listed on the Workplace Health and Safety web site and are updated on a regular basis. Before enrolling in a course, make sure it is approved by checking the web site listing of approved first aid training agencies and courses.

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For more information

 [www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/courses/firstaid.asp](http://www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/courses/firstaid.asp)  
Approved First Aid Agencies

## Equipment and supplies

In addition to first aid services, the *OHS Code* specifies the equipment and supplies that are required at a work site. Contents of the various required first aid kits are listed in Schedule 2, Table 3, along with the requirements for stocking a first aid room is listed in Schedule 2, Table 4, if such a room is needed. Where specialized equipment is made available, the employer must ensure that first aiders are trained and competent in the use of that equipment. It is recommended that medications not be included in first aid kits. Individuals designated to administer medication should have specific written medical directives

from a licensed physician. Alberta's training standards for designated workplace first aider *do not* include the administration of medications.

## First aid record keeping

Various written records must be developed and maintained as part of a First Aid Plan. The records to include are:

- names of first aiders, including their certificates and training records;
- first aid supply and equipment inventories;
- injury and illness records in accordance with the *OHS Code*;
- procedures for communication, including how to summon help; and
- transportation plans for getting injured or ill workers to medical treatment facilities.

These records are important both for administrative purposes and to meet the legal requirements.

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## Transportation

Employers must arrange for the transport of injured or ill workers to a health care facility where medical treatment is available. This is a requirement in section 180 of the *OHS Code* and applies to all work sites, regardless of the types of injuries and illnesses, the number of workers, the number and level of trained first aiders and the supplies and equipment required. Transportation arrangements must be made prior to dispatching workers to a work site, and therefore advanced planning is needed.

Transporting injured or ill workers in urban settings is straightforward and does not normally require any additional, specialized planning since appropriate supplies and transportation services are readily available. There may be cases where potential work exposures require specialized treatment and in these situations, municipal emergency services may need to be contacted ahead of time so that any specialized supplies, equipment, or specific arrangements for transportation or treatment are in place.

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More planning is generally required for rural and remote locations where workers may be isolated or working alone. Once again, it is important to consider the extent of possible injuries and illnesses that may occur. The goal for this part of the First Aid Plan is to get medical treatment as soon as possible.

Injured or ill workers can be transported by any mode of transportation that meets the requirements of the *OHS Code*, including a designated vehicle, a ground ambulance from a municipal ambulance service, or emergency air transportation. Prior arrangements should be made with the ambulance service that may be summoned. When appropriate, highly specific latitude and longitude coordinates may need to be provided. It is important to provide specific directions with highway, township or range road numbers and landmarks so that those responding can find the work site.

## Communication

Communication is one of the most important elements of the First Aid Plan. Communication involves informing workers about:

- who the designated first aiders are;
- how to summon the first aiders;
- what the check-in procedures are when working alone or at an isolated work site;
- where supplies and equipment are located;
- when to summon transportation;
- what type of transportation is available to get injured or ill workers to medical care;
- who to call to summon transportation;
- what the back-up plan is if the first type of transportation is unavailable; and
- when to report incidents to Workplace Health and Safety.

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## Finalizing the plan

Once developed, the plan should be endorsed by management and communicated to all workers. It should be in writing and accessible to everyone at the work site. No matter what or where injuries or illnesses occur, everyone at the work site should know how to respond and how to get help.

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Plans must be tested before being finalized. Even the best plans can have gaps. It is important to have drills at least once a year, or more often if work locations, workers or other factors change. Before conducting drills, be sure to let emergency response personnel know ahead of time.


An effective First Aid Plan is one that provides appropriate first aid and, when necessary, medical treatment in a timely manner so that health is preserved, safety is protected, and injury and illnesses are not aggravated.

For more information

 [www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/law/pdf/ohsc\\_p11.pdf](http://www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/law/pdf/ohsc_p11.pdf)  
*Occupational Health and Safety Code Explanation Guide*  
Part 11 First Aid

 [www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/fa009.pdf](http://www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/fa009.pdf)  
First Aid Records – FA009

 [www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/fa011.pdf](http://www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/fa011.pdf)  
Workplace First Aiders and Legal Requirements – FA011

 [www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/li016.pdf](http://www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/li016.pdf)  
Reporting Injuries and Incidents – LI016


 [www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/li016-1.pdf](http://www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/li016-1.pdf)  
Reporting Injuries and Incidents – Quick Facts – LI016.1

## Contact us:

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### Province-Wide Contact Centre

 Edmonton & surrounding area:  
(780) 415-8690

 Toll-free within Alberta:  
1-866-415-8690



Deaf or hearing impaired

- In Edmonton: **(780) 427-9999**

or

- **1-800-232-7215**  
throughout Alberta

### Web Site



[www.worksafely.org](http://www.worksafely.org)

## Getting copies of OHS Act, Regulation & Code:

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### Queen's Printer



[www.qp.gov.ab.ca](http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca)



Edmonton (780) 427-4952  
Calgary (403) 297-6251

### Workplace Health and Safety



[www.whs.gov.ab.ca/law](http://www.whs.gov.ab.ca/law)

Call any Government of Alberta office toll-free  
Dial 310-0000, then the area code and telephone number you want to reach

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