Contents

1. OBJECTIVE

This guide assists with the determination and implementation of first aid measures when utilising the Risk Assessment Approach for the management First Aid.

2. BACKGROUND

The **Risk Assessment Approach** to implementing First Aid in a work and/or learning environment is a legislated system for the management of First Aid. The legislative requirements for first aid are fully detailed in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (Vic)* (the *OHS Act*) and the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations (Vic)* (the *OHS Regulations*)

3. SCOPE

This process applies to RMIT globally.

NOTE – Referenced legislation applies to Australian jurisdictions only. RMIT campuses in other jurisdiction must refer to local applicable legislation, where available.

4. WHAT MUST GO RIGHT?

The expected outcomes – known as 'what must go right' – will be that:

• Work and learning environments are risk assessed for first aid needs

• Staff and other stakeholders, including Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs), are consulted on matters relating to first aid measures and management in their area

• Senior and Operational Leaders ensure that the provision of first aid measures meet the legislated, prescribed requirements, for areas under their control

• First aid measures and processes are communicated to staff, students, researchers, third parties and others as required

5. PROCEDURE / IMPLEMENTATION

5.1. Establishing first aid needs

Senior and Operational Leaders must ensure that, for areas under their control, they:

• identify the hazards that could result in work and/or learning-related injury or illness (including research activities and tasks)

• assess the likelihood and severity of work and/or learning-related injury or illness (including research activities and tasks)

• determine and provide the appropriate first aid facilities and training, taking into account the nature of the work and learning environment (e.g. size, layout, location)

• review their needs and first aid arrangements on a regular basis or as circumstances change

Operational Leaders must consult with staff including HSRs (where available) throughout the steps noted above and detailed in this guideline.

As part of this systematic approach, Senior and Operational Leaders need to consider all of the following:

5.1.1.   The nature of the hazards and the severity of the risks

Certain work and learning environments have greater risks of injury and illness due to the nature of the work and learning being undertaken. This is an important factor in determining first aid needs. For example, offices and libraries will need different first aid facilities to laboratories, workshops and studios.

Where a work or learning environment stores or uses highly toxic or corrosive substances, additional first aid facilities need to be provided, particularly if specified in the relevant safety data sheet (SDS). Additional facilities may also need to be considered where work and learning involves diving or hazardous atmospheres. For example, facilities may need to include specific antidotes, emergency showers and eyewash stations or a medical oxygen supply.

First aid officers must be trained in the use of these facilities.

Table 1 – Injuries and illnesses associated with common workplace hazards that may require first aid

Hazard	Potential harm
Manual tasks	Overexertion can cause musculoskeletal illnesses.
Working at height or on uneven or slippery surfaces	Slips, trips and falls from height can cause fractures, bruises, lacerations, dislocations, head or spinal injury, and harness suspension trauma.
Electricity	Potential ignition source—could cause injuries from fire. Exposure to live electrical wires can cause shock, burns and cardiac arrest. Harness suspension trauma may result if a person is electrocuted while working in a harness.
Machinery and equipment	Being hit by moving vehicles or being caught by moving parts of machinery can cause fractures, amputation, bruises, lacerations, dislocations, crush injury.
Hazardous substances	Toxic or corrosive substances may be inhaled or may contact skin or eyes causing poisoning, chemical burns, irritation, breathing difficulties, respiratory arrest. Flammable substances could result in injuries from fire or explosion.
Hazardous atmosphere	A hazardous atmosphere (such as a confined space) may have low oxygen levels or increased concentrations of contaminants, leading to unconsciousness or burns from fire or explosion. Poor air quality (for example, due to bushfire smoke) can cause shortness of breath and respiratory irritation and exacerbate heart and lung conditions including asthma.
Extreme temperatures	Hot surfaces and materials can cause burns. Working/learning in extreme heat can cause dehydration and heat-related illness. It can also increase risks by reducing concentration and increasing fatigue and chemical uptake into the body. Exposure to extreme cold can cause hypothermia and cold injury (such as frostbite or non-freezing cold injury). Liquid nitrogen can cause cold burns.
Radiation	Welding arc flashes, ionising radiation and lasers can cause burns and blindness. Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun can cause sunburn, heat-related illness and eye damage.
Violence	Behaviours including intimidation and physical assault can cause both physical and psychological injuries.
Biological	Infection, allergic reactions, anaphylaxis, contamination.
Animals	Bites (e.g. snakes, spiders, ticks), stings (e.g. bees, wasps, ants), kicks, falls, crush injuries, scratches, disease transmission.

