

SEGMENT FIVE - First Aid at Work

AIMS OF THE SEGMENT

The main aim of this segment is to help you to understand the purpose and importance of first aid at work, and be able to:

- Explain the requirement for first aid provision dependent on workplace hazards and risks;
- Understand the difference between an appointed person and a first aider;
- Give examples of first aid materials which should be commonly provided.

FIRST AID AT WORK – Horses for Courses

How do you know what is an appropriate level of first aid provision for your workplace?

In the seafood industry it can vary from a simple first aid kit all the way up to the need for a skipper to have a ship's medical certificate and a very well stocked first aid cabinet.

What are the main differences between a fishing boat and the fish counter of a supermarket when it comes to first aid needs?

Fishing vessel

- A high risk environment, with the possibility of injury and exposure.
- Few people to call upon in case of emergency.
- If medical attention is required it may be several hours before it can arrive.

Supermarket

- A much lower risk environment.
- Lots of people around who may be able to help.
- Medical services and first aiders in easy reach.

So, when an employer assesses the need for first aid in their workplace they will have to think about:

Workplace hazards and risks including:

- The size of the organisation - the larger the business the greater the need;
- The distribution of the workforce – spread over how many sites?;
- The distance to emergency medical services;
- The need for first aiders to have holidays etc;
- The businesses history of accidents.

In the seafood industry we have businesses ranging from one-man operations up to fish processing factories employing hundreds of staff.

Leaving aside fishing vessels which are regulated separately, onshore businesses need to comply with the Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) for First Aid at Work.

The ACoP specifies how many first aiders and/or appointed persons there should be in each workplace.

A **First Aider** is someone who has received suitable first aid training and whose first aid qualification is up to date. Depending on the hazard and risks above, there will have to be a certain ratio of first aiders to employees. The riskier the business the more first aiders that are required. If the business has specific risks, then first aiders may need specific training.

An **Appointed Person** is simply someone who has been given the responsibility of taking charge in an emergency. The appointed person will call for emergency medical assistance for example. Appointed Persons may undertake some first aid training to provide support to first aiders.

In low risk businesses an Appointed Person may be all that is required.

For example, a fish and chip shop probably only needs an appointed person and a simple first aid box, but specific attention will have to be given to dealing with and treating burns.



Anything more serious then call 999.

A medium sized fish processing factory will need several first aiders and some appointed persons to support them.

Why have both? In an emergency the first aider will have to deal with treating the casualty while the appointed person calls the ambulance, clears others from around the emergency site, informs management etc.

Typical Numbers of First Aiders and Appointed Persons

Type of Business	Typical Requirements
Fish mongers, fish and chip shops, businesses employing less than 20 people with easy access to emergency medical aid.	At least one appointed person, but a first aider is preferred.
Fish processors employing more than 20 people.	At least one first aider, and an additional first aider for every 50 employees.
Businesses remote from emergency medical aid and those with specific hazards such as dangerous chemicals.	At least one first aider, and an additional first aider for every 50 employees, plus at least one of the first aiders should be trained to handle the specific risk.

These recommendations are for the number of first aiders on duty during working hours.

You will need additional first aiders to cover for shift work, split sites, holiday cover etc. And one of my pet concerns is, what if it is the first aider who is the victim? Always have a few spare trained people around, you never know when they will come in handy.

FIRST AID BOXES

The Safety Signs and Signals Regulations 1996 states that all first aid signs (including those on boxes) should be represented by a white cross on a green background.



Generally, each first aid box should include a guidance card as well as:

- adhesive bandages 20
- sterile eye pads 2
- triangular bandages 4
- safety pins
- medium dressings 6
- large dressings 2
- disposable gloves 1 pair
- safety scissors 1

An eyewash bottle may also be required and if tap water is not readily available, then sufficient sterile bottled water or saline solution must be kept near the first aid box for washing wounds and cooling scalds etc.

First aid boxes should be replenished or replaced when used and before the use-by date is exceeded.

FIRST AID ROOMS

Some workplaces need or have first aid rooms. If this is the case then they have to comply with the following:

- be large enough to hold a couch;
- have appropriate lighting, heating and ventilation;
- be kept clean and tidy at all times;
- provide easy access to an ambulance (i.e. on the ground floor or near a lift);
- have displayed a notice listing the names and locations of all first aiders onsite.