

First aid cover requirements during the coronavirus outbreak

As buildings across the University Estate prepare to re-open or allow more staff into them it is important to ensure that sufficient first aid cover is available.

The University currently have over 620 trained first aiders to comply with the First Aid at Work Regulations. However, managing first aid cover during re-occupation of buildings will need careful consideration as not all of these trained first aiders will be amongst those employees returning to the buildings.

First Aid needs assessment

You should review your first aid needs during re-occupation, this must include the number of people that will be in your building, any shift patterns and the type of work that is being undertaken. Further guidance on completing a needs assessment can be found in the link below.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/needs-assessment.htm>

As there will be fewer people in your buildings then it may still be safe to operate with the reduced numbers of first aiders available to you.

Number of first aiders required

Figure 1 below shows the number of first aiders required depending on the hazards present and the number of people.

Here at the University we use the 'appointed person' in some out of hours working situations in low risk environments. All University first aiders have to undertake the 3 day first aid at work course FAW. We do not use the emergency first aid at work course EFAW, however some departments do use this course and will have people who hold this qualification.

As an absolute minimum a low risk small office should have a first aid box available and an appointed person. The role of an appointed person is set out below.

Appointed persons Where an employer's assessment of first-aid needs identifies that a designated first-aider is not required, the minimum requirement for an employer is to appoint a person to take charge of the first-aid arrangements, including looking after the equipment and facilities, and calling the emergency services when required. Arrangements should be made for an appointed person to be available to undertake these duties at all times when people are at work.

First Aid Qualifications

If your first aider holds a certificate that expired on or after 16th March 2020 and cannot access requalification training yet because of covid-19 they may qualify for an extension. To qualify for this extension they have to explain why they haven't been able to requalify and demonstrate what steps they have taken to access training, if they are asked to do so by external authorities. The reason for non-attendance cannot be personal preference not to attend training during the Pandemic, if people do not wish to attend requalification training then they must step down as a University First Aider and allow someone else to train. This individual may be able to retrain in the future if there is a requirement within their department.

FAW or EFAW certificates that expired after 16 March 2020 remained valid until 31 October 2020 or 6 months from date of expiry, whichever is later. The HSE has advised that all requalification training for these certificates should be completed by 31 March 2021.

Under the current lockdown restrictions (Jan 2021) St John Ambulance are continuing to offer first aid training at various venues. The Safety Office will contact those individuals requiring requalification training. Please advise the Safety Office of your chosen date to allow bookings to be made. If you do not intend to retrain can you also advise the Safety Office of this so we can ensure adequate cover remains in place.

Whilst you wait for your training St John are offering free on-line refresher training to all current first aiders. Details on how to access this have been sent out to first aiders and they should be encouraged to access it, particularly those with expired certificates.