5.1.2.   Known occurrences of injuries, illnesses and incidents

A review of injury, illness and 'near miss' incident data for the work and learning environment will help identify problem areas. However, the use of this data should not be the only means of identifying hazards as it covers past occurrences that may not reliably indicate potential future injuries and illnesses.

Specialist practitioners, subject matter experts and representatives of industry associations, unions and government may be of assistance in gathering health and safety information regarding work and learning environment hazards, injuries and illnesses, and in determining appropriate first aid resources.

5.1.3.   Size and layout of the work and learning environment

In relation to the size and layout of a work and learning environment, Operational Leaders need to consider:

• the nature of the work and learning being undertaken in different work and learning environments

• the distance an injured or sick person has to be transported to receive first aid

• the level of first aid available throughout the immediate and adjoining work and learning environments.

First aid facilities need to be located at convenient points and in areas where there is a significant risk of an injury occurring, where reasonably practicable.

A large work and learning environment may need first aid facilities to be provided in more than one location if:

• the place of work and learning is a long distance from emergency facilities

• small numbers of staff, students, researchers are dispersed over a wide area

• access to treatment is difficult, or

• the work and learning environment has more than one floor.

5.1.4.   The number of staff, students, researchers and the way work and learning is done

Where there are separate work and learning areas (e.g. a number of buildings on a site or multiple floors in a building), it may be appropriate to locate first aid facilities centrally and provide appropriate first aid kits in each work and learning area (including portable first aid kits in RMIT motor vehicles for when staff, students and researchers travel).

Where staff, students and researchers work and learn away from RMIT campuses or premises, Operational Leaders will need to consider:

• whether staff, students and researchers work/learn alone or in groups

• staff, student's and researcher's access to telephones and emergency radio communications, and

• the nature of the work/learning being performed.

If work and learning occur over more than one "shift" and outside of normal business hours, Operational Leaders must, so far as is reasonably practicable, provide adequate facilities for the welfare of all staff, students and researchers across those shifts and hours, which means that adequate first aid facilities and first aid officers need to be available whenever people work and learn. Additional hours of work and learning heightens fatigue. This may increase the risk of incidents and injuries. When staff, students and researchers undertake work and learning activities/tasks outside of normal business hours, Operational Leaders need to ensure that adequate first aid facilities and first aid officers are available for the number of staff, students and researchers in the work and learning environment.

Alternatively, if Operational Leaders cannot ensure the availability of adequate first aid facilities and first officers outside of normal business hours, then Operational Leaders must ensure that no work or learning activities/tasks are undertaken.

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In work and learning environments where other people, such as volunteers, visitors and members of the public may be present, Operational Leaders need to consider and assess what additional first aid requirements should be provided for people other than RMIT people.

5.1.5.   Location of the work and learning environment

The distance of the work and learning environment from ambulance services, hospital and medical centres or occupational health services (services that specialise in work-related healthcare) needs to be considered.

If timely access to emergency services cannot be assured, a person trained in more advanced first aid techniques may be needed at the work and learning environment. This may involve providing additional training for the first aid officer or using the services of a registered health professional. Decisions about qualifications and training for first aid officers will depend on a combination of factors, such as how accessible emergency services are, the number of employees, the nature of the hazards present, and the severity of the risks involved.

The time taken for medical aid to reach the person requiring first aid is more significant than the distance of the work and learning environment from emergency health services. For work and learning environment in remote areas, special considerations for provision of first aid may apply. Where there may be poor roads and adverse weather conditions, facilities for aerial evacuation need to be included when planning first aid facilities. Efficient communications systems need to be available for ensuring optimum response times. Operational Leaders must consider which communication systems are appropriate for the work and learning environment they are responsible. These may include mobile or satellite phones, radios or global positioning systems (GPSs). Systems selected need to be suitable for the infrastructure available in the area. For example, an area may not have sufficient mobile phone coverage.

For staff, students and researchers working in remote locations, Operational Leaders need to provide portable first aid kits. Remote work and learning locations may also need the provision of first aid kit contents to treat asthma and anaphylaxis and specialised first aid kit modules (e.g. for eye injuries, burns, and snake, spider and insect bites).

