



First Aid Consultation, Co-operation, and Co-ordination in Your Workplace

This article deals with how you may satisfy the legal requirements of consultation, co-operation, and co-ordination regarding first aid in your workplace. It could be of particular interest to Managers, Supervisors, H&S Committee Members, or HSRs.

As you know consultation with workers in your workplace about health and safety matters is a legal requirement (see section 47, WHS Act 2011 NSW). That includes consultation about first aid because it is a health and safety matter.

Also a PCBU must consult, co-operate and co-ordinate activities with all other persons in your workplace who have a work health or safety duty in relation to first aid, so far as is reasonably practicable (see section 46 WHS Act 2011 NSW).

Consulting Your Workers About First Aid

Consultation about first aid involves:

- sharing of information about the first aid matter
- giving workers a reasonable opportunity to express their views
- taking those views into account before making a decisions (see page 5, Code of Practice on First Aid in the Workplace)

The first aid health and safety matters would include:

- the number, location and contents of first aid kits
- the number of first aiders
- the need for a first aid room or health centre
- first aid procedures
- working in remote or isolated workplaces
- the need for equipment such as eye wash and shower equipment, or automatic external defibrillators

Consulting, Co-operating and Co-ordinating with other Duty Holders

Sometimes and perhaps regularly, you may have responsibility for health and safety together with other PCBUs because you are involved in the same activities or because you share the same workplace.

“In these situations, you should communicate with each other to find out who is doing what and work together in a co-operative and co-ordinated way so that all risks are eliminated or minimised so far as is reasonably practicable.”
(See page 5, Code of Practice on First Aid in the Workplace)

In these circumstances, it will be necessary to:

- consult the other business operators to work out what first aid arrangements are needed
- co-operate with each other in sharing first aid equipment and facilities
- co-ordinate access to the first aiders.

For example:

- A local government council and a community organisation get together to run a street festival. They decide to engage another organisation to provide first aid facilities and services to handle any first aid needs of the large number of public that will attend the festival.
- A labour hire business that provides labour hire workers to host businesses has a duty of care for those workers as well as the host business. They need to discuss the hazards and risks associated with the work and ensure the host business has appropriate first aid arrangements that the labour hire workers can access.
- A business may share the same workplace with other businesses that have workers trained in administering first aid. It may be able to arrange that their workers have access to the trained first aiders and facilities instead of training their own workers.

Note:

“The Code of Practice on First Aid in the Workplace is an approved code of practice under section 274 of the Work Health and Safety Act (the WHS Act).

An approved code of practice is a practical guide to achieving the standards of health, safety and welfare required under the WHS Act and the Work Health and Safety Regulations (the WHS Regulations).”