

Approved Code of Practice for

**First Aid in the
Workplace**

Draft Only

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FOREWORD

The term 'approved Code of Practice' has a particular meaning under the *Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986* (the Act).

An approved Code of Practice is designed to be used in addition to the Act and is associated Regulations. In proceedings for an offence against the Act, where it is proved that a person failed to comply with a provision of a relevant approved Code of Practice, the person shall be taken to have failed to exercise the required standard of care, in the absence of any proof to the contrary (section 63A of the Act).

Thus, a Code of Practice provides practical guidance on how a particular standard of health and safety can be achieved. It describes the preferred methods or courses of action for achieving this standard of safety. However, an approved Code of Practice allows the flexibility to show that an equivalent or better standard of health and safety is achieved by alternative action. An approved Code of Practice is therefore different from a Regulation where the responsible person must meet the specific requirement of the Regulation.

In summary, an approved Code of Practice:

- provides practical guidance;
- should be followed unless there is another solution which achieves the same or a better standard of health and safety; and
- can be used to support a prosecution.

Codes of Practice are approved under Section 61 of the Act by the Ministers for Industrial Relations, following recommendation by the SafeWork SA Advisory Committee.

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1. Introduction

Title

- 1.1. This code of practice may be cited as the *Approved Code of Practice for First Aid in the Workplace*.

Authority

- 1.2. This code of practice is approved pursuant to Section 63 of the Act.
- 1.3. Section 19 (1) (b) of the Act requires employers to provide adequate facilities of a prescribed kind for the welfare of employees at any workplace, that is under the control and management of the employer. For the purpose of Section 19 (1) (b), prescribed facilities include first aid facilities.
- 1.4. Section 19 (1) (c) of the Act requires employers to provide such information, instruction, training and supervision as are reasonably necessary to ensure each employee is safe from injury and risk to health. For the purpose of first aid this includes:
 - (a) ensuring any person required to provide first aid in the workplace is competent to do so; and
 - (b) ensuring employees know how to access appropriate first aid if required.
- 1.5. Section 20 of the Act requires employers to prepare and maintain policies and procedures that set out the arrangements, practices and procedures at the workplace to protect the health and safety of employees. For the purpose of first aid this means:
 - (a) ensuring the arrangements, practices and procedures put in place for first aid are documented; and
 - (b) taking reasonable steps to ensure employees are aware of the arrangements, practices and procedures for first aid that have been put in place to protect their health and safety.
- 1.6. Section 22 (2) of the Act also places a responsibility on employers and self-employed persons to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable that any other person (not being an employee) is safe from injury and risk to health:
 - (a) while the other person is at a workplace that is under the management and control of the employer or self-employed person; or
 - (b) while the other person is in a situation where he or she could be adversely affected through an act or omission occurring in connection with the work of the employer or self-employed person.
- 1.7. For the purpose of first aid this means providing appropriate first aid to any "other person" (e.g. a customer or visitor) who is injured or becomes ill as a result of being at the workplace or as a result of the work performed there.

Purpose

- 1.8. The purpose of the *Approved Code of Practice for First Aid in the Workplace* (the Code) is to provide practical guidance to employers and self-employed persons on the provision of adequate first aid in the workplace.

Definitions

- 1.9. In the Code, terms that have a related definition in the Act, the Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Regulations 1995, or in this section are marked in bold. In this Code:

“designated first aider” means a person with the designated duty to provide first aid in the workplace who:

- (a) has the appropriate and current statement/s of attainment; or
- (b) is an appropriate medical professional.

“emergency medical service” means an open accident and emergency section of a public or private hospital.

“first aid” is the immediate treatment or care given to someone suffering from an injury or illness until more advanced care is accessed or they recover. The aims of first aid are to:

- (a) preserve life;
- (b) prevent illness or injury from becoming worse;
- (c) relieve pain, if possible;
- (d) promote recovery; and
- (e) protect the unconscious.

“first aid facilities” means the physical resources provided at a workplace to ensure the timely provision of appropriate first aid to a person who suffers an injury or illness while in that workplace. Examples of such resources include:

- (a) first aid kits;
- (b) deluge showers;
- (c) eye wash facilities;
- (d) oxygen equipment;
- (e) first aid rooms; and
- (f) occupational health services.

“medical professional” means an appropriately qualified ambulance officer or a person who has current registration with the appropriate professional body as a doctor, occupational health nurse or registered nurse.

