



First aid during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

This page covers first aid requirements in non-healthcare settings during the outbreak, as well as first aid cover and qualifications at this time.

[First aid in non-healthcare settings](#)

[First aid cover and qualifications](#)

First aid in non-healthcare settings

This guidance will help employers ensure first aiders are confident that they can help someone injured or ill at work during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Employers and their first aiders should take account of the specific guidance on giving cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) from the [Resuscitation Council UK](#)^[1].

Emergency service professionals, such as NHS ambulance workers, will receive specific advice from their employer.

HSE has guidance on [First aid cover and qualifications](#).

Check your first aid needs assessment

As an employer, when reviewing your risk assessment to include working during the outbreak, consider refreshing your first aid at work [needs assessment](#)^[2].

Ask your first aiders if there are any factors that should be taken into account as part of your [risk assessment](#)^[3], for example vulnerable workers with first aid responsibilities.

You should discuss the risk assessment with your first aiders so they are confident about providing the right assistance. This includes knowing what equipment they can use to minimise risk of infection transmission, as explained below.

Guidance for first aiders

Try to assist at a safe distance from the casualty as much as you can and minimise the time you share a breathing zone.

If they are capable, tell them to do things for you, but treating the casualty properly should be your first concern. Remember the 3P model – preserve life, prevent worsening, promote recovery.

Preserve life: CPR

- Call 999 immediately – tell the call handler if the patient has any COVID-19 symptoms
- Ask for help. If a portable defibrillator is available, ask for it
- Before starting CPR, to minimise transmission risk, use a cloth or towel to cover the patient's mouth and nose, while still permitting breathing to restart following successful resuscitation
- If available, use:
 - a fluid-repellent surgical mask
 - disposable gloves
 - eye protection
 - apron or other suitable covering
- Only deliver CPR by chest compressions and use a defibrillator (if available) – **don't** do rescue breaths

Prevent worsening, promote recovery: all other injuries or illnesses

- If you suspect a serious illness or injury, call 999 immediately – tell the call handler if the patient has any COVID-19 symptoms
- If giving first aid to someone, you should use the recommended equipment listed above if it is available
- You should minimise the time you share a breathing zone with the casualty and direct them to do things for you where possible

After delivering any first aid

- Ensure you safely discard disposable items and clean reusable ones thoroughly
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser as soon as possible

First aid cover and qualifications during the outbreak

If first aid cover for your business is reduced because of coronavirus or you can't get the first aid training you need, there are some things you can do so that you still comply with the law.

You should review your first aid needs assessment and decide if you can still provide the cover needed for the workers that are present and the activities that they are doing.

Keep enough first aid cover

If fewer people are coming into your workplace it may still be safe to operate with reduced first aid cover. You could also stop higher-risk activities.

Share first aid cover with another business

You could share the first aiders of another business, but be sure that they have the knowledge, experience and availability to cover the first aid needs of your business.

Shared first aiders must:

- be aware of the type of injuries or illnesses that you identified in your [first aid needs assessment](#)^[4] and have the training and skills to address them
- know enough about your work environment and its first aid facilities
- be able to get to the workplace in good time if needed

Whoever provides the temporary cover must make sure they do not adversely affect their own first aid cover.

First aid certificate extensions

If you hold a first aid certificate that expires on or after 16 March 2020 and cannot access requalification training because of coronavirus, you may qualify for an extension. This applies to:

- Offshore Medic (OM)
- Offshore First Aid (OFA)
- First Aid at Work (FAW)
- Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW)

How you qualify for the extension

To qualify for the extension, you must be able to:

- explain why you haven't been able to requalify
- demonstrate what steps you have taken to access the training, if asked to do so

Requalification training in England

The first aid training industry in England is confident that enough courses will now be available for all required requalification training to take place. HSE has therefore agreed a final deadline for requalification for these qualifications of **30 September 2020**.

Requalification training in Scotland and Wales

It is accepted that training capacity in Scotland and Wales, and for some parts of the emergency services across Great Britain, might take longer to build.

The deadline for completing requalification training in Scotland and Wales (and in relevant GB emergency services), will therefore be reviewed by HSE over the coming months. Employers or certificate holders should still try to arrange requalification training at the earliest opportunity.

Annual refresher training

If first aiders are unable to access annual refresher training face to face during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, HSE supports the use of online refresher training to keep their skills up to date.

HSE still strongly recommends that the practical elements of actual FAW, EFAW and requalification courses are delivered face to face, so that competency of the student can be properly assessed.

Interrupted first aid training

If because of coronavirus you cannot complete training for your first aid qualification within the usual timeframe, training can restart at a later date as long as:

- a full recap of training delivered before the interruption is done before moving onto undelivered modules
- the awarding body is content that you can show:
 - a full understanding of all aspects of the course content
 - the knowledge required and competencies at the end of the training

Related content

- [General guidance on first aid at work](#)^[5]
- [Working safely during the coronavirus outbreak](#)^[6]

Link URLs in this page

1. Resuscitation Council UK
<https://www.resus.org.uk/media/statements/resuscitation-council-uk-statements-on-covid-19-coronavirus-cpr-and-resuscitation/covid-community/>
2. needs assessment
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/needs-assessment.htm>
3. risk assessment
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/working-safely-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm>
4. first aid needs assessment
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/needs-assessment.htm>

5. General guidance on first aid at work

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/index.htm>

6. Working safely during the coronavirus outbreak

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/working-safely-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm>

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