Operational Leaders must review HR – HSW-PR49 – Fieldwork Guidelines and complete HR – HSW-PR49-FR01 – Fieldwork Hazard ID Risk Assessment to identify possible first aid requirements in remote location s.

5.1.6.   Recording the first aid assessment

Operational Leaders need to record the first aid assessment and its outcomes. This may be beneficial when reviewing first aid facilities and training needs.

Operational Leaders may utilise *HR – HSW-PR31-TM01 – First Aid Risk Assessment Template* or equivalent electronic version.

Records of first aid risk assessments must be retained and managed locally. Record keeping must follow the requirements detailed in *HR – HSW-PR04 – HSW Records Management*.

5.1.7.   Summary of the First aid risk assessment process

Step 1 – Identify potential causes of work and learning environment injury and illness

- Has a comprehensive hazard identification of the work and learning environment been completed?
- Have incident, injury and 'near miss' data been reviewed?
- Has advice from key stakeholders, SMEs and/or HSW team been obtained?
- Have you consulted with HSRs (if any), staff, students and researchers?
- Is specialist or external assistance required?

Step 2 – Assess the risk of work and learning environment injury and illness

- Is the nature of the hazards involved in the work and learning known?
- Is the likelihood of a person's exposure to a hazard known?
- Do you know how many people may be exposed to a hazard and for how long?
- Has information on safety data sheets (SDSs) and product labels been checked?
- Have you consulted with HSRs (if any) staff, students and researchers?

Step 3 – What first aid arrangements are required to meet the assessed needs?

First aid officers and training	First aid facilities	First aid procedures
• How many first aid officers are needed? • What competencies do they require? • What training is needed?	• How many first aid kits are needed and are other modules needed? • Where should they be located and are they identifiable? • Who is responsible for maintaining the kits? • Is other first aid equipment needed? • Is a first aid room or external medical centre needed?	• What first aid procedures are needed for the work and learning environment?

Periodic review of assessment

5.2. First aid officers

Senior and Operational Leaders need to ensure they provide first aid officers with appropriate training, so they are able to perform their role effectively.

The skills and knowledge first aid officers need may vary according to the type of work and learning environment. Having regard to the outcomes of the risk assessment, Operational Leaders need to ensure that an adequate number of suitably trained first aid officers are provided for the welfare of staff, students and researchers in the work and learning environment. In addition, Operational Leaders need to ensure that the first aid officers have access to adequate first aid kits and where appropriate, first aid rooms and occupational health centres.

Operational Leaders need to ensure that a record of any first aid treatment given is kept by the first aid officer and reported to Senior Leaders and other key stakeholders on a regular basis to assist Colleges/Portfolios, schools/departments and RMIT as a whole, when reviewing risk assessment outcomes.

First aid treatment records, and the privacy of an individual's health information, are subject to the requirements of the *Health Records Act 2001*.

Note: All RMIT Security staff are qualified in First Aid (*Provide First Aid (HLTAID011)*) and can respond to incidents regardless of location or College / Portfolio and will do so as per the **RMIT Campus Emergency Plan**. However, RMIT Security must not be relied upon as the primary First Aid responders for high risk areas. In cases of high-risk tasks and activities, schools or departments should address the need for, and provision of, First Aid officers locally in the first instance, with RMIT Security acting as backup only.

5.3.   First aid training

The requirements for first aid training are detailed in *HR – HSW-PR31 – First Aid*. First aid training requirements are identical regardless of the approach chosen.

5.4.   First aid kits

5.4.1.   Quantity

Provision of appropriate first aid facilities for the welfare of staff, students and researchers will vary from one work and learning environment to the next. In determining the quantity of first aid kits required in the work and learning environment under their control, Operational Leaders must consider the outcome of the completed first aid risk assessment and, specifically, take into account the sections in "**Establishing first aid needs"** above in this document.

5.4.2.   Location, Contents and container

The details around the requirements for first aid kit locations, contents and container types is available in *HR – HSW-PR31-WI05 – First Aid Kits and Facilities*

5.5.   First aid facilities

5.5.1.   First aid rooms

Senior and Operational Leaders need to determine whether a first aid room is needed in the work and learning environments under their control, having considered the outcome of the first aid risk assessment.