“serious injury or illness” mean one or more work or workplace-related injuries or illnesses that require not only the provision of first aid at the workplace but:

- (a) require further assessment and /or treatment by an emergency medical service; and/or
- (b) may cause permanent disability, disfigurement or death.

“sudden illness” means an illness that occurs suddenly as a result of being at the workplace or as a result of the work undertaken there (e.g. asthma attack after exposure to a hazardous substance or biological irritant).

“sudden injury” means an injury that occur as a result of an accident or occurrence at the workplace (e.g. an assault, a fall, a chemical spill, fire, a snake bite or a plant malfunction) as opposed to those that more commonly occur over time and do not normally benefit from first aid (e.g. eye strain or carpal tunnel syndrome).

2. Establishing What Type of First Aid Facilities, Skills and Knowledge are Needed

- 2.1 The type of first aid facilities, skills and knowledge needed at a workplace to ensure appropriate first aid is provided, will depend on the type and number of injuries and illnesses that are reasonably foreseeable given the nature of the work environment and the work performed in the workplace.
- 2.2 To determine what type of first aid facilities, skills and knowledge are needed at a workplace, the employer or self-employed person who manages and controls the workplace should identify:
- (a) the hazards and risks to health and safety at the workplace;
 - (b) the reasonably foreseeable accidents or events that could occur in as a result of these hazards and risks; and
 - (c) the types of injuries or illnesses that could result from these accidents and events that would require first aid.

3. Types of First Aid Facilities

First Aid Kits

- 3.1 Every workplace should have:
- (a) one or more Workplace First Aid Kit or Personal First Aid Kit; and
 - (b) any other additional first aid modules or items needed to appropriately treat all reasonably foreseeable injuries or illnesses that could occur as a result of being at the workplace or as a result of the work performed there.
- 3.2 First aid kits may be of any size, shape or type, but each kit should:
- (a) be large enough to house all the required contents and be able to be securely closed;
 - (b) contain a list of all of the required contents for that kit;
 - (c) have a white cross on green background prominently displayed on the outside;
 - (d) be made of material that will protect the contents from dust, moisture and contamination; and
 - (e) be portable.

Workplace First Aid Kit

- 3.3 The Workplace First Aid Kit should (as a minimum) contain the following items:

Item	Minimum Quantity
The first aid instruction booklet issued by the appropriate State government authority	1
Gauze Pieces 75mm x 75mm, sterile packs containing 5 pieces	5 packs
BPC wound dressings No. 15, large	2
Wound dressings sterile, non-adherent, small	6
Wound dressings sterile, non-adherent, large	3
Conforming cotton bandages, 50mm	3
Conforming cotton bandages, 75mm	3
Conforming cotton bandages, 100mm	3
Triangular bandages, minimum width 90cm	3
Non-stretch, hypoallergenic adhesive tape, 25mm x 200mm roll	1 roll
Adhesive dressing strips, independently wrapped	50
Disposable Saline (at least 30mls) for wound rinsing	2
Disposable wound cleaning swabs, 1% Cetrimide BP	10
Povidone-iodine 10% solution	15ml
Cotton-tipped applicators	50
Disposable latex gloves, powder free, assorted sizes	10 pairs
Resuscitation face mask with cushion rim (persons using the resuscitation face mask should be competent in its use)	1
Scissors, with sharp and blunt point	1 pair
Safety pins, assorted sizes	10
Notebook and pen for recording first aid	1
70% Alcohol swabs	5
Splinter probes, sterile, disposable	10
Sharps disposal unit, mini size (if there is no first aid room with a larger sharps disposal unit).	1

Personal First Aid Kit

- 3.4 A Personal First Aid Kit should only be provided in situations where one or two employees work at a very low risk workplace.
- 3.5 The Personal First Aid Kit should contain (as a minimum) the following items:

Item	Minimum Quantity
The first aid instruction booklet issued by the appropriate state government department or authority	1
Disposable Saline (at least 30mls) for wound cleaning	2
Adhesive dressing strips, individually wrapped	5
BPC wound dressing No.15 (large)	1
Triangular bandage (minimum width 90 cm)	1
Safety pins	2
Absorbent tissues, travel pack of 10	1
Disposable latex gloves, powder free, assorted sizes	2 pairs

The Eye Injury Module

- 3.6 The Eye Injury Module should be included in first aid kits in workplaces where there is there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of serious eye injuries – that is injuries that would require assessment and/or treatment by a medical professional.

3.7 The need to have an Eye Injury Module especially applies to workplaces where personal protective equipment is worn to reduce the risk of serious eye injuries.

