

First Aid for your First Aid Kit



Exactly what goes in a first-aid kit can vary according to a business's needs. OSHA has few regulations for first-aid kits other than you make them easily accessible and stock them with supplies to treat common injuries at your company. There are no required items but it's important to tailor a kit to treat common injuries for a particular type of work. If exposures relate to deep cuts or lacerations, keep large bandages on hand. If it relates to thermal burns, keep water gel packets and dressings soaked in water gel available in kits.

At the very least, a basic kit should contain sterile gauze pads, roller and triangular bandages, assorted sizes of adhesive bandages, scissors, disposable tweezers, an ice pack, disposable latex/nitrile gloves and flashlight. Consultation with an Occupational medicine specialist can also help you tailor a kit for your workplace exposures.

Make sure the kits are stored in a dry place, easy to reach, with easy and unobstructed access. It's a good idea to mark their locations and provide portable kits for mobile worksites. While OSHA has no guidelines on how many kits companies must have or where they are to be placed, regulations require that serious injuries be treated within three to four minutes (via immediate proximity to a hospital or first aid), so don't stash or lock the kit away where its not handy.

It's also prudent to list local emergency phone numbers (police, fire, poison control, hospital, duty officer) near the kit.

Having a First Aid Kit *and* personnel who are trained in First Aid can also save you money on your workers' compensation insurance costs. Often times, a trained individual can treat the injury with first aid and provide enough reassurance that the injured person is taken care of and won't make an unnecessary visit to the emergency room or doctor. A trained individual can also help recognize cases that *do* require professional medical or emergency care and can provide interim first aid until medical care is available, preventing a condition from worsening.

Many first-aid suppliers and distributors will work with companies to help determine the type of kit and materials they need. It is also important to keep kits regularly inspected and restocked. First Aid training is often offered through local hospitals, the Red Cross or facilities offering CPR. For more information on this or other safety-related topics, contact our Loss Control Department.