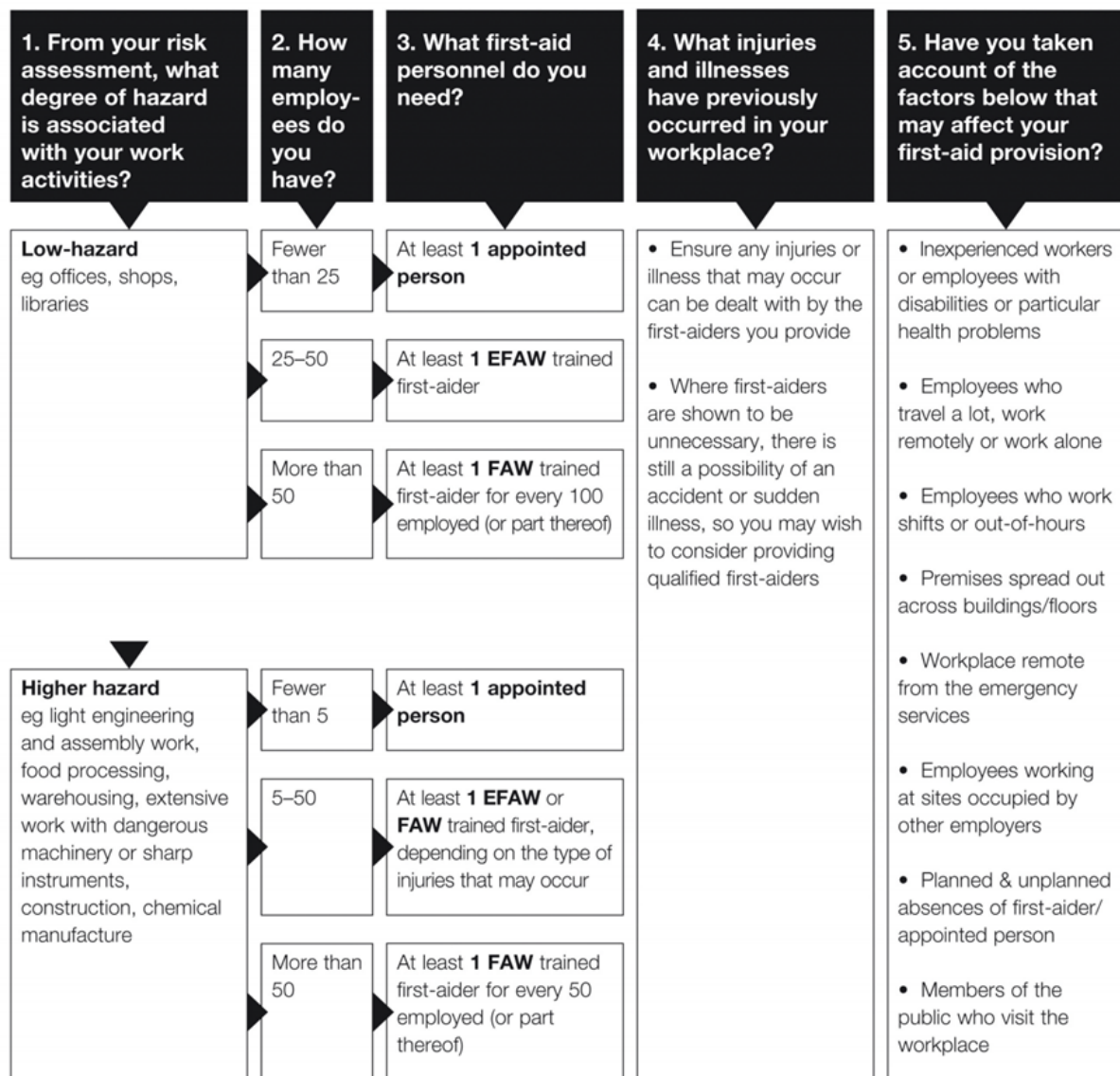


Figure 1.

Providing adequate first aid cover

Departments will have to work closely with others who occupy the same building or same site in some instances to comply with the above for the foreseeable future while building are only partly occupied. Ensure lists of first aiders close by are available to those in the building. Current lists of all first aiders are available on the Safety Office web site to help with this.

Consider access to your part of the building and familiarity of the lay out for others who don't normally work there. If necessary invite all first aiders local to you to tour your area and get to know the type of work being conducted.

It may be necessary to **STOP** high hazard work i.e. certain chemicals / workshops / laboratory etc. during parts of the day/shift when sufficient first aid cover isn't available. This should be made very clear to all those present during these times.

Updating Communications

It is important to communicate any temporary changes to your first aid provisions to all members of staff in the area. Please make sure your first aid list is up to date, has the correct contact numbers on and is readily displayed in and around the work place.

It is also important to ensure someone is responsible for your first aid boxes and Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) if the usual person for this has not returned yet, and people are aware of who to report issues to.

Pads and batteries for AEDs can still be purchased through the Safety Office in the usual way.

Administering first aid

Extra precaution needs to be taken by all first aiders who administer first aid during this outbreak. Guidance for this has been sent to all first aiders.

<https://www.sja.org.uk/get-advice/first-aid-advice/covid-19-advice-for-first-aiders/>