

Selecting a first-aid training provider

A guide for employers

HSE information sheet

General Information Sheet No 3(rev1)

Introduction

1 As an employer, you must provide adequate and appropriate first-aid equipment, facilities and personnel to ensure your employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work.

2 This information sheet will help you identify and select a competent training provider to deliver any first-aid training indicated by your first-aid needs assessment (under the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981). You can get further information about carrying out a needs assessment and all other aspects of providing first aid at work in HSE's short guide to the Regulations *First aid at work: Your questions answered*.¹

3 Where your first-aid needs assessment indicates that trained first-aiders are required, the level of training undertaken should be as identified in the assessment. Typically, this will be either first aid at work (FAW) training or emergency first aid at work (EFAW) training. However, it may also be some other level of first-aid training, outside the usual framework, if indicated by the needs assessment.

4 As an employer, you have a number of options available to you when selecting a first-aid training provider. HSE does not advocate, promote or support any particular option. You should select the most suitable option for your requirements. However, to comply with your legal duties under the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 that choice must be appropriate and adequate, based on a needs assessment and appropriate due diligence (reasonable investigation) being conducted.

Due diligence

5 The guidance advises on the levels of due diligence that you may be required to follow. When selecting a training provider you should check:

- the qualifications expected of trainers and assessors;
- monitoring and quality assurance systems;

- teaching and standards of first-aid practice;
- syllabus content; and
- certification.

More detail is given in Table 1 and paragraphs 14 to 32.

6 The guidance also allows for selection of specialist first-aid training for the purposes of work, eg in the outdoor education industry, so long as you have ensured that the training provider meets the above criteria.

7 The guidance, however, does not promote, recommend or support any particular route to delivery. It does not comment on the quality of individual training courses or the service provided, nor does it provide an assessment of the quality assurance systems of any provider or class of provider.

8 Clearly, as an employer, you will require some assurance that the due diligence criteria are adequately met and that you have selected an appropriate training provider. All training providers should be able and prepared to demonstrate how they satisfy these criteria. Clarity in this area will be beneficial to both employers and first-aid training providers.

Options

External training providers

9 Training providers have to show an employer that they are competent to deliver first-aid training and have the relevant quality assurance systems in place. First-aid training is available from a wide range of providers who choose to:

- offer regulated qualifications; or
- operate under voluntary accreditation schemes (including trade/industry bodies); or
- operate independently of any such accreditation scheme.

10 First-aid training is also available from the Voluntary Aid Societies (St John Ambulance, British Red Cross and St Andrew's First Aid).

11 Regulated qualifications are delivered by training centres recognised by a regulated 'awarding organisation' (AO). These AOs are regulated by the national qualification regulators (Ofqual, SQA or Qualification Wales)* against standards for the design, delivery and award of qualifications. As part of the regulated standards, AOs must have dedicated quality assurance processes to approve and monitor their recognised training centres. Also, the qualifications regulators stipulate that AOs and their training centres must work in compliance with the Assessment Principles for First-Aid Qualifications (which can be found on the Scottish Qualifications Authority website www.sqa.org.uk) and the criteria in paragraph 5.

12 You are not required to formalise or write down the checks you carry out when choosing a training provider but it may be useful for you to retain a written record. By documenting the checks you have undertaken to confirm the competence of a training provider. By retaining a record of those steps, you can demonstrate to an employee, a safety representative, HSE or a local authority inspector how you selected a training provider/organisation. The checklist in Table 1 can be used for this purpose. Due to awarding organisations offering 'regulated qualifications', you do not have to use the checklist to satisfy yourself of the competency of that organisation.

In-house training

13 Should an employer decide to provide first-aid training in-house they will need to make sure that the first-aid training is fit for purpose by ensuring:

- the content of any first-aid training is appropriate (see paragraph 11) and that elements of the syllabus in common with FAW or EFAW (see Appendices 1 and 2) are delivered in accordance with currently accepted standards for first-aid practice (see paragraph 23);
- in-house individuals acting as trainers/assessors have the necessary skills, qualifications and competencies expected of those working for an external training provider (see paragraph 14);
- a system of quality assurance is in place ensuring that the competence of trainers/assessors is regularly reviewed by competent 'verifiers'. These systems should be reviewed on an annual basis by a competent person independent of those directly involved in the delivery/assessment of this training (see paragraph 16);
- class sizes are appropriate and take account of the needs and capabilities of those undertaking any training (see paragraph 20 and 21);
- certificates issued contain information in accordance with paragraph 32;
- equipment provided is suitable and sufficient (see paragraph 16);
- training consists of sufficient, minimum contact training time (see Table 1).

