

Australian Capital Territory

# Work Safety (ACT Code of Practice for First Aid) Code of Practice 2011

## Disallowable instrument DI 2011 – 98

made under the

***Work Safety Act 2008*, section 18 (Codes of Practice)**

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### **1 Name of instrument**

This instrument is the *Work Safety (ACT Code of Practice for First Aid) Code of Practice 2011*.\*

### **2 Commencement**

This instrument commences on the day after notification

### **3 Approval of a code of practice**

Under section 18 of the *Work Safety Act 2008*, having consulted with the ACT Work Safety Council, I approve the ACT Code of Practice for First Aid as a code of practice.

Katy Gallagher  
Minister for Industrial Relations  
9 March 2011

\*Name amended under Legislation Act, s 60



OFFICE OF REGULATORY SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE & COMMUNITY SAFETY

# FIRST AID IN THE WORKPLACE

CODE OF PRACTICE



**FEBRUARY 2011**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Title

This code of practice is identified as the First Aid in the Workplace Code of Practice.

## 1.2 Authority

This code of practice is approved in accordance with Section 18 of the *Work Safety Act 2008* (the Act) effective the day after notification.

## 1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this code of practice is to provide guidance for the provision of first aid in the workplace.

## 1.4 Work Safety Act 2008

The Act emphasises the development of safe work practices and provides the means of developing, administering and enforcing work safety standards in the ACT.

## 1.5 Codes of Practice

The Act provides for the making of codes of practice for the purpose of giving guidance on specific areas of work to workers and persons in control.

Codes of practice are designed to be used in conjunction with the Act and associated regulations. Section 19 of the Act provides that in deciding whether a person has complied with a duty, a decision maker may consider whether a person has complied with an approved code of practice in relation to the duty. Codes of practice can be called upon during legal proceedings and can be called on to show that a person has failed to meet a standard specified in the Act or a regulation.

Where there is a breach of the Act an Inspector appointed under the Act may cite a relevant code of practice when issuing an Improvement or Prohibition Notice. Failure to comply with an Improvement or Prohibition Notice is an offence under the Act.

This code of practice was referred to the Work Safety Council for advice. The Work Safety Council is established under the Act and provides advice to the Minister on the approval of codes of practice under the Act. The Council recommended to the Minister that the revised code of practice be approved.

# 2 DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

“Business or Undertaking” includes—

- (a) a not-for-profit business; and
- (b) an activity conducted by a local, state or territory government.

**“Construction Site”** for the purposes of this code of practice means a place at which construction work is undertaken, and any other area in the vicinity where plant or other material used or to be used in connection with the construction work is located or kept during the construction work. It does not include a place where elements are manufactured 'off site' or where construction material is stored as stock for sale or for hire.

**“First aid service”** means a service that has as its main objectives the provision of first aid treatment for persons suffering illness or injury at work.

**“First aid trained personnel”** means those holding current approved first aid qualifications from a nationally accredited course that has been delivered by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

**“Persons in control”** means anyone who has control of the premises, plant or equipment, a system of work, design, import or manufacture; including anyone with authority to make decisions about the management of any of the above. Examples include principal contractors, sub-contractors, employers and self-employed persons.

**“Premises”** includes any place, and in particular includes:

- (a) any land, building or part of any building
- (b) any vehicle, vessel, aircraft, or mine
- (c) any installation on land
- (d) any installation on the bed of, or floating on or in any waters
- (e) any tent or moveable structure.

**“Reasonably Practicable”** means reasonably practicable having regard to:

- (a) the severity of the hazard or risk in question
- (b) the state of knowledge about that hazard or risk and any ways of removing or mitigating that hazard or risk
- (c) the availability and suitability of ways to remove or mitigate that hazard or risk
- (d) the cost of removing or mitigating that hazard or risk.

**“Should”** indicates that a course of action is recommended and, in accordance with clause 1.5, paragraph 2, that course of action is to be followed unless alternative action is taken which achieves an equivalent or better standard of care.

**“Worker”** means an individual who carries out work in relation to a business or undertaking, whether for reward or otherwise, under an arrangement with the person conducting the business or undertaking.

