**FIRST AID EQUIPMENT – OHS Act 85 of 1993 – Regulation 7**

Employers; please note that the ''Draft General Health and Safety Regulations'' were Gazetted on 28 October 2005 (Government Gazette, No. 28162). Regulation 7 of the regulations provides the specifications relating to ''First aid, emergency equipment, and procedures''.

**When should first aid be provided at the workplace?**

The regulation states that ''an employer shall take all reasonable steps that are necessary under the circumstances, to ensure that persons at work *receive prompt first aid treatment* in case of injury or emergency.''

**The appointment of first aiders**

Where *more than 10 employees are employed at a workplace*, the employer needs to *appoint a first aider*. This is a compulsory legal appointment and the first aider should be readily available during normal working hours.

**Ratio of first aiders**

Shops and offices - one first aider for every 100 employees. Other workplaces - one first aider for every 50 employees.

**Competency of the first aider**

The first aider should be in possession of a valid first aid certificate, issued by a person or organisation approved by the chief inspector for this purpose.

Where pesticides, hazardous chemical substances or hazardous biological agents are used, handled, processed or manufactured the first aid worker should be trained in the first aid procedures that are necessary for the treatment of injuries that may result from such activities.

**In the case of injuries or wounds**

Employees duty - an employee suffering from an open wound, cut, sore or any similar injury, who works where hazardous chemical substances or hazardous biological agents is used, handled, processed or manufactured, shall report such injury to his employer as soon as possible.

The employer's duty – the employer may not permit such person to continue working before the injury has been cleaned with soap and water or with a diluted disinfectant and suitable dressed to eliminate blood or bodily fluids seepage through the dressing, where necessary.

**Emergency equipment**

Eye-wash fountain and similar facilities - where an employee is exposed or may be exposed to a potential hazard of injury to the eye through contact with a hazardous biological agent or hazardous chemical substance, the employer shall make sure that there is an eye-wash fountain, or any similar facilities, in the immediate vicinity of the workplace of such employee and that the employee is trained in the use thereof.

Deluge showers - where an employee is exposed to a potential hazard of injury to or absorption through the skin as a result of sudden contact with a large amount of hazardous chemical substances or hazardous biological agents, the employer shall make sure that there is a fast-reacting deluge shower with clean water, or similar facility in the immediate vicinity of the workplace of such employee and that the employee is trained to use such facility in the use thereof.

**When should first aid boxes be provided?**

The regulation states that first aid facilities must be provided ''Where *more than five employees are employed* at a workplace''

**Placement of the first aid boxes**

''The employer must provide a first aid box or boxes at or near the workplace, *available and accessible for the treatment* of injured persons at that workplace."

**How many first aid boxes should be provided?**

The number of boxes required should be determined by the employer, taking the following into account:

· the type of injuries that are likely to occur at a workplace, · the nature of the activities performed and · the number of employees employed at such workplace

**Signage**

An employer shall post a prominent notice or sign in a conspicuous place at a workplace, indicating where the first aid box or boxes are kept as well as the name of the person in charge of such first aid box or boxes.

**What content should the first aid box contain?**

Suitable first aid equipment, as listed *in the prescribed Annexure*.

**Annexure**

**Minimum contents of a First Aid Box**

In the case of shops and offices, the quantities stated under items 1, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 17, and 18 may be reduced by half.

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| Item 1 | Wound cleaner / antiseptic (100ml) |
| Item 2 | Swabs for cleaning wounds |
| Item 3 | Cotton wool for padding (100g) |
| Item 4 | Sterile gauze (minimum quantity 10) |
| Item 5 | 1 pair of forceps (for splinters) |
| Item 6 | 1 pair of scissors (minimum size 100mm) |
| Item 7 | 1 set of safety pins |
| Item 8 | 4 triangular bandages |
| Item 9 | 4 roller bandages (75mm x 5m) |
| Item 10 | 4 roller bandages (100mm x 5m) |
| Item 11 | 1 roll of elastic adhesive (25mm x 3m) |
| Item 12 | 1 Non-allergenic adhesive strip (25mm x 3m) |
| Item 13 | 1 Packet of adhesive dressing strips (minimum quantity 10 assorted sizes) |
| Item 14 | 4 First aid dressings (75mm x 100mm) |
| Item 15 | 4 First aid dressings (150mm x 200mm) |
| Item 16 | 2 Straight splints |
| Item 17 | 2 Pairs large and 2 pairs medium disposable latex gloves |
| Item 18 | 2 CPR mouth pieces or similar devices |
| Item 19 | An adequate supply of absorbent material for the absorption of blood and other body fluids spilled |
| Item 20 | Disinfectant to disinfect the area after cleaning up blood and other body fluids spilled. |
| Item 21 | 2 Pairs large and 2 pairs medium disposable rubber household gloves. |
| Item 22 | A suitable sized impervious bag for the safe disposal of blood and other body fluid contaminated biohazard materials |

**Spillage kit**

Please note that a spillage kit had been added to the content of the first aid box. (See items 19 to 22 of the under mentioned Annexure)

**May the employer keep any other articles or substances like painkillers in the firth aid box?**

Regulation 7 states that the employer must ensure that *only articles and equipment as mentioned above or other similar equipment or medicine* is kept in the first aid box or boxes. According to the Medicines and Related Substances Control Act 101 of 1965, no person is allowed to dispense a medicine (ie: headache tablets, cough mixture, any other oral medicine) unless authorized to do so under the Pharmacy Act.