First aid rooms need to be provided in the manner and include the basic contents set out in *HR – HSW-PR31-WI03 – First Aid Kits and Facilities*. Additional first aid kit modules and other items or equipment need to be provided for the first aid room if required by the risk assessment.

5.5.2.   Registered health professionals and access to medical services

In higher risk work and learning environments, Senior and Operational Leaders must attempt to make arrangements for the services of an appropriate medical centre external to the work and learning environment under their control. The medical centre needs to:

• be able to provide emergency health care

• be readily available during the operating times of the work and learning environment

• understand the types of hazards present in the work and learning environment and the potential effect on the health of staff, students and researchers that may arise from exposure to those hazards.

Senior and Operational Leaders need to consider developing an emergency management plan in conjunction with the external medical centre. Note that there are specific requirements for emergency plans in certain circumstances

under the **OHS Regulations (Vic)** (e.g. major hazard facilities) and under the **Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations 2012**.

5.6. Immunisation for first aid officers

Where there is a risk of vaccine-preventable disease, first aid officers need to be offered vaccinations in line with **The Australian Immunisation Handbook**.

For RMIT staff members or post-graduate students, the school or department will pay for any immunisations or screening required if exposure to the risk is related to their role or research.

Further details on immunisation is available in **HR – HSW-PR56 – Immunisation**

5.7. Other first aid equipment

Senior and Operational Leaders need to consider whether it is reasonably practicable to have an automated external defibrillator (AED) in the work and learning environment.

Senior and Operational Leaders need to provide safety showers and/or emergency eyewash equipment in the work and learning environment where there is a risk of hazardous substances or infectious substances splashing on people resulting in injuries.
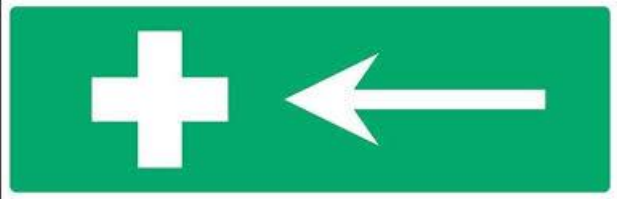
For more information about first aid equipment refer to **HR – HSW-PR31-WI05 – First Aid Kits and Facilities**.

5.8. Signage

Operational Leaders need to provide safety signs to ensure first aid facilities are adequately signed, and that the telephone numbers of emergency services and details to assist people to locate first aid officers are provided (e.g. telephone numbers, locations or a photograph if the first aid officer has provided one). Signs must comply with **AS 1319 Safety signs for the occupational environment**, for example by including a white cross on a green background. See Table 2.

Additional guidance on signage is provided in **AS 1319 Safety signs for the occupational environment**.

Table 2 – Examples of first aid signage

Sample first aid location sign	*Sample first aid location sign*
Sample first aid directional sign	*Sample first aid directional sign*

5.9. First aid procedures

Senior and Operational Leaders need to develop and implement first aid procedures for areas under their control, to ensure staff, students and researchers have a clear understanding of first aid arrangements in the work and learning environment. For example, the procedures need to include:

- types and locations of first aid kits
- location of first aid facilities (such as first aid rooms)
- first aid kit contents and review dates
- list of emergency numbers
- systems for emergency communication with first aid officers and emergency services, including for remote or isolated staff, students and researchers, and processes for checking and maintaining these
- arrangements for training first aid officers
- arrangements for providing first aid information and instruction for staff, students and researchers (including communicating to staff, students and researchers the names of first aid officers, their locations, and how to find them in the work and learning environment)
- processes for ensuring emergency services reach the unwell person as quickly as possible when called
- processes for reporting injuries and illnesses in the work and learning environment
- requirements for notifying WorkSafe of a notifiable incident and how the notification will be carried out
- infection control processes, including avoiding exposure to blood and body fluids or substances

5.9.1. Reviewing first aid arrangements

Operational Leaders need to regularly review first aid arrangements to ensure they are adequate and effective. In particular, Operational Leaders must review first aid arrangements when:

- the number of staff, students and researchers changes in the work and learning environment
- the way work and learning is completed changes, or new work and learning practices are introduced
- there has been an incident that required first aid, or
- there is new information about a previously unidentified hazard or first aid measures

Furthermore, Senior and Operational Leaders should consider the questions below when reviewing first aid arrangements for areas under their control.

