

First Aid at Work – Forestry Commission Policy

Introduction

1. The Forestry Commission has updated its First Aid at Work policy, as set out in this document. Contractors and others wishing to work on its land will need to show that they comply with the new policy. The target date for that is 1 January 2012.
2. People, wherever they work in our industry, can suffer injury or be taken ill. It is essential that we have first aid provision in place so that we can give them immediate attention and call an ambulance if needed. This guidance covers what you need to do to ensure that can happen. Proper first aid provision can save lives and prevent minor injuries becoming major ones.
3. The Health and Safety Executive's guidance under the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations was revised in October 2009 and our Forest Certification auditors have found gaps when assessing first aid provision. In response to these issues, this document sets out our updated approach to first aid provision. It shows the minimum standards for those working on FC managed land, i.e. contractors.
4. This guidance should be read alongside AFAG802 (Emergency Planning).

Legislation

5. The Regulations place a general duty on employers to "provide or ensure that there are provided such equipment and facilities as are adequate and appropriate in the circumstances for enabling first-aid to be rendered to his employees if they are injured or become ill at work".
6. Self-employed persons are also covered by the Regulations and are required to provide adequate and appropriate equipment so that they can render first aid to themselves if they are injured at work.
7. The Regulations do not require employers to provide first aid for visitors or non-employees. However HSE strongly recommend that employers include them in their assessment of first aid needs and make provision for them.

What must Unit Managers/Contractors do?

8. Managers/contractors must assess what their first aid needs are and ensure they have adequate and appropriate provision in place at all times when people are at work. Managers/contractors should use the guidance contained in this document to

assist with that. The assessment should be based on realistic needs rather than trying to cover all possible eventualities.

9. Appendix 1 shows outline assessments of first aid needs for some forestry scenarios. Managers/contractors should refer to the scenarios, but also pick out and properly consider any additional factors that are specific to the workplaces of those they are responsible for. Additional factors may include:

- Hazards in the workplace; such as electricity, machinery, slips/trips.
- Numbers of individuals on sites; increase the first aid skill level and provide more trained people accordingly.
- Individuals that are inexperienced or have known disabilities or health issues.
- Previous accidents and ill-health records.
- Working arrangements; particularly where travelling, remote or shift working, or in offices elsewhere.
- Remoteness from emergency medical services and communication issues.
- Individuals working on shared or multi-occupied sites.
- Holidays and other temporary absences of first aiders or appointed persons.

10. You can use Appendix 2 to help you record your assessment of first aid provision.

11. Managers/contractors should ensure that all individuals are asked to declare any medical condition (e.g. diabetes, epilepsy), or any cultural or religious issues that may impact on the provision of first aid to them. Any individuals who declare conditions or issues must be encouraged to discuss their specific needs with first aiders, so they can be prepared to provide the appropriate assistance as necessary. Such individuals should also be encouraged to tell their close working colleagues, helping them to respond appropriately to any accident or ill-health situation. However, each individual has a right to confidentiality that must be respected and maintained at all times and if there is no declaration then the expectation will be that first aid treatment will be carried out with the best of intentions.

What are the basics of First Aid provision?

12. Provision can be broken down into 3 main areas:

- First aid training and numbers of trained people.
- First aid kits and where you should keep them.
- Procedures to follow in an emergency.

13. **Training.** There are now 2 HSE recognised/approved qualifications for first aiders:

- First Aid at Work (FAW), based on a minimum 3-day course.
- Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW), based on a minimum 1-day course.

14. The EFAW qualification recognises the value of the non-HSE approved 1-day training that many individuals have had (sometimes called Emergency First Aid for Appointed Persons).

15. Both qualifications have a 3-year certification period. Re-qualification for FAW must be done over a minimum of 2-days, and for EFAW a repeat of the 1-day course is required.

16. On FC managed land the preference for many of those needing training will be the EFAW course although some will need to continue with FAW. The decision between the two should largely be based on matching the skills you think you may need for your possible accidents/illnesses, to the course that gives you those skills. To assist with that decision Appendix III shows general course contents.

17. Working with the principle of matching skills to your possible accidents/illnesses, for those working out on sites we recommend Managers/contractors source training that can be delivered with a forestry context (ie sites remote from medical aid and where limited help will be available). You may also need add-on elements for our special hazards (eg severe chainsaw cuts, crush injuries, hypothermia, Lyme disease). This training is referred to in this guidance as EFAW+F or FAW+F. Managers/contractors should seek this training from their known providers where possible, but can contact their representative body or FC Safety Health and Environment for support.

18. FC supports the HSE recommendation that first aiders undertake annual refresher training. HSE have stated that refresher events should be of minimum half-day duration, led by someone with current experience of first aid skills and competence to train. Appendix 3 shows general course contents. For forestry, courses can usefully be based around a field exercise and should include the importance of, and arrangements for, planned emergency procedures. Importantly, if managers/contractors don't have access to someone with current experience of first aid skills and competence to train, they should use an outside provider.

19. Appointed Persons (AP) can contribute to the Unit's first aid provision. AP responsibilities include looking after first aid equipment/facilities and calling the emergency services when required. APs do not need first aid training and individuals could receive most of the information they need to carry out the role as part of normal workplace induction.