3.8 The Eye Injury Module should contain (as a minimum) the following items:

Item	Minimum Quantity
Disposable eye wash, normal saline, (each holding at least 30ml)	6
Sterile eye pads (individually wrapped)	6
Non-stretch hypo-allergenic adhesive tape	1 roll
Absorbent tissues, travel pack of 10	1
Surgical spears (strolls wedges) on applicator sticks (disposable packs of 2)	4 packets

The Burn Injury Module

3.9 In workplaces where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of a serious burn (that is a burn that would require assessment and/or treatment by a medical professional) action should be taken to:

- (a) include the Burn Injury Module in the relevant first aid kit; and
- (b) ensure access to a plentiful supply of cold running water.

3.10 The need to have the Burns Injury Module especially applies to workplaces where personal protective equipment is worn to reduce the risk of serious burns.

3.11 The Burn Injury Module should contain (as a minimum) the following items:

Item	Minimum Quantity
Wound dressings, sterile, non-adherent, 50mm x 50mm	3
Wound dressings, sterile, non-adherent, 100mm x 100mm	3
Wound dressings, sterile, non-adherent, 200mm x 150mm	2
Combine dressings, sterile, 90mm x 100mm	5
Combine dressings, sterile, 200mm x 200mm	5
Burns sheet 75mm x 75mm (if major burns are foreseeable)	1
Burns sheet 700mm x 2000mm (if major burns are foreseeable)	1
Note: Bandages to retain these dressings are in the Workplace First Aid Kit or should be purchased separately.	

The Remote Areas Module

3.12 The Remote Areas Module should be added to all first aid kits where it is reasonably foreseeable that:

- (a) a person at the workplace could suffer from:
 - i. a snake or insect bite/sting; or
 - ii. severe bleeding; and /or
- (b) there could be a significant delay in getting an ill or injured person, who requires advanced care, to an appropriate emergency medical service.

3.13 The Remote Areas Module should contain (as a minimum) the following items:

Item	Minimum Quantity
Wound dressings, non-adherent, sterile and antiseptic (impregnated and independently wrapped) 100mm x 100mm	6
Disposable Saline (at least 30mls) for wound cleaning	1
Heavy duty crepe bandages, 75mm	3
Heavy duty crepe bandages, 100mm	3
Triangular bandages, minimum width 90cm	4
Combine dressings, sterile, 200mm x 200mm	2
Aluminium sulphate 20% gel (Stingose or similar product)	5
Thermal blanket	1
Disposable latex gloves, powder free, assorted sizes	6 pairs
Note: These are minimum quantities recommended for one or two persons.	

Other First Aid Facilities

3.14 In addition to one or more appropriate First Aid Kits, every workplace should have any other first aid facilities needed to appropriately treat all reasonably foreseeable work-related injuries or illnesses that could occur as a result of being at the workplace or as a result of the work performed there. Examples of other first aid facilities that may be used to treat work-related injuries or illnesses include:

- (a) deluge facilities;
- (b) oxygen equipment.

First Aid Rooms

3.15 A first aid room should, so far as is reasonably practicable, be provided in workplaces:

- (a) where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of a person suffering a serious and sudden injury or illness as a result of being at the workplace or as a result of the work performed there; and
- (b) it would be difficult to give the appropriate treatment and care needed to prevent further deterioration in health without access to a first aid room; and
- (c) at least one of the following apply:
 - i. a relatively large number of people are present in the workplace at any one time on a regular basis (e.g. schools, universities, function and convention centres); or
 - ii. the work done is of a relatively hazardous nature (e.g. mining, quarrying, stevedoring, construction and manufacturing); or
 - iii. there is likely to be a significant delay in getting advanced care from a medical professional due to the location of the workplace.

3.16 First aid rooms should contain:

- (a) a Workplace First Aid Kit including as necessary additional first aid items or modules;

- (b) a sink and wash basin with hot and cold water supply, soaps, nail brush and disposable paper towels;
- (c) a work bench and/or dressing trolley;
- (d) a cupboard for storage of dressings, utensils and linen;
- (e) a soiled dressings container with a disposable lining;
- (f) a bowl or bucket (minimum 2 litres capacity);
- (g) a container for the safe disposal of sharps;
- (h) electric power points;
- (i) a couch with blankets, pillows and sheets and pillow cases;
- (j) one armchair,
- (k) a chair and a table or desk;
- (l) a telephone and/or emergency call system;
- (m) a portable stretcher;
- (n) an examination lamp; and
- (o) official record keeping facilities.