**“workplace”** means a place where work is, has been, or is to be, carried out by or for someone conducting a business or undertaking.

### 3 WHAT IS APPROPRIATE

First aid facilities, appropriate to the particular hazards of each workplace, should be readily available and maintained. Facilities should be determined following reference to the Code of Practice, in consultation with health and safety and first aid trained

personnel, workers and their Work Safety Representative/s and, if desired, consultation with reputable providers of first aid services or providers of accredited first aid training.

As a general rule, consideration of the following can assist in determining the most appropriate arrangements or provisions for each workplace:

- (a) size and layout of the workplace
- (b) location of the workplace
- (c) number and distribution of workers, including shift work arrangements
- (d) nature and hazards of the work
- (e) statistical information on accidents or illnesses
- (f) distance from the workplace to the nearest available and appropriate medical service, occupational health service or ambulance service.

Having regard to each of the points outlined above, decisions can then be made to determine:

- (a) the contents of first aid kits
- (b) the number and location of first aid kits
- (c) suitable means of communication
- (d) suitable provision for movement of the sick or injured, e.g. wheelchair, portable stretcher
- (e) worker training and advice on availability of first aid assistance
- (f) the number and training of first aid personnel
- (g) first aid rooms and their contents
- (h) the languages in which information should be provided.

Appropriate white on green safety signs should be provided to identify the location of first aid facilities. Refer to Section 5.5.1(c).

## 4 TYPES OF WORKPLACES

In this Code of Practice all workplaces should have at least one first aid kit with contents as provided in Section 5.4.

There are 3 types of workplaces categorised in this Code of Practice.

### Group A

- Construction site with more than 25 workers; and
- All other workplaces with more than 25 workers.

### Group B

- Construction sites with 25 or less workers; and
- All other workplaces with 25 or less workers.

### Group C

- Workplaces other than a construction site with 10 or less workers.

NB - a vehicle may be a workplace where the business or undertaking is conducted from the vehicle. In these circumstances a risk assessment should be carried out to determine the suitability of a first aid kit being available in the vehicle.



## 5 FIRST AID KITS

All workplaces should have at least one first aid kit meeting minimum contents as outlined in 5.4.

As a general rule, first aid kits should not be locked.

First aid kits should not contain paracetamol.

All items contained in workplace first aid kits should be listed by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

### 5.1 Construction and labelling

The first aid kit should:

- a) be constructed of impervious material, be dustproof and of sufficient size to adequately store the required contents
- b) be capable of being sealed and preferably be fitted with a carrying handle as well as have internal compartments
- c) be clearly labelled on the outside with a white on green sign with the words "First Aid" and/or a white cross on green background - examples below



- d) display emergency telephone numbers, the phone number and location of the nearest first aid trained personnel (including appropriate information for those workers who have mobile workplaces)
- e) display a photograph of the appointed first aid trained personnel along with contact details that would assist in the identification process.

### 5.2 Location

The first aid kit should be located to ensure that:

- a) it is in a prominent and accessible location identified with a suitable sign as described in 5.1;
- b) in workplaces where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of serious and sudden injury or illness, prompt treatment can be provided;
- c) for workers with a regular workplace, it is close to areas where there is a likely risk of injury or illness;
- d) in a mobile workplace where a first aid kit is appropriate, that it is secured and easily accessible;

- e) for each workplace at least one kit is provided on each alternate level of a multi-storey building; and
- f) there is immediate access to appropriate facilities in remote areas or areas of specific hazards, such as:
  - hazardous substances and dangerous goods (e.g. gas, corrosives, poisons, pesticides and other chemicals)
  - machinery or equipment (e.g. in construction, manufacturing, warehousing, logging, amusement rides).

### 5.3 Minimum Kit Numbers

- Group A - Construction Sites, at least one kit should be provided, with an additional kit for every 50 workers exceeding 25 workers.
- Group A - Other workplaces, at least one kit should be provided, with an additional kit for every 50 workers exceeding 100 workers.
- For Group B and C workplaces, at least one kit should be provided.

A workplace may require additional first aid kits based on consideration of factors in 5.2.

