

First Aid Readiness

Occasionally, workers may become injured or ill. Injuries range from paper cuts in the office to amputated fingers at the jobsite to the occasional auto accident. Illnesses may range from dizziness caused by solvent vapors to heart attacks.

Performing first aid correctly can save the life of a victim & reduce his or her recovery time (e.g. *cardio-pulmonary resuscitation [CPR] for heart attack victim*).

Thus, it can reduce your costs of injury & downtime. Performing first aid incorrectly can cause further harm (e.g. *cracked ribs and punctured lungs if your hands are in the wrong position when performing CPR*). Additionally, performing the incorrect first aid techniques can harm a victim (e.g. performing CPR upon a choking victim instead of the Heimlich maneuver).

Performing incorrect first aid techniques can harm you, too.

For example, approaching an accident victim without first knowing the injuries may add to the trauma already incurred. Using your bare hand to stop a coworker's bleeding may expose you to HIV or other blood-borne illnesses.

To properly protect yourself & help the person who is injured or ill, you and your workers should complete first aid and CPR training. Many reputable organizations offer training, including your local Red Cross chapter, American Heart Association chapter, hospital and National Safety Council chapter. Your local fire department and adult education programs may offer training as well. Red Cross first aid/CPR training typically takes about 8 hours. Cost per person is minimal. Some organizations can tailor training to your needs, depending upon the hazards your workers face.

After you and your workers have completed training, develop or revise your emergency action plan as needed. Make sure everyone knows how to respond when someone becomes injured or ill. Make sure they know whom to notify (e.g. *call 911, call supervisor or coworker who is trained in first aid*). Make sure workers know how to summon emergency personnel (e.g. *dial 9 before dialing 911*). Make sure workers trained in first aid and/or CPR keep their knowledge fresh by periodically asking them how they would respond to specific emergencies. Hold practice drills from time to time. Renew training prior to the expiration shown on your certificates. Use the knowledge you gained from your training to determine which items you should have in your first aid kits or consult with the organization that performed the training.

Knowing how to perform first aid properly can lessen the possible extent of a worker's injuries and shorten recovery time without putting yourself at risk. It can also enable you to treat yourself. It can enable you to treat family and others when injuries or illnesses occur away from work.