

Selecting a first-aid training provider

A guide for employers

General Information Sheet 3

DRAFT VERSION

Introduction

1 This guide is for employers. It will help you identify and select a competent training provider to deliver any first-aid training indicated by your first-aid needs assessment under the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981. Further information about carrying out a needs assessment and all other aspects of providing first aid at work can be found in HSE's guide to the Regulations *First aid at work*.¹

2 Where your first-aid needs assessment indicates that trained first-aiders are required, the level of training undertaken should be as identified in the assessment. Typically, this will be first aid at work (FAW) training or emergency first aid at work (EFAW) training, although it may also be some other level of first-aid training, outside the usual framework, if indicated by the needs assessment.

3 First-aid training is available from a number of sources, many operating under voluntary accreditation schemes or industry bodies, whose intention is to set and maintain standards in line with the requirements of HSE – other training providers may choose to operate independently of any such scheme. First-aid training is also available from the Voluntary Aid Societies.*

4 The effort you will need to put in to your due diligence ('reasonable investigation') in selecting a training provider should be in proportion to a training provider's chosen route to delivery or industry affiliation. Table 1 summarises the level of due diligence an employer would need to undertake in identifying a competent training provider.

Table 1 Level of due diligence required in selecting a competent training provider

Option	Training provider	Level of due diligence required
Awarding organisations	Provide nationally accredited regulated qualifications in FAW and EFAW (see paragraph 5)	No due diligence required
Voluntary Aid Societies (see paragraph 3)	Have similar quality assurance processes and procedures. The qualifications provided are non-regulated for FAW and EFAW (see paragraph