



# OCCUPATIONAL FIRST AID ATTENDANTS ASSOCIATION NEWS

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## Pilot Project gets to the Heart of the Matter

Harmac Pacific is the first industrial site in British Columbia to add a heart defibrillator to its first aid resources

In 1996, two Harmac Pacific employees died of heart attacks while on the job at the Nanaimo worksite. Harmac's first aid attendants and co-workers performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), but it wasn't enough.

These tragic deaths prompted Harmac's first aid and security team to enlist the help of the WCB to add a defibrillator to its first aid equipment. Sudden cardiac death is most often due to an arrhythmia, which is an irregular rhythm of the heart preventing effective pumping of blood. Research proves that a defibrillator (a small power pack with a computer that is used to identify and correct the irregular or erratic heart

beat) is the most successful treatment for these cases.

Required first aid room equipment is listed in Schedule 5, Part 33 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation*. A defibrillator, however, is not among the listed requirements because it is classified as medical equipment and falls under the jurisdiction of the *Health Act* and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of B.C.

WCB first aid officer Wayne Bingham worked with Harmac to have the defibrillator included in its equipment and still meet all WCB requirements. After careful consideration and because Harmac

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