



# ACT PUBLIC SERVICE

## FIRST AID IN THE WORKPLACE

### 1. PURPOSE

This document articulates ACT Government policy on the provision of first aid services in ACT Public Service (ACTPS) workplaces.

### 2. APPLICATION

This policy applies to all ACTPS Directorates and any person considered to be a worker for the ACT Government under the *Work Health & Safety Act 2011* (the WHS Act).

### 3. CONTEXT

The Code of Practice (CoP) First Aid in the Workplace is an approved code of practice under section 274 of the WHS Act and is notified on the ACT Legislation Register. The CoP includes guidance on how to comply with duties under the WHS Act and Regulations to provide adequate first aid facilities in the workplace. It includes information on first aid kits, procedures, facilities and training for First Aid Officers. The procedures for delivering first aid and first aid standard precautions (as described in the CoP) must be adopted by Directorates as a minimum standard.

The CoP applies to all types of work and all workplaces. It must be read in conjunction with this policy and the Responsibilities under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* policy.

#### 3.1 Work Health and Safety Management System

Directorates must develop and implement a workplace health and safety management system that meets the requirements of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011* (Regulations).

A wide range of workplace incidents may result in a need for first aid. The procedures outlined in the Emergency Management, Critical incident and First Aid section of the Work Health Safety Management System<sup>1</sup> outline the steps required to ensure that a Directorate has appropriate first aid resources and effective critical incident and emergency management plans in place.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://sharedservices/actgovt/WHS/SafetyMgt/Control/Emergency.htm>

## **4. PAYMENT OF ALLOWANCES**

Workers appointed as First Aid Officers must hold a current nationally recognised Statement/s of Attainment issued by a Registered Training Organisation. Workers must be selected on the basis of their qualifications and their availability to perform the duties of First Aid Officer in the local work environment.

Relief First Aid Officers must also have the required qualifications and be prepared to take responsibility for workplace first aid duties when the appointed First Aid Officer is absent or on leave. The level of competency required of a First Aid officer varies depending on the workplace risk environment, the competencies can be found in clause 3.5 of the CoP.

First Aid Officers will receive an allowance corresponding to their level of qualification in accordance with Division 4.2.2 of the Public Sector Management Standards 2006 and applicable ACTPS enterprise agreements.

## **5. USE OF ANALGESICS**

First aid is defined as the provision of emergency treatment and life support for people suffering injury or illness. Provision of analgesics (e.g. paracetamol) come under the category of medication and are not considered a first aid item. The supply of medications, including analgesics, is a matter for individual workers who should carry their own medication for personal use and is not a matter for First Aid Officers. Medication has the potential to cause adverse health effects in some people including asthmatics, pregnant women and people with medical conditions. The supply of medications may also be controlled by drug and poisons laws.

### **5.1 Emergency Treatment**

Although First Aid Officers are not expected to have knowledge of the medical conditions of workers, medication for the provision of emergency treatment and life support is an exception and may be dispensed in exceptional circumstances that call for it. For example, the provision of an Epinephrine Auto-Injector (EpiPen) to a person suffering a life-threatening allergic reaction and that person is known to carry an EpiPen and known to have life-threatening allergic reactions.

## **6. RECORD MANAGEMENT & PRIVACY**

First Aid Officers are required to record any first aid treatment administered in accordance with requirements outlined in the CoP. First aid treatment records are subject to requirements under health records legislation. First Aid Officers are also required to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988*, which protects individuals' rights in relation to the collection, use, storage and disclosure of personal information. The records of any treatment administered must be stored in a confidential manner and only released to people who have authorised access to the documents.

## 7. LEGAL LIABILITY

First Aid Officers must not administer first aid services beyond the level of their training and experience and should weigh any risks involved in treating any person against their level of qualification.

Before starting to treat a casualty, the First Aid Officer should receive consent for the treatment. If the casualty is unconscious, or unable to give consent due to their injuries then the First Aid Officer can assume consent and commence treatment.

A designated First Aid Officer, who in the course of his or her employment with the Territory renders first aid assistance to another Territory worker or member of the public, is acting on behalf of the Territory. The Territory will assume liability and meet any damages and legal costs in the event that a claim arises out of the provision of that assistance.

## 8. AMBULANCE COSTS

If an ambulance is used to transport a worker to hospital as a result of a work-related injury or illness, the cost of the service will generally be met by the workers' compensation insurer. However, in the event that an ambulance is required for an injury or illness unrelated (or later determined to be unrelated) to a worker's employment or workplace, the worker is responsible for the associated costs.

If an ambulance is required for a visitor/third party who becomes ill or is injured at the workplace, associated costs are the responsibility of the visitor/third party. The Human Resources Area is responsible for ensuring these costs are met by the visitor/third party. The relevant person responsible for Injury Prevention and Management (IP & M) in the employing Directorate must be notified immediately after the ambulance has been called.

## 9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

For responsibilities under the WHS Act this policy must be read in conjunction with Policy WHS-03-2013: Responsibilities under the *Work Health & Safety Act 2011*.

## 10. GLOSSARY

**"First aid"** is the immediate treatment or care given to a person suffering from an injury or illness until more advanced care is provided or the person recovers.

**"First aider"** is a person who has successfully completed a nationally accredited training course or an equivalent level of training that has given them the competencies required to administer first aid.

**"First aid facilities"** include first aid rooms, health centres, clean water supplies and other facilities needed for administering first aid.

**"First Aid Officers"** is personnel who hold current approved first aid qualifications from accredited trainers, and who have been designated as workplace First Aid Officers.



**ACT**  
Government

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Chief Minister and Treasury

## 11. REFERENCES

- Work Health and Safety (First Aid in the Workplace Code of Practice) Approval 2012
- <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/ni/2012-429/default.asp>
- *Work Health Safety Act 2011*
- *Work Health Safety Regulations 2011*
- WHOG Workplace Health and Safety Framework: Emergency Management, Critical Incident and First Aid
- <http://sharedservices.actgovt/WHS/SafetyMgt/Control/Emergency.htm>
- *Public Sector Management Act 1994* (PSM ACT)
- ACTPS Agency Enterprise Agreement(s) 2011-2013
- *Privacy Act 1988* (Commonwealth)
- Public Sector Management Standards (2006)

## 12. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed after three (3) years unless there is a requirement for earlier review.

## 13. APPROVAL AUTHORITY

This policy is approved by Andrew Kefford, Commissioner for Public Administration, 26 July 2013.

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