To help you comply with the law, and for the reasons set out in paragraph 13, you may find it beneficial to maintain good records.

* Ofqual is the regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England. SQA (the Scottish Qualifications Authority) and Qualification Wales carry out similar functions in Scotland and Wales.

Table 1 Checklist for evaluating the competence of first-aid training organisations

CHECK	YES	NO	NOTES
Trainers/assessors			
Do the trainers/assessors have a current FAW certificate or qualify for an exemption?			
Do the trainers/assessors have an appropriate training/assessing qualification?			
Quality assurance			
Is there a documented quality assurance plan designating an individual to take responsibility for quality assurance, including assessment of the performance of trainers/assessors at least annually?			
Does the designated person have a current FAW certificate or qualify for an exemption?			
Does the designated person have an assessing/verifying qualification?			
Is there a documented course evaluation procedure?			
Is there a documented complaints procedure?			
Teaching currently accepted first-aid practice			
Is FAW/EFAW taught in accordance with current guidelines on adult basic life support published by the Resuscitation Council (UK), and for other aspects of first aid, in accordance with current guidelines published by the Voluntary Aid Societies or other published guidelines that are supported by a responsible body of medical opinion?			
Training syllabus			
Does the course content adequately meet the needs of your workplace as indicated by your first-aid needs assessment?			
For FAW , does the syllabus include the topics listed in Appendix 1 and does the course include at least 18 training and assessment contact hours, over three days?			
For FAW requalification , does the syllabus include the topics listed in Appendix 1 and does the course last at least 12 training and assessment contact hours, over two days?			
For EFAW , does the syllabus include the topics listed in Appendix 2 and does the course last at least six training and assessment contact hours, over one day?			
For EFAW requalification , does the syllabus include the topics listed in Appendix 2 and does the course last at least six training and assessment contact hours, over one day?			
Certificates			
Do the certificates issued to students assessed as competent contain the name of the training organisation, the title of the qualification (eg FAW or EFAW), reference to the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981, the date of issue and confirmation the certificate is valid for three years? (If training is neither FAW nor EFAW the certificate should also list the learning outcomes of the syllabus on which candidates have been assessed.)			

Are the trainers/assessors competent?

14 Trainers/assessors should have knowledge and competence in first aid, as demonstrated by:

- a current, valid FAW certificate; or
- being registered and licensed as a doctor with the General Medical Council; or
- current registration as a nurse with the Nursing and Midwifery Council; or
- current registration as a paramedic with the Health and Care Professions Council; and
- a knowledge and competence in training and/or assessing, demonstrated by holding a training/assessing qualification such as those listed in Table 2.

15 The list in Table 2 is not exhaustive but provides a guide to acceptable training and assessing qualifications. Trainers who also assess student competence should hold a qualification (or separate qualifications) that enables them to perform both of these functions. A training organisation may use different individuals to train and assess students and they should hold qualifications appropriate for their role.

Table 2 Acceptable training/assessing qualifications

Qualification	Train	Assess
A1 (D32/33) – Assess candidates using a range of methods	-	✓
A2 (D32) – Assess candidates' performance through observation	-	✓
Cert Ed, PGCE, B Ed, M Ed	✓	✓
CTLTS/DTLLS	✓	✓
English National Board 998	✓	✓
Further and Adult Education Teacher's Certificate	✓	✓
IHCD Instructional Methods	✓	✓
IHCD Instructor Certificate	✓	✓
Learning and Development Unit 9D – Assess workplace competence using direct and indirect methods	-	✓
Learning and Development Unit 9D1 – Assess workplace competence using direct and indirect methods	-	✓
Nursing mentorship qualifications	✓	✓
PTLLS	✓	-
PTLLS with unit 'Principles and Practice of Assessment'	✓	✓
QCF Qualifications based on the Learning and Development NOS for assessors	-	✓
S/NVQ level 3 in training and development	✓	✓
S/NVQ level 4 in training and development	✓	✓
TQFE (Teaching Qualification for Further Education)	✓	✓
Training Group A22, B22, C21, C23, C24	✓	-
Level 3 Award in Education & Training	✓	✓
Level 4 Certificate in Education & Training	✓	✓
Level5 Diploma in Education & Training	✓	✓

Is there a quality assurance system in place to monitor the quality of training?

