



What is the “Adequate Number of Trained First Aiders”? Assessment Form

The WHS Regulation 2017 (42) requires every PCBU to provide workers with access to an “adequate number of trained first aiders”.

Pages 3, 14, and 15 in the SafeWork NSW *First Aid in the Workplace* Code of Practice July 2015, provide guidance on how to work out the “adequate number of trained first aiders” for a workplace. Based on this guidance, Courtenell has developed this 4 step assessment form that can help you to work out the “adequate number” for your workplace.

Step 1. Low or High Risk Workplace

The *First Aid in the Workplace* Code of Practice recommends:

- “low risk workplaces – one first aider for every 50 workers”
- “high risk workplaces – one first aider for every 25 workers”

See the definitions of a “low risk workplace” and a “high risk workplace” in the definitions section at the end of this assessment form and decide how they apply to your workplace(s).

Many workplaces are not 100% low risk activities or 100% high risk activities. Consider the nature of the work being carried out at the workplace and determine if you have workers who are at a high risk of being exposed to hazards that could require immediate first aid treatment and if there are workers who are low risk.

It could be that at your workplace you have a low risk area such as a significant number of office workers and a high risk workplace area such as a manufacturing plant. You may decide to tick both boxes and calculate the maximum number of workers you may have in each area.

Tick the box that applies to your workplace. Calculate the maximum number of workers you have in your low or high risk workplace and work out the number of first aiders needed using the low or high risk ratio you have ticked.

The number of trained first aiders you have worked out is your starting point. But there are other factors from the Code of Practice that you also need to consider.

Step 2. Is your workplace remote or is access to emergency services difficult?

Determine if the workplace is remote or if access to emergency services is difficult. The Code of Practice recommends that “high risk” workplaces that do not have timely access to medical and ambulance services should have at least one first aider for every 10 workers.

Step 3. How do your workers carry out work?

Consider the variety of ways that your workers carry out work, for example:

- if a worker spends most, if not all, of their time working alone and in transit i.e. their workplace is their vehicle and the places they visit in the course of their work (for example, couriers, taxi drivers, sales representatives, door-to-door charity collectors and inspectors)
- if a worker's location varies on a regular basis and they often work without supervision (for example, tradespeople, construction workers in the housing industry, farm hands and cleaners)
- if a worker sometimes works alone for relatively short periods of time (for example, when opening or closing a business for trade or working back late to meet a deadline).

In these situations, it may not be practicable to have a first aider available at all times at the workplace. However, these workers must be able to access first aid assistance, for example by ensuring they are provided with:

- an effective means of contacting emergency services or first aiders
- information, instruction and training on how to respond if a serious injury or illness occurs.

Step 4. Are there any other factors?

Before finalising the number of first aiders your workers require access to, consider if there are any other factors that indicate that your workplace needs additional first aiders, for example:

- the arrangement of work (multiple shifts or overtime)
- seasonal work, where there may be a sudden and significant increase or decrease in the number of workers
- where there are large numbers of other persons present on a regular basis (e.g. schools, shopping centres, hotels and function centres)
- workplaces that have unique hazards such as fitness centres, amusement rides and dive schools
- access during times when a first aider is absent (e.g. annual leave).

Keep Records & Review

Keep a record of the steps you followed and review regularly or when there are significant changes in the matters covered by these steps. This form and the records that you keep will help your PCBU demonstrate compliance with regulation 42 and that reasonably practicable steps were taken to protect health and safety.

Definitions

High risk workplace

Means a workplace where workers are exposed to hazards that could result in serious injury or illness and would require first aid. Examples of workplaces that may be considered high risk are ones in which workers:

- use hazardous machinery (for example, mobile plant, chainsaws, power presses and lathes)
- use hazardous substances (for example, chemical manufacture, laboratories, horticulture, petrol stations and food manufacturing)
- are at risk of falls that could result in serious injury (for example, construction and stevedoring)

- carry out hazardous forms of work (for example, working in confined spaces, welding, demolition, electrical work and abrasive blasting)
- are exposed to the risk of physical violence (for example, working alone at night, cash handling or having customers who are frequently physically aggressive)
- work in or around extreme heat or cold (for example, foundries and prolonged outdoor work in extreme temperatures).

Low risk workplace

Means a workplace where workers are not exposed to hazards that could result in serious injury or illness such as offices, shops or libraries. Potential work-related injuries and illnesses requiring first aid would be minor in nature.

Note

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11th September 2017 revised 9th July 2019