

First Aid and Medical Services

Description:

Adequate training of persons who render first aid to injured employees, employer provision for readily available medical services and consultation with health care professionals regarding workplace conditions that might affect employees' health are the subject of this OSHA standard.

Regulatory Reference

29 CFR §1910.151 Medical services and first aid
Appendix A to 29 CFR §1910.151—First Aid Kits (Nonmandatory)

Applies to:

The standard applies to all employers and employees, and has special importance for employees who render first aid treatment to other persons in the workplace.

General Requirements:

According to the OSHA standard:

- (a) The employer shall ensure the ready availability of medical personnel for advice and consultation on matters of [workplace] health.
- (b) In the absence of an infirmary, clinic, or hospital in near proximity to the workplace which is used for the treatment of all injured employees, a person or persons shall be adequately trained to render first aid. Adequate first aid supplies shall be readily available.
- (c) Where the eyes or body of any person may be exposed to injurious corrosive materials, suitable facilities for quick drenching or flushing of the eyes and body shall be provided within the work area for immediate emergency use.
- (d) If it is reasonably anticipated that employees will be exposed to blood or other potentially infectious materials while using first aid supplies, employers are required to provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) in compliance with the provisions of the Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens standard, §1910.1030(d)(3). This standard lists appropriate PPE for this type of exposure, such as gloves, gowns, face shields, masks, and eye protection.

Training Requirements:

Managers, supervisors and other employees whose duties include the rendering of first aid, or employees who volunteer to render first aid should complete a recognized first aid training course such as those offered by chapter organizations of the American Red Cross. If cardio-pulmonary respiration (CPR) training is included, appropriate personal protective equipment such as sterile airway masks with back-check valves should be provided.

Periodic refresher training as may be prescribed by the sponsoring agency's first aid and CFR certifications should also be provided affected employees.

Maintenance and Review

Employers may determine that standard operating procedures and personnel policies are needed for implementation of this OSHA standard.

In developing a compliance program for the standard consideration should be given to identifying clinics, hospitals and other medical facilities in close proximity to company workplaces, and establishing procedures and relationships with designated medical facilities to handle employee injuries and medical emergencies.

Inquires from employers regarding the meaning of “absence of an infirmary, clinic, or hospital in near proximity to the workplace” have resulting in published interpretations from OSHA that indicate that the definition of near proximity to the workplace is viewed by OSHA as a measurement of distance in terms of travel time in minutes and the nature and severity of injury. For instance, if an employee is injured by electrical contact, travel time proximity is crucial in terms of CPR administration while emergency medical services are traveling to the workplace.

Although the appendix to the standard regarding first aid kits and supplies is non-mandatory, OSHA field inspections in the past have indicated that minimum requirements do apply to first aid kits and supplies such as maintenance of sterile packaging, and requirements for individual packaging of supplies. Bulk packaging, such as the use of an alcohol bottle or bottle of aspirin among employees, or broken seals on individual eye wash applicators is typically not acceptable to OSHA field inspectors.

Additional Information and Resources

Consultation with a company physician or other licensed medical practitioner or industrial hygienist

Local chapters of the American Red Cross, Internet address www.redcross.org

OSHA's Internet website, <http://osha-slc.gov/SLTC/medicalfirstaid/index.html>