



OCCUPATIONAL FIRST AID ATTENDANTS ASSOCIATION NEWS

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Employers Now Required to Conduct First Aid Assessments

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(This article is published as submitted by Wayne Bingham. Mr. Bingham has been with the WCB for years and is currently WCB Manager, Education and Certification Services. The point of view in this article represents that of the WCB anent the new Regulation, but not necessarily that of the OFAAABC.)



Phil Hazell
(Member of the team Under Cover) applies pressure to Greg's arterial leg bleed at the City of Vancouver's First Aid Competition.

Photo supplied by Kim Kennedy

OFAAs, still have the competition bug?
See Page 4 for more details.

Recent changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation mean greater flexibility for B.C. employers, but also added responsibility. Effective March 30, 2004, employers are required to perform an annual assessment of their worksites to determine their First Aid requirements. They are responsible for ensuring that they have adequate and appropriate First Aid equipment, supplies, facilities and attendants on hand to meet those requirements.

The Regulation continues to require the provision of prompt First Aid service and transportation to medical aid when required. However, employers will have more flexibility to implement the appropriate levels of

First Aid service to reflect the unique needs of their worksites. When a significant change occurs in

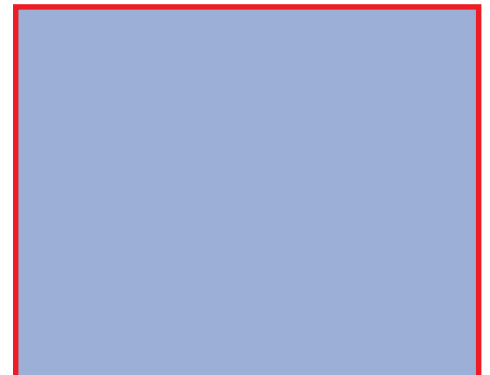
"...employers will have more flexibility..."

operations, or external factors impacting care available to injured workers change, an additional assessment is required to determine if the worksite requires a different level of First Aid service.

One of the concerns voiced about the former requirements was inflexibility in the face of unique

worksite circumstances. The hazard ratings found in Schedule 7 were based on work processes, job functions and types of injuries likely to occur that were common to industries in general, but not to specific worksites.

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Further, some industries were not listed in Schedule 7. As a consequence, some employers were compelled to make approximations of First Aid service based on similar job functions or processes in other industries. This made it challenging to determine accurate assessments of First Aid service levels.

The new Regulation addresses the shortcomings in the previous First Aid requirements. Employers must now conduct an assessment to evaluate their particular worksites. This assessment must include a thorough review of the following:

- the number of workers;
- the nature and extent of the risks and hazards;
- the types of injuries likely to occur;
- any barriers to providing First Aid; and
- the time required to transport an injured worker to a clinic or hospital.

A Preliminary OHS Guideline for Occupational First Aid has been created to assist employers in conducting a diligent assessment. This Guideline is based on Part 33 of the former Regulation, therefore employers who are currently in compliance will

continue to be in compliance under the new Regulation.

Generally, the levels of First Aid required under the former Regulation continue to reflect the needs of typical workplaces within industry classifications. Nonetheless, it is expected that employers will:

- conduct the assessment diligently;
- come to a reasonable conclusion based on the Guideline; and
- be able to explain and provide a rationale for their conclusion.

Job aids (a flowchart and worksheet) have been created to assist

- employers,
- joint health and safety committees, and
- worker representatives with the process, and are posted online.

For more information, visit the WCB online at: <http://firstaid.healthandsafetycentre.org/s/home.asp> or call Certification Services at **604 276-3090**.

“Employers who are currently in compliance will continue to be in compliance under the new Regulation.”

Voice Your Opinion

Have these new Regs affected *your* work site? How?

What's your opinion of this radical shift of responsibility? Do you think it will benefit the performance of First Aid, or not? And in what ways?

We value your opinion and want to hear from you. Contact us via post, email, fax, or on our Message Board at the web site, www.ofaaa.bc.ca.