A summary of minimum requirements is set out in Section 9.

### 5.4 Contents - Required Items in Kit

At a minimum, each workplace first aid kit should contain the following items:

| <b>Description</b>                  | <b>Group A Kit (Qty/kit)</b> | <b>Group B Kit (Qty/Kit)</b> | <b>Group C Kit (Qty/kit)</b> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Amputated Parts Bag Set in Envelope | 1                            | 1                            | 1                            |
| Antiseptic – Swabs                  | 20                           | 10                           | 10                           |
| Bandage Conforming 5cm              | 2                            | 1                            | 1                            |
| Bandage Crepe 10cm                  | 2                            | 1                            | 1                            |
| Contaminated Waste Bag              | 1                            | 1                            | 1                            |
| Dressing Strip – Plastic (50)       | 2                            | 1                            | 1                            |
| Dressing Tape (hypoallergenic) 25mm | 1                            | 1                            | 1                            |
| Dressing Wound – No. 14P            | 2                            | 1                            | 1                            |
| Dressing Wound – No. 13P            | 2                            | 1                            | -                            |
| Emergency Blanket (Space)           | 1                            | 1                            | 1                            |
| Eyepad – Sterile Single             | 3                            | 1                            | 1                            |
| First Aid Manual                    | 1                            | 1                            | -                            |
| First Aid Pamphlet Insert           | 1                            | 1                            | 1                            |
| Gloves Latex – Large (pair)         | 3                            | 2                            | 1                            |
| Non Adherent Dressing 7.5x7.5cm     | 2                            | 2                            | 1                            |
| Protective Eyewear                  | 1                            | 1                            | 1                            |
| Resuscitation Face Shield/Mask      | 1                            | 1                            | 1                            |
| Safety Pin 12 Pack                  | 1                            | 1                            | 1                            |
| Scissors – Sharp/Blunt 125mm        | 1                            | 1                            | 1                            |
| Sodium Chloride 30ml                | 6                            | 3                            | 3                            |
| Splinter Forceps 125mm              | 1                            | 1                            | 1                            |
| Triangular Bandage                  | 6                            | 2                            | 1                            |

\* Amputated parts bag to be used for a contaminated waste bag.

## 5.5 Contents - Additions

Additional items may need to be added to the first aid kit depending on an assessment of risks and hazards in the workplace.

### 5.5.1 Eye Injuries

Additional quantities of sterile eye wash ampoules/bottles or an emergency eye wash facility following reference to any Material Safety Data Sheets / Safety Data Sheets relevant to the workplace.

### 5.5.2 Burns

Additional quantities of assorted sized non-adherent dressings and sterile normal saline solution.

### 5.5.3 Remote Areas

Additional quantities of sterile eye wash ampoules, sterile eye pads, adhesive tape 1.25cm, spray or wipe on itch relief solution.

### 5.5.4 High Risk Areas

Additional items may be added to the first aid kit based on risk assessment of particular hazards as well as estimated time for arrival of emergency services or other medical support. This may include chemical reversing agents required for immediate treatment.

Such workplaces should ensure that, where appropriate, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for hazardous substances are located near the first aid kit and are referred to in assessing risks and determining additional requirements. Staff should receive additional training in the use of any additional items in this circumstance.

### 5.5.5 Other Considerations

Consideration should be given to preventative measures such as sunscreen protection and potable water if working outdoors.

## 5.6 Maintenance and Replenishment

Persons in control are responsible for the provision of first aid kits and for the maintenance of kit contents.

Items used from the first aid kit should be replaced at the earliest opportunity and it is the responsibility of a designated person within the workplace to do this except where the persons in control has made alternative arrangements such as arranging for on-site restocking of first aid kits.

## 6 WORKER AWARENESS

All workers should be provided with practical instruction in:

- (a) the nature of first aid facilities in the workplace
- (b) the location of first aid kits
- (c) the names and work locations, including work phone numbers, of person/s responsible for rendering first aid
- (d) the procedures to be followed when first aid is required. Specifically, workers should normally immediately contact the designated first aid officer or, in their absence, their immediate supervisor.

