

Toolbox Talk

Is First Aid Training Required?

There are countless workplaces around the world that require First Aid training. It makes a lot of sense that workers in Health Care, Emergency Response, or even Schools should know First Aid. These professions are meant to take care of other people. But in the dangerous world of Construction, is First Aid training “required”?

The short answer... No, it is not required, but it is recommended.

Before we get too far let me clarify that last statement, it is loosely required. The current standard is written to suggest someone better be able to help quickly.

1926.50(c) In the absence of an infirmary, clinic, hospital, or physician, that is reasonably accessible in terms of time and distance to the worksite, which is available for the treatment of injured employees, a person who has a valid certificate in first-aid training from the U.S. Bureau of Mines, the American Red Cross, or equivalent training that can be verified by documentary evidence, shall be available at the worksite to render first aid.

Thanks to a 2007 clarification letter published by OSHA we’ve learned:

“OSHA recommends, but does not require, that every workplace include one or more employees who are trained and certified in first aid, including CPR.” [\(click here for full letter\)](#)

Rather than rely on the "reasonably accessible" infirmary, clinic, hospital, or physician, wouldn't you feel more comfortable knowing the people working around you can help at the drop of a hat?

How do I get First Aid training?

The need for First Aid and CPR training is so common that you can easily find training near you. We recommend visiting [Red Cross Training](#) to find local classes. Training takes less than half a work day, and if you combine it with CPR training probably closer to a full day.

Can I do it online?

Yes you can, but if you are also doing CPR training that needs to be in-person. CPR certification has a tested element to ensure the training was effective.

How often do I need to redo training?

Both First Aid and CPR are 2 year certifications.

First Aid Kit Standards

Spending time, effort, and money on training wont go very far without the proper equipment. A basic first aid kit **is required** in the health and safety standards.

1926.50(d)(1) First aid supplies shall be easily accessible when required.

1926.50(d)(2) The contents of the first aid kit shall be placed in a weatherproof container with individual sealed packages for each type of item, and shall be checked by the employer before being sent out on each job and at least weekly on each job to ensure that the expended items are replaced.

What should be in a First Aid kit?

| ANSI Z308.1-1998 – Minimum Requirements for Workplace First Aid Kits | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Basic kit – minimum contents | |
| Item | Minimum quantity |
| Absorbent compress, 32 sq. in. (81.3 sq. cm.) with no side smaller than 4 in. (10 cm.) | 1 |
| Adhesive bandages, 1 in. x 3 in. (2.5 cm. x 7.5 cm.) | 16 |
| Adhesive tape, 5 yd. (457.2 cm.) total | 1 |
| Antiseptic, 0.5g (0.14 fl. oz.) applications | 10 |
| Burn treatment, 0.5g (0.14 fl. oz.) applications | 6 |
| Medical exam gloves | 2 pair |
| Sterile pads, 3 in. x 3 in. (7.5 x 7.5 cm.) | 4 |
| Triangular bandage, 40 in. x 40 in. x 56 in. (101 cm. x 101 cm. x 142 cm.) | 1 |

This is a basic kit, not to be confused with someone frequently exposed to [Bloodborne Pathogens](#)

In Summary

It is not required by OSHA that construction workers are first aid and CPR certified, but it is HIGHLY recommended. In the event of an incident, this standard will likely be enforced if no trained person was present.

The cost, ease, and piece of mind that comes with having a trained staff should greatly outweigh the risk of going without. Also, consider that these are life skills you and fellow employees can use outside of work as well; at a kids soccer game, in the parking lot of a grocery store, in your own home.