Do all people have access to first aid officers and first aid kits?
Are more first aid kits needed?
Are more first aid officers needed?
Do people have access to first aid officers at all times?
Are the first aid kits and modules suitable for the hazards in the work and/or learning environment?
Are first aid kits well maintained and identifiable to people?
Is a first aid room or health centre required?
Are first aid facilities well maintained?
Do first aid officers have skills, training and competencies to provide first aid in the work and/or learning environment and are their skills up to date?
Do people know how to access first aid?

Are first aid contact details up to date?

6.   Responsibilities

6.1.   Senior and Operational Leaders

- Ensure first aid reviews/ assessments have been conducted in their areas of control.
- Ensure appropriate numbers of trained first aid officers and adequately stocked first aid kits are available and purchased where necessary.
- Ensure first aid officers are trained at the level determined by the risk assessment and currency is maintained.
- Ensure first aid management is documented and that staff, students, researchers and third parties are provided information, instruction and training relating to first aid matters
- Ensure that consultation around first aid management has occurred with impacted people, including HSRs.
- Review performance against this process on a regular basis.

6.2.   First Aid Officers

- Hold current and relevant first aid qualifications to fulfil the duties of their role.
- Respond promptly to provide first aid treatment service to an injured or ill staff member, student, third party or other persons where RMIT is present
- Arrange prompt and appropriate referral as required.
- Advise their Operational Leader and HSW team of any changes, updates, additions or errors in the First Aider Register, as it applies to the first aid officer

6.3.   Staff, students, researchers and third parties

- Assist in first aid risk assessments where required.
- Follow this process and all reasonable instructions relating to HSW and first aid in the work and learning environment.

6.4.   HSW Team

- Liaise with Operational Leaders and first aid officers on matters relating to the management first aid
- Regularly review this process in consultation with relevant stakeholders.
- Develop and report on KPIs relevant to this process.
- Monitor compliance with this process and report on outcomes.

7.   Definitions

Defines any key terms and acronyms relating to the process where they apply.

Term / acronym	Definition
First aid facilities	Includes first aid kits, first aid rooms and associated first aid equipment such as AED's
First aid officer	A member of RMIT staff who volunteers to provide emergency treatment and life support in accordance with the level of first training undertaken
Higher-risk workplace	Higher-risk workplaces are those where employees may be exposed to hazards that could result in serious injury or illness that would require immediate medical

Term / acronym	Definition
	treatment. Higher risk workplaces include workshops, laboratories, and any areas where hazardous machinery or materials are used. Examples of serious injuries requiring immediate medical treatment are: • The amputation of any part of the body • A serious head injury • A serious eye injury • Degloving or scalping • Electric shock • A spinal injury • The loss of a bodily function • Serious lacerations.
HSR	Health and Safety Representative: An employee who is a member of the DWG and elected by its members to represent them in relation to health and safety matters, risks, or concerns
Low-risk workplace	Low-risk workplaces are those where: • Employees are not exposed to hazards that could result in serious injury or illness that would require immediate medical treatment such as those associated with plant, hazardous substances, dangerous goods, confined spaces and hazardous manual handling • The business is located where medical assistance or ambulance services are readily available to the community and to the workplace where the business operates. • Low-risk workplaces include offices, libraries and most retail operations.
Operational leaders	Any staff member with direct reports or supervision over a cohort, including: • Deans and Associate Deans • Directors, Deputy and Associate Directors • General Managers and Managers • Coordinators and Supervisors • Teachers
Senior Leaders	• Deans and Associate Deans • Directors, Deputy and Associate Directors • General Managers and Managers • Chief Investigators

8. Supporting Documents

Lists the supporting and related Processes and Guidance Material, Legislative references, Australian and International Standards etc. that may be useful references for process users

- HR – HSW-PR31 – First Aid
- HR – HSW-PR31-WI03 – First Aid – Prescribed Approach Guidelines
- HR – HSW-PR31-WI05 – First Aid Kits and Facilities
- HR – HSW-PR31-TM01 – First Aid Risk Assessment Template
- HR – HSW-PR49 – Fieldwork Guidelines

- HR – HSW-PR49 – Fieldwork Hazard ID Risk Assessment
- Occupational Health and Safety Act (Victoria)
- Compliance Code - First Aid in the Workplace (WorkSafe Victoria)