

COVID-19 GUIDANCE ON FIRST AID IN SCHOOLS

Supplement for School Policy

General Guidance

- Review the First Aid needs risk assessment for your Facility/site (how many First Aiders are required to cover the number of persons working at the site, taking into account the type of work, need to cover staggered working, sickness, etc.)
- Review your existing list of First Aiders to ascertain who and how many are likely to be present in the workplace (some may be working at home/shielding).
- Revise your First Aider Notices and display at suitable locations.
- Review the contents of First Aid kits and Personal Protective Equipment for First Aiders.

Qualification extension advice from [HSE](#)

If you hold a first aid certificate that expires on or after 16 March 2020 and cannot access requalification training because of coronavirus, you may qualify for an extension. This applies to:

- Offshore Medic (OM)
- Offshore First Aid (OFA)
- First Aid at Work (FAW)
- Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW)

How you qualify for the extension

To qualify for the extension, you must be able to:

- explain why you haven't been able to requalify
- demonstrate what steps you have taken to access the training, if asked to do so

Requalification training in Scotland and Wales

It is accepted that training capacity in Scotland and Wales, and for some parts of the emergency services across Great Britain, might take longer to build.

The deadline for completing requalification training in Scotland and Wales (and in relevant GB emergency services), will therefore be reviewed by HSE over the coming months.

Employers or certificate holders should still try to arrange requalification training at the earliest opportunity.

Guidance for First Aiders

- Be aware of the risks to yourself and others.
- Keep yourself safe and maintain the social distancing measures (minimum distance of 2m/6Ft) whenever possible.
- Where this is not possible, other measures should be implemented such as the use of physical barriers, alternative working practices and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- COVID 19 infects people through contact with the mucous membranes (eyes, nose and mouth) it does not infect through the skin.
- The greatest risk for a first aider is the transfer of the virus to their mucous membranes by contact with their potentially contaminated hands. It is essential to manage this risk by maintaining the recommended social distancing measures where

possible, minimising hand contamination, avoiding touching your face and washing your hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol based hand gel.

- There is also a significant risk of direct transfer of the virus onto the mucous membranes by droplet transmission. This is the direct impact of larger infectious virus droplets generated by the person's respiratory tract landing directly in your eyes nose or mouth. The risk is managed by the use of appropriate (PPE -mask and eye protection). The person who is displaying symptoms should also be provided with a mask/face covering to cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing (respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette).
- Where practicable, the First aider should avoid close contact with persons with minor injuries (cuts, abrasions, minor burns etc.) and advise the injured person what steps to take in treating their own injury.
- For the First Aider, avoiding close contact will not be possible in the event of having to provide emergency lifesaving measures to an incident of cardiac arrest, heart attack, choking or stroke.

Updated guidance (13.5.20) on CPR (during COVID19) issued by the [Resuscitation Council UK](#) states that:-

1. *Recognise cardiac arrest by looking for the absence of signs of life and the absence of normal breathing. Do not listen or feel for breathing by placing your ear and cheek close to the patient's mouth. If you are in any doubt about confirming cardiac arrest, the default position is to start chest compressions until help arrives.*
2. *Make sure an ambulance is on its way. If COVID 19 is suspected, tell them when you call 999.*
3. *If there is a perceived risk of infection, rescuers should place a cloth/towel over the victim's mouth and nose and attempt compression only CPR and early defibrillation until the ambulance (or advanced care team) arrives. Put hands together in the middle of the chest and push hard and fast.*
4. *Early use of a defibrillator significantly increases the person's chances of survival and does not increase risk of infection. If the rescuer has access to any form of personal protective equipment (PPE) this should be worn.*
5. *After performing compression-only CPR, all rescuers should wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water; alcohol-based hand gel is a convenient alternative. They should also seek advice from the NHS 111 coronavirus advice service or medical adviser.*

Paediatric advice

We are aware that paediatric cardiac arrest is unlikely to be caused by a cardiac problem and is more likely to be a respiratory one, making ventilations crucial to the child's chances of survival. However, for those not trained in paediatric resuscitation, the most important thing is to act quickly to ensure the child gets the treatment they need in the critical situation.

For out of hospital cardiac arrest, the importance of calling an ambulance and taking immediate action cannot be stressed highly enough. If a child is not breathing normally and no actions are taken, their heart will stop and full cardiac arrest will occur.

It is likely that the child/infant having an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest will be known to you. We accept that doing rescue breaths will increase the risk of transmitting the COVID-19 virus, either to the rescuer or the child/infant. However, this risk is small compared to the risk of taking no action as this will result in certain cardiac arrest and the death of the child.

First aiders must make sure that they are familiar with the symptoms of COVID19. In addition to Coronavirus, there are many seasonal illnesses in the workplace such as colds, flu, hay fever and allergies which may have similar symptoms. You will need to perform a dynamic risk assessment based on the scenario you are presented with.

Key control measures

- Maintain the social distancing measures whenever possible.
- Standard infection control precautions must be applied when responding to any first aid incident in the workplace. Hand washing with warm water and soap or alcohol based hand gel must be performed before and after and first aid treatment.
- Any person presenting with symptoms consistent with COVID19 should be treated as a suspected case. In such cases (and if safe to do so), move an individual to an isolated room to minimise the risk of infection to others.
- Only one first aider should provide support/treatment where practicable.
- Additional PPE (disposable gloves, eye protection and fluid repellent surgical mask) should be worn by a First Aider when responding to all first aid incidents where close contact cannot be avoided. Also have a mask available to give to the sick person if they are displaying symptoms of COVID19, to limit droplet dispersion.
- Following first aid treatment, the incident area should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected with waste disposed of appropriately.
- No re-usable equipment should be returned to service without being cleaned/disinfected appropriately.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Requirements

The following PPE must be available for responding to First Aid Incidents

- Disposable gloves (nitrile/latex free)
- Fluid repellent surgical masks
- Eye protection (face visor/goggles).
- Disposable plastic apron

The First Aider must ensure that any mask covers both their mouth and nose and is fitted correctly to create an adequate barrier to the face. Any disposable PPE and any other waste should be disposed of appropriately and any reusable PPE cleaned/disinfected thoroughly (see Guidance for schools on the use of Personal Protective Equipment). Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before putting on and after taking off PPE.

Replenish PPE stocks as appropriate after use.

See a poster and video on how to put on and take off PPE safely:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877658/Quick_guide_to_donning_doffing_standard_PPE_health_and_social_care_poster_.pdf

[Video](#)