16 The training organisation should have:

- a suitable and documented quality assurance plan designating an individual to take responsibility for quality assurance, including assessment of the skills of trainers/assessors at least annually. This 'designated person', who can be from inside or outside the organisation, should be independent of training delivery and demonstrate competence for their role (see paragraphs 17 and 18);
- a documented course evaluation procedure that includes feedback from students;
- a documented complaints procedure;
- a mechanism for retaining a detailed record of assessments for each student and store those records for a minimum of three years after completion of the course;
- sufficient quantity of well-maintained equipment that permits students to complete their training and assessment within the appropriate number of contact hours;
- where training is provided in blocks, these blocks should be not less than two hours in duration and ensure the candidate has completed the course and the assessment within a reasonable time frame, ie for 3-day FAW – 10 weeks, 2-day requalification FAW – 6 weeks, and EFAW – 3 weeks.

17 The designated person should also have knowledge and competence in first aid, as demonstrated by:

- a current, valid FAW certificate; or
- being registered and licensed as a doctor with the General Medical Council; or
- current registration as a nurse with the Nursing and Midwifery Council; or
- current registration as a paramedic with the Health and Care Professions Council; and
- an in-depth knowledge of the subject of first aid and first-aid training.

18 The designated person should also have knowledge and competence in assessing and verifying qualifications, as demonstrated by:

- an assessing qualification such as those listed in Table 2; and
- a verifying qualification such as those listed in Table 3; or
- working towards such a qualification with the objective of achieving it within two years, providing they have previous experience of verifying first-aid training and assessing qualifications.

19 The list in Table 3 is not exhaustive, but provides a guide to acceptable verification qualifications.

Table 3 Acceptable verifying qualifications

Qualification
D34 – Internally verify the assessment process
D35 – Externally verify the assessment process
V1 – Conduct internal quality assurance of the assessment process
V2 – Conduct external quality assurance of the assessment process
Level 4 Award in the internal quality assurance of assessment processes and practice
Level 4 Award in the external quality assurance of assessment processes and practice
Level 4 Certificate in leading the internal quality assurance of assessment processes and practice
Level 4 Certificate in leading the external quality assurance of assessment processes and practice

Have training providers demonstrated that they work to accepted standards for training?

20 Training organisations should demonstrate that class size is appropriate. For example where first-aid training is provided in class sizes of greater than 12, unless additional trainers and/or assessors are provided there may be concerns over addressing the training needs of individual candidates or adequately assessing their competence.

21 Where your candidates for training have learning or communication difficulties these should be communicated to your training provider. The training provider should then make reasonable adjustments to accommodate their learning needs, eg provision of additional learning support.

22 Where candidates have a disability, training providers should make reasonable adjustments during the period of training. However, at the formal (summative) assessment stages the candidate must demonstrate their first-aid competence without assistance of any kind.

Is first aid taught in accordance with currently accepted first-aid practice?

23 Training organisations should teach the first-aid management of injuries and illness, in relation to the topics covered in FAW/EFAW training courses, in accordance with:

- current guidelines published by the Resuscitation Council (UK); and
- the current edition of the first-aid manual of the Voluntary Aid Societies (St John Ambulance, British Red Cross, St Andrew's First Aid); or
- other published guidelines, provided they are in line with the two above or supported by a responsible body of medical opinion.

Training with an e-learning component

24 Some training providers offer training that is a mix of e-learning and face to face. This is known as blended learning and is an accepted means by which workplace first-aid training can be delivered. It is important that you conduct the necessary additional checks (due diligence) to decide if this method is suitable. This means you should make sure you are satisfied that:

- the individual being trained knows how to use the technology that delivers the training;
- the training provider has an adequate means of supporting the individual during their training;
- the training provider has a robust system in place to prevent identity fraud;
- sufficient time is allocated to classroom-based learning and assessment of the practical elements of the syllabus. HSE strongly recommends that practical elements of the course should be assessed by direct observation, to ensure the competence of candidates;
- the provider has an appropriate means of assessing the e-learning component of the training.

