

## Facilities Management from A to Z

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## irst Aid

The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 require employers to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to enable first aid to be given to employees if they are injured or become ill at work. These Regulations apply to all workplaces including those with five or fewer employees and to the self-employed. No matter how safe the workplace is or how well the risks are managed, accidents can still happen. Employees may be injured or taken ill at work, and will require immediate attention.

The function of first aid is to ensure that the injured or ill person has the best chance of recuperation until medical assistance is available. The first aider will attempt to limit the deterioration of the condition of the injured or ill person and, where possible, promote their recovery. In addition to serious injuries, the first aider will also be available to treat injuries that would not normally require outside medical assistance, such as minor cuts.

What is adequate will depend on the circumstances in the workplace. This includes whether trained first aiders are needed, what should be included in a first aid box and if a first aid room is needed. Employers should carry out an assessment of first aid needs to determine this. The Regulations do not place a legal obligation on employers to make first aid provision for non-employees such as the public or children in schools. However, the HSE strongly recommends that non-employees are included in a first aid needs assessment and that provision is made for them.

The risk assessment may not identify a need for a qualified first aider but at a minimum someone should be appointed to take charge when someone is injured or falls ill and look after the first aid equipment, e.g. restocking the first aid box. If qualified first aiders are needed the number required will depend on the level of risk and number of employees. First aid arrangements must be available at all times including shift or after-hours work and more than one first aider or appointed person should be trained to cover absence.

*The HSE provide useful guidance on the legal requirements for first aid in the workplace at [www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid](http://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid)*