This instruction should occur when:

- (a) a worker first commences working at the workplace; or
- (b) there is a significant change in the personnel, workplace or nature or type of duties performed.

All workers should be advised and kept aware of first aid requirements in regard to specific hazards in the workplace.

## **7 FIRST AID TRAINED PERSONNEL**

### **7.1 Numbers**

Persons in control should ensure that in any workplace, at least one first aid trained person is immediately available at all times when workers are at work.

Section 9 sets out minimum numbers of first aid trained personnel. This may need to be increased depending on:

- a) the size and layout of the workplace
- b) the location of the workplace and its distance to the nearest available ambulance or medical services
- c) number and distribution of workers including shift work arrangements
- d) nature and specific hazards of the work
- e) previous occurrence of accidents, illness or near miss.

### **7.2 Training**

Designated first aid trained personnel must hold a current first aid qualification as provided by an accredited Registered Training Organisation (RTO) with first aid on their scope of training as per the following training levels. The qualification must entirely focus on first aid requirements and not be a component within another training course.

The recommended levels of training are:

- a) Workplace Level 2 First Aid qualification or Senior First Aid (or equivalent) for persons designated as responsible for rendering first aid; or
- b) Occupational First Aid qualification (Workplace Level 3) where a person has responsibilities for a first aid room as well as first aid duties.

### **7.3 Additional Training**

In any workplace where a specific hazard exists (e.g. hazardous substances, dangerous goods, machinery or equipment) first aid trained personnel should be made familiar with those particular hazards and trained in the specific use of any first aid/medical interventions that are provided to counter the effects of such hazards.

## 7.4 Responsibilities

Persons in control of the business or undertaking are reminded of their responsibility under the Act to notify the Chief Executive of a serious event at or near a workplace. This includes: the death of a worker or another person; an injury to a worker that results in incapacity for work for seven days; a serious injury to another person; or a dangerous occurrence. A reminder notice placed with a first aid kit may assist in ensuring that notification is provided within the timeframes required by the Regulation.

Under the direction of the persons in control, it is the responsibility of the designated first aid trained personnel to:

- a) familiarise themselves with the location and responsibility for first aid kits in their workplace
- b) using first aid kits provided, respond to requests for first aid assistance and to render assistance within their level of training and, where appropriate, arrange for additional ambulance/medical assistance
- c) maintain the first aid kit in a fully stocked, clean and tidy state, where other arrangements have not been made by the persons in control
- d) dispose of contaminated clinical waste.

**Clinical waste** - means waste that has the potential to cause disease, including for example the following:

- animal waste
- discarded sharps
- human tissue waste
- laboratory waste

Waste is not clinical waste when:

- **Domestic premises**  
In the home environment the only category of clinical and related wastes requiring special treatment is sharps or other devices used to penetrate the skin. All other wastes can be disposed of through the domestic waste stream. *NH&MRC - National Guidelines for Waste Management in the Health Care Industry, March 1999.*
- **Emergency first-aid**  
Waste generated when administering emergency first-aid at accident scenes should be disposed of by using all reasonable precautions commensurate with the nature and circumstances of the situation. This involves the first aid person using disposable gloves to administer treatment and washing their hands thoroughly before and after using the gloves.

Dressings used in first aid that are contaminated with blood or other body fluids are to be disposed into a plastic bag (garbage bag type of plastic). This bag is then tied off, not using staples or pins, and disposed into the domestic garbage system.

## **Sharps**

Normal workplace first aid should not use or generate contaminated sharps such as needles or syringes. If for any reason sharps are generated in the workplace they are to be disposed in an approved puncture proof container in accordance with *AS 4031:1992* or *AS 4261:1999*.

City Rangers or an approved contractor can arrange disposal. Unplanned sharps disposal is arranged via the Sharps Hotline on 132 281.



## 8 FIRST AID ROOMS

### 8.1 Requirement for First Aid Room

A first aid room is required for:

- a) Group A, construction workplaces with more than 100 workers
- b) Group A, other Workplaces with more than 200 workers.

The first Aid Room is only required when the entire number of workers at the workplace at any one time is above the designated number of workers for whom a room is required.

Wherever there is a specific hazard, such as described in 5.2(e), a first aid room may be required.