25 Employers should also ensure they are complying with regulation 13 of the Health and Safety Management Regulations 1999, which has a requirement to ensure adequate time is set aside during the working day to undertake any first-aid training employees receive.

26 Where your first-aid needs assessment identifies, or where you choose to use qualifications other than FAW or EFAW to demonstrate workplace first-aid competence, you should ensure that common elements of the syllabus are taught in accordance with the same guidelines.

Does the first-aid training course cover an appropriate syllabus?

27 **First aid at work** – the training organisation should provide a syllabus covering the topics listed in Appendix 1. The training and assessment should be at least 18 hours (not including breaks) over a minimum period of three days.

28 **First aid at work requalification** – the training organisation should provide a syllabus covering the same topics as those in the initial first aid at work course (see Appendix 1). The training and assessment should be at least 12 hours (not including breaks) over a minimum period of two days.

29 **Emergency first aid at work** – the training organisation should provide a syllabus covering the topics listed in Appendix 2. The training and assessment should be at least six hours (not including breaks) over a minimum period of one day.

30 **Emergency first aid at work requalification** – the syllabus and duration of this course should be the same as for the initial EFAW course, ie six hours, not including breaks (see paragraph 27).

31 **Alternative qualifications** – where such qualifications are being used for the purposes of the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981, the syllabus should contain appropriate content to address the findings of the first-aid needs assessment. This is likely to contain elements common to, or indeed all the topics listed in the syllabus for FAW (see Appendix 1). The duration of training (not including breaks) should be based on comparison of the proposed syllabus content with that for FAW and the time adjusted accordingly.

Do certificates issued to students assessed as competent contain appropriate information?

32 The training organisation should only issue certificates to those students it has assessed as competent through demonstrating satisfactory knowledge, skills and understanding in all aspects of the training course.

33 The certificates should contain:

- the name of the training organisation (except in Scotland where regulated qualifications will bear the name of the Scottish Qualifications Authority);
- the name of the candidate;
- the title of the qualification (eg FAW or EFAW);
- an indication that the certificate has been issued for the purposes of complying with the requirements of the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981;
- confirmation that the certificate is valid for three years;
- the commencement date;
- a statement that teaching was delivered in accordance with currently accepted first-aid practice; and
- if the qualification is neither FAW nor EFAW (or the training contains additional elements), the certificate should also provide an outline of the topics covered or the additional elements. This may be on the reverse of the certificate or as an appendix.

Appendix 1 Content of a first aid at work (FAW) course

This information has been reproduced from Appendix 5 of the 2013 edition of *First aid at work*.¹

On completion of training, whether a full FAW course or a FAW requalification course, successful candidates should have satisfactorily demonstrated competence in all of the subject areas listed in Appendix 2 and also to be able to:

- administer first aid to a casualty with:
 - injuries to bones, muscles and joints, including suspected spinal injuries;
 - chest injuries;
 - burns and scalds;
 - eye injuries;
 - sudden poisoning;
 - anaphylactic shock;
- recognise the presence of major illness and provide appropriate first aid (including heart attack, stroke, epilepsy, asthma, diabetes).

Appendix 2 Content of an emergency first aid at work (EFAW) course

This information has been reproduced from Appendix 6 of the 2013 edition of *First aid at work*.¹

On completion of training, successful candidates should be able to:

- understand the role of the first-aider, including reference to:
 - the importance of preventing cross-infection;
 - the need for recording incidents and actions;
 - use of available equipment;
 - assess the situation and circumstances in order to act safely, promptly and effectively in an emergency;
 - administer first aid to a casualty who is unconscious (including seizure);
 - administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation and use of an automated external defibrillator;
 - administer first aid to a casualty who is choking;
 - administer first aid to a casualty who is wounded and bleeding;
 - administer first aid to a casualty who is suffering from shock;
 - provide appropriate first aid for minor injuries (including small cuts, grazes and bruises, minor burns and scalds, small splinters).

References

1 *First aid at work: The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981. Guidance on Regulations L74* (Third edition) HSE Books 2013 ISBN 978 0 7176 6560 0
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/L74.htm

Further reading

First aid at work: Your questions answered Leaflet INDG214 HSE Books 2014
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg214.htm

Basic advice on first aid at work Leaflet INDG347 HSE Books 2017 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg347.htm

HSE's first aid at work website:
www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid

Further information

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