Note: See paragraphs 5.1, 5.7 and 5.8 for other requirements regarding the provision and maintenance of first aid rooms.

- 3.17 In some workplaces the risk assessment might identify that although there may be a relatively large number of people present in the workplace at any one time, the likelihood of a person sustaining a sudden and serious injury or illness (as a result of being at the workplace or as a result of the work performed there) is so remote so as to be almost unforeseeable.
- 3.18 In such workplaces, arrangements should be made to allocate a suitable room; or area; and/or provide other facilities that will enable a sick or injured person to rest comfortably until they either recover or leave the workplace to go home, to a medical centre or somewhere else where they will be appropriately cared for.

Occupational Health Services (See Discussion Paper: Section 2.4)

4. Requirements for First Aid Personnel

Determining the Need for Designated First Aiders

- 4.1 So far as is reasonably practicable, a designated first aider should be readily available at a workplace where the risk assessment has determined that:
- (a) there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of a person suffering a serious and sudden injury or illness as a result of being at the workplace or as a result of the work performed there; or
 - (b) the eye and/or burns module is required in the first aid kit; or
 - (c) a first aid room has been determined as a required first aid facility; or
 - (d) employees cannot competently provide first aid treatment required; or
 - (e) the workplace is remote from an emergency medical service.
- 4.2 If it is not reasonably practicable to provide ready access to a designated first aider in the workplace, but there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of a work related serious and sudden injury or illness occurring, then all employees or self-employed persons who may have to administer first aid for such an injury or illness must be provided with appropriate information, instruction and training to ensure they are competent to do so.

Note: See paragraph 5.9 for requirements regarding communication with and access to Designated First Aiders.

Training for Designated First Aiders

- 4.3 Designated first aiders should hold nationally recognised Statement/s of Attainment issued by a Registered Training Organisation for the nationally endorsed first aid unit/s of competency as nominated by the Director from time to time. In deciding what type of training is appropriate, consideration should be given to:
- (a) the nature of the workplace (e.g. remote);
 - (b) the types and incidence of work-related injuries and illnesses that are reasonably foreseeable;
 - (c) the types of first aid facilities the designated first aider is responsible for and/or may be required to use (e.g. first aid rooms); and
 - (d) any other relevant factors (e.g. other legal and/or industry requirements).
- 4.4 In any workplace where a life-threatening hazard exists, designated first aiders must be made aware of the hazard, the types of injuries or illnesses it may cause, and the first aid required for such injuries and/or illnesses.
- 4.5 Designated first aiders should attend training on a regular basis to refresh their first aid knowledge and skills and to confirm their competence to provide first aid. The frequency of such refresher training should be at intervals nominated by the Director or more frequently if identified as desirable as a result of the risk assessment performed for the purpose of Section 2.
- 4.6 Training for designated first aiders should be provided by a Registered Training Organisation, which is registered to provide the relevant competencies.

5. Availability of Appropriate First Aid Facilities and Personnel

- 5.1 An employer or self-employed person who has a duty to provide first aid at a workplace, must ensure that the first aid facilities provided are:
- (a) conveniently located and easily accessible;
 - (b) clearly marked; and
 - (c) appropriately maintained.

First Aid Kits

- 5.2 For employees with a regular workstation at a fixed location, the maximum distance from the workstation to the nearest first aid kit should be 100 metres. Internal divisions and barriers should be taken into consideration when assessing how convenient a first aid kit is.
- 5.3 The location of first aid kits in fixed workplaces should be identified with suitable signage that complies with Australian Standard *AS 1319: 1994 - Safety Signs for the Occupational Environment*.
- 5.4 A first aid kit in a mobile workplace should be easily accessible and safely located so as not to become a projectile in the event of an accident.
- 5.5 In mobile workplaces (e.g. cars and busses) the location of a first aid kit should be identified by a prominent sticker on the vehicle that either marks the location of the kit, or explains where it is.

Maintenance of Facilities and Other Responsibilities of First Aid Personnel

- 5.6 The person/s allocated responsibility for providing first aid at a workplace should also be the person in charge of the first aid kit for that workplace. This person's role is to:
- (a) monitor access to the first aid kit and ensure any items used are replaced as soon as practicable after use;
 - (b) do regular checks of first aid kits to ensure the kit contains a clean and complete set of the required items (as listed in the kit);
 - (c) ensure items are in good working order, have not deteriorated and are within their "use by" dates;
 - (d) report to the employer any hazardous situations that have resulted in a person requiring first aid; and
 - (e) record first aid treatments.

