

RISK INFORMATION – CHURCHES

FIRST AID

The Risk Information contained in this paper provides input to the establishment of church first aid facilities.

For the purposes of Work Health & Safety legislation, a church is considered to be a workplace. As such, churches have obligations to provide first aid facilities and sufficient staff trained to an appropriate level of competency in first aid.

The actual first aid requirements of a workplace (including number of trained staff needed) should be determined as a result of a risk assessment of the workplace; the assessment should involve representatives of workers (employees and volunteers) and Health & Safety representatives, where these have been appointed. Safe Work Australia advises that there should be a minimum of one trained first aid practitioner for up to 50 workers (25 workers if higher risk) with increases as numbers of workers increase. Where there is no access to timely medical and ambulance services the minimum ratio is one practitioner per 10 workers.

The trained person(s) must be immediately available in an emergency.

Identification of trained first aid workers and locations of first aid kits should be communicated to all people at the church (workplace). Notices of trained workers and locations of first aid kits are to be posted on notice boards, near first aid kits and in first aid rooms.

Workers who practice first aid should have their position descriptions upgraded to reflect the additional responsibility.

Workers who will practice first aid should receive, at a minimum, Level 2 training (Apply First Aid) and CPR training. Level 2 training remains current for 3 years; CPR training has a currency of 12 months.

There is no current requirement to provide defibrillator machines. Any decision to provide such equipment should be in response to a risk identified in the risk assessment. Physical safety of the machines will need to be appropriately managed and additional training will be required for those who will operate the devices.

Safe Work Australia advises that first aid rooms must be provided when there are more than 200 workers at a site. For higher risk workplaces the ratio is one first aid room per 100 workers. Establishing the need for a first aid room(s) should be an output of the first aid risk assessment. *It may well be that a church decides to establish a first aid room based on the congregation size and age profile, even if it has less than 200 workers.*

For details of the room fit-out and equipment refer to the Safe Work First Aid Code of Practice.

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First aid kits should be maintained to the standard outlined by the Code of Practice.

Emergency assistance (ambulance) should be sought if there are any doubts about the patient's health and safety and/or the situation is beyond the capacity of the first aid provider.

Details of first aid provided should be recorded in a first aid log.

Any "notifiable" events will need to be communicated to the relevant state Safe Work / WorkSafe authority.

References

Safe Work Australia, "First Aid in the Workplace, Code of Practice", July 2012

WorkSafe Victoria, "First Aid in the workplace", Compliance Code, September 2008