

## OSH - FIRST AID (Part 2) First Aid Supplies

### Review of first aid facilities

First aid facilities and services should be under continual review by the employer in consultation with employees to determine if they need to be changed or expanded.

### Remote workplaces

Persons working in remote locations should be trained in effective communication in the event of an emergency. The Code suggests the WA Commission for Occupational Safety and Health Guidance Note [Working Alone](#) as an information source on providing means of communication in certain industries, as well as for establishing communication where a telephone is not available.

### First aid boxes

The Code states that first aid boxes can be any size, shape or type providing they are:

- large enough to contain all the items required for a particular workplace
- able to protect the contents from dust, moisture and contamination
- kept securely closed to ensure contents are kept clean and dry and
- where located in a vehicle, of a material that minimises deterioration of its contents from heat and sunlight.

### Contents of first aid boxes

Appendix 3 to the Code suggests the following contents for a basic first aid box. Individual items and quantities will vary according to identified hazards (note that the box should also contain any additional items appropriate to the workplace):

- Adhesive dressing strips individually wrapped
- Gauze squares 75 millimetre x 75 millimetre sterile packets
- Eye pads sterile
- Triangular bandages
- Safety pins
- Scissors (blunt or universal)
- Splinter probe or forceps
- Torch (small pencil type)
- Paracetamol or similar analgesics
- Saline disposable 10 or 30 millilitre bottle for eye wash and wound dressing
- Wound dressings
- Dressing sterile, non-adherent, small
- Dressing sterile, non-adherent, large
- Cleansing swabs
- Cotton tipped applicators
- Gauze bandages 5 centimetres
- Conforming bandages (crepe or cotton)
- Non-stretch adhesive tape hypo-allergenic 1.25 centimetres wide
- Disposable gloves (Appendix 5 to the [Code](#) lists examples of types of gloves and uses for which they are suitable)
- Cold packs (ice or chemical)
- Note pad and pencil

- Instruction booklet for emergency treatment
- Expired air resuscitation (EAR) and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) guides
- Face shields

Note also that while the WA Code of practice suggests the provision of analgesics such as paracetamol, Codes of practice in some States/Territories expressly ban this practice (eg Victoria, Australian Capital Territory).

### **Location of first aid boxes**

The Code makes the following requirements concerning the location of first aid boxes:

- they are immediately accessible to all employees, including persons working in isolated or remote locations, and employees with mobile workplaces, such as bus and transport drivers
- the names and contact numbers of first aiders are provided on or near the box
- additional information such as the name, address and telephone number of the nearest medical or emergency service, is supplied on or near the box
- instructions for emergency treatment of injuries, expired air resuscitation (EAR) and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) are provided inside the box
- instructions for dealing with injuries that may be specific to a workplace (eg eye injuries or chemical burns) are provided in or near the box, and
- instructions are provided on the care of first aid instruments such as scissors or splinter forceps for wound care.

### **Other requirements**

Other requirements for first aid boxes include:

- they should be clearly marked
- the contents should be replaced or added to as required
- should not contain items likely to be toxic or open to misuse, and
- if containing prescription drugs, must be securely locked and accessible only to properly trained personnel.

If medical oxygen is assessed as needing to be available, it should be stored away from any heat source or reactive work process but easily available.

### **Responsibility for box**

Employers should ensure the first aid box is in the care of a responsible person, preferably trained in first aid. That person is responsible for maintaining and replenishing the contents.

### **Provision of information**

Employers must provide information and instruction about:

- the location of all first aid boxes, equipment and first aid rooms (if any)
- the names, work locations and contact numbers of first aiders
- procedures to be followed when first aid is required and for contacting external assistance when first aid is not available or further assistance is required (ie who calls the ambulance and procedures for evacuating an injured person)
- standard precautions for the control of infection including blood-borne infections.

This information should be kept up to date and provided:

- when an employee is first employed at the workplace
- if there is a change in the location of the first aid facilities or services
- if there are any changes in the names, locations or contact numbers of trained first aiders, and
- thereafter, at regular intervals.

Information about first aid boxes and first aiders should be provided in a form that all employees can understand and take into account the needs of people with non-English speaking backgrounds and people with disabilities. Use of the following strategies should be considered: audio and visual aids; graphics (eg posters); interpreters; simple English phrases; same language people to provide information; and interactive practical demonstrations.

Signs should comply with Australian Standard AS 1319 Safety signs for the occupational environment.