Note: See Section 3 for other requirements regarding first aid kits.

First Aid Rooms

- 5.7 A first aid room and its contents should be the responsibility of one or more appropriately trained designated first aiders, except where this room is part of an occupational health service.
- 5.8 A first aid room should:
- (a) be suitably located and be easily accessible to emergency services;
 - (b) be well lit and ventilated;
 - (c) be readily accessible to toilet facilities;
 - (d) have an appropriate floor area (14 square metres as a guide); and
 - (e) have an entrance clearly marked "FIRST AID".

Note: See Section 3 for other requirements regarding first aid rooms.

Designated First Aiders

- 5.9 In workplaces where it has been determined that access to a designated first aider is required, an employer or self-employed person who manages and controls the workplace should ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that any person who is injured or becomes ill as a result of being at the workplace or the work done there, has timely access to assistance from a designated first aider. Such action includes:
- (a) ensuring an appropriate number of designated first aiders are readily available and easily accessible at the workplace; and
 - (b) appropriate communication systems are in place (including equipment and procedures) to ensure rapid communication with designated first aiders.

Note: See Section 4 for other requirements regarding Designated First Aiders.

6. First Aid Policies and Procedures

Development and Implementation of Procedures

- 6.1 An employer or self-employed person who manages and controls a workplace must:
- (a) prepare and keep up to date a written procedure that describes the arrangements, practices and procedures at the workplace for the provision of first aid; and
 - (b) take reasonable steps to bring the contents of the procedure to the attention of employees at that workplace.

- 6.2 A procedure for first aid should contain (as appropriate) information on matters including:

- (a) The type and location of first aid kits. Who is responsible for them and how frequently they are to be checked and maintained.
- (b) The location of any other first aid facilities such as first aid rooms and deluge showers. Who is responsible for them and how frequently they are to be checked and maintained.
- (c) The communication equipment and systems provided for use when first aid is needed (especially for remote and isolated workers). The location of the communication equipment. Who is responsible for it and how frequently communication equipment is to be checked and maintained.
- (d) The names and contact details of the designated first aider allocated to cover the work areas and/or shift.
- (e) Arrangements to ensure designated first aiders receive appropriate training.
- (f) Arrangement for ensuring that employees receive appropriate, information, instruction and training in relation to first aid.
- (g) The system for reporting injuries and illnesses that occur in the workplace (including arrangements for recording and storing details of first aid treatment).
- (h) The procedures to be followed if an employee or other person through injury or illness is too ill to stay at the workplace (but does not require treatment at an emergency medical service) including what to do if they require assistance with transport to a medical service, home or somewhere else where they can rest and recover.
- (i) Any other relevant information or instructions necessary to ensure appropriate first aid is provided.

Arrangements for the Management of Critical Incidents

- 6.3 Every workplace must have in place arrangements and procedures for the appropriate management of any reasonably foreseeable critical incidents that may occur at the workplace, including incidents where:
- (a) a person/s suffers a life-threatening injury or illness requiring immediate transport by ambulance to an emergency medical service; or
 - (b) a person/s is exposed to a life threatening situation in the workplace – irrespective of whether they sustain any injury or illness as a result of this exposure.

6.4 A procedure for response to critical incidents should include the name and contact details of the person/s responsible for taking control of the scene for the purpose of making the situation safe and co-ordinating the response. The response procedure should also detail (as appropriate) arrangements for:

- (a) liaising with ambulance and other emergency services;
- (b) organising for first aid to be provided once the situation has been made safe;
- (c) retrieving and/or rescuing injured/ill persons (e.g. from confined spaces);
- (d) ensuring safe access by ambulance and emergency personnel to the person/s concerned;
- (e) organising, as appropriate, post-incident de-briefing or counselling;
- (f) notifying, if necessary, the relevant occupational health and safety authority of the injury and or dangerous occurrence; and, if this applies;
- (g) ensuring the only alterations made to the scene are for the purpose of:
 - i. rescuing an injured person,
 - ii. retrieving a dead body, or
 - iii. protecting the health and safety of others in the area, or
 - iv. preventing undue damage to property.

6.5 This procedure should also provide (as appropriate) details of:

- (a) emergency communication equipment and systems;
- (b) any rescue equipment and personnel that may be required (including the location of equipment and the names and contact details of the persons trained in rescue procedures); and
- (c) the nearest emergency medical service.