Each first aid room and its contents should be the responsibility of a first aid person who holds a current Occupational First Aid Certificate in accordance with 7.2.

### 8.2 Room Requirements

At a minimum, a first aid room should:

- a) be suitably located so as to be easily accessible
- b) provide for convenient access for transport of those who are ill/injured
- c) be well lit and ventilated
- d) be readily accessible to toilet and hand-washing facilities
- e) be of sufficient size to allow easy movement within the room and allow for stretcher access by ambulance/medical services
- f) have an entrance clearly marked "FIRST AID" (refer 5.1(c))

### 8.3 Equipment and Supplies

The first aid room should contain the following items:

- a) first aid kit (refer Section 5)
- b) sink or wash basin with hot and cold water supply
- c) approved handwashing solution in a pump pack dispenser along with disposable paper towels
- d) work bench and/or dressing trolley
- e) lockable cupboard
- j) sufficient storage for clean dressings, utensils and linen
- k) "Contaminated Waste" bag and holder
- l) couch or stretcher with blankets, sheets, and pillowcases (a wheelchair may also be appropriate)

- m) table/desk and chair
- n) telephone and/or emergency call system, with emergency numbers and procedures clearly displayed
- o) portable stretcher
- p) Injury Register and suitable storage facility to maintain privacy

## 9 SUMMARY OF MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

The following chart provides a quick reference guide to assist in determining the minimum requirements for the workplace.

| Type of Workplace<br>(Section 4)   | Number and type<br>of first aid kits<br>required<br>(Section 5) | Number of first aid<br>trained personnel<br>(Section 7)  | First aid room<br>(Section 8)  |
|--|---|--|--|
| Group A<br>Construction site with<br>25 or more workers                        | 1 (Type A)<br>(1/50 workers)                                    | 2<br>1 additional trained<br>first aid person for<br>every additional<br>50 workers  | 1<br>if greater than<br>100 workers at any one<br>time, plus occupational<br>first aid trained person<br>required                      |
| Group A<br>Other workplaces with<br>25 or more workers                         | 1 (Type A)  | 1<br>1 additional trained<br>first aid person for<br>every additional<br>100 workers   | 1<br>if greater than<br>200 workers at any one<br>time, plus occupational<br>first aid trained person<br>required                      |
| Group B<br>Construction site or<br>other workplace with<br>25 workers or less  | 1 (Type B)  | 1  | Not Required   |
| Group C<br>Other workplace (non-<br>construction) with less<br>than 10 workers | 1 (Type C)  | 1  | Not Required   |
|  |   | Minimum training for<br>first aid personnel who<br>are responsible for a<br>first aid kit is Senior<br>First Aid Certificate | Minimum training for<br>first aid personnel who<br>are responsible for a<br>first aid room is<br>Occupational First Aid<br>Certificate |

## 10 CHECKLIST FOR ASSESSING REQUIREMENTS

To assist in determining requirements, consider the following questions

| QUESTION   | CODE REFERENCE                  |
|--|---------------------------------|
| What is a workplace?   | Section: 2                      |
| What type of workplace is it?  | Section: 4                      |
| What is the distance from the workplace to the nearest available and appropriate medical service?                            | Section: 3                      |
| What is the incidence of accidents or illness in the workplace?  | Section: 3                      |
| Is the workplace isolated?   | Section: 3<br>Clause: 5.3       |
| What specific hazards are in the workplace?  | Section: 5                      |
| Do you have Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for the particular hazardous substances or dangerous goods in your workplace? | Section: 5                      |
| Do you have the first aid facilities listed on the Material Safety Data Sheets?  | Section: 5                      |
| How many first aid kits are needed, who is responsible for their maintenance?  | Sections: 5 & 9                 |
| Are extra first aid kit items needed?  | Section: 5                      |
| How many first aid trained personnel are needed?   | Sections: 7, & 9<br>Clause: 8.1 |
| What training must first aid personnel undertake?  | Section: 7.2                    |
| Is a first aid room required?  | Section: 8 & 9                  |
| Who is responsible for the first aid room?   | Clause: 8.1                     |

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