20. **Numbers of trained people.** In forestry we need to provide adequate cover across a wide range of worksites and locations. The table in Appendix 1 sets out FC's guidance for various scenarios, but must be read with the following considerations in mind:

- The Regulations suggest the numbers of first aiders that should be available for different situations but emphasise that managers/contractors should assess first aid needs. Given issues such as the size and remoteness of our sites, the FC policy is to require more first aiders than the Regulations suggest
- The FC guidance shows minimum numbers that should be available on a site at all times. It is expected that more individuals will have to be trained to maintain those levels, to allow for when individuals have to leave site temporarily or are not at work.

First Aid kits. There is no mandatory list of items to put in a first aid kit as it depends on what you assess your needs to be based on possible accidents.

21. First aid containers should protect the contents and be clearly marked with a white cross on a green background.

22. A first aid kit should be available to all individuals at all times. A personal kit, if required, should be carried by the person while at work. Other kits should always be at a readily locatable and accessible place on the site.

23. Managers/contractors must ensure that the necessary numbers and types of first aid kits are maintained, and that they remain complete and fit for purpose. All kit contents should be checked and replaced on a regular basis.

24. **Emergency procedures.** When serious accidents/illnesses happen it is important to minimise the time taken for the emergency services to reach the scene. The means to achieve this must always be planned for in advance and explained to those on site. AFAG802 provides useful guidance and a format for the essential written record you will need to make.

[AFAG802 Emergency Planning](#)

Other issues

25. **Records and reviews.** A written record should be kept of the dates on which first aiders obtain their certificates and have their refresher events. Records should also be kept of any incidents they attend. A management system should include tasks to review first aid provision and training needs, as well as kit content and equipment checking.

26. **Informing people.** Managers/contractors must tell individuals of the first aid arrangements including who and where the first aiders or appointed persons are, and where the first aid kit is. In built facilities, signs should also provide that information.

Queries

27. Any queries related to this policy and guidance can be directed firstly to your representative body and then to the FC Safety, Health and Environment team.

References

28. The Health and Safety Executives publications:

- First Aid at Work – Your questions answered (INDG214, rev1).
- First Aid at Work – Approved Code of Practice and Guidance (L74).
- AFAG802 – Emergency Planning.

Gordon Adam
FC Safety, Health and Environment
7 September 2010

Appendix 1

First Aid; Scenarios and Minimum Recommended

Provision for those working on FC land

Risk	Activity examples	Training level	Equipment	Other requirements
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For anyone working on their own (even when colleagues leave site temporarily)

High Risk	Lone workers Site supervision	All individuals trained to a minimum of EFAW+F.	Individuals with personal first aid kit. First Aid kit in vehicle.	Effective lone working system including emergency procedures.
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For people working in pairs or larger groups

High Risk	Harvesting Civil engineering /construction Planting/fencing	At least 2 individuals trained to a minimum of EFAW+F, at all times.	First Aid kit on site. Individuals with personal first aid kit.	Effective, written and discussed emergency procedures. See AFAG802.
	Pesticide operations Forest Nursery operations	At least 2 individuals trained to a minimum of EFAW+F, at all times.	First Aid kit on site. Additional items (e.g. eyewash), consider via COSHH assessment. Individuals with personal first aid kit.	Effective emergency procedures (as above).
	Mechanical ground preparation	All individuals trained to a minimum of EFAW+F.	First Aid kit in vehicle. Individuals with personal first aid kit..	Effective emergency procedures (as above).

Where it states “to a minimum of” above, you should consider whether FAW (or FAW+F) level training better offers the skills you need for your scenario.

Where the number of employees on site rises to 50 in high risk, or 100 in low risk, you must have a first aider qualified to FAW level.

First Aid; Record of provision

First aid personnel	Required? Yes / No	Number needed
First aider with FAW certificate		
First aider with EFAW certificate		
First aider with EFAW+F certificate		
First aider with FAW+F certificate		
First aider with other additional training (eg defibrillator)		
Appointed person		
First aid equipment	Required? Yes / No	Number needed
"Personal" first aid kit		
"Office" first aid kit		
"Outdoor" first aid kit		
Additional equipment (specify)		

Content of a first aid at work (FAW) course

On completion of training, successful candidates should be able to:

- (a) provide emergency first aid at work (see below);
- (b) administer first aid to a casualty with:
 - (i) injuries to bones, muscles and joints, including suspected spinal injuries;
 - (ii) chest injuries;
 - (iii) burns and scalds;
 - (iv) eye injuries;
 - (v) sudden poisoning;
 - (vi) anaphylactic shock;
- (c) recognise the presence of major illness and provide appropriate first aid.

Content of an emergency first aid at work (EFAW) course

On completion of training, successful candidates should be able to:

- (a) understand the role of the first-aider including reference to:
 - (i) the importance of preventing cross-infection;
 - (ii) the need for recording incidents and actions;
 - (iii) use of available equipment;
- (b) assess the situation and circumstances in order to act safely, promptly and effectively in an emergency;
- (c) administer first aid to a casualty who is unconscious (including seizure);
- (d) administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation;
- (e) administer first aid to a casualty who is choking;
- (f) administer first aid to a casualty who is wounded and bleeding;
- (g) administer first aid to a casualty who is suffering from shock;
- (h) provide appropriate first aid for minor injuries.

Content of an annual refresher course

Candidates should demonstrate their competence to:

- (a) assess the situation in an emergency;
- (b) administer first aid to a casualty who is unconscious (including seizure);
- (c) administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation;
- (d) administer first aid to a casualty who is wounded and bleeding;
- (e) administer first aid to a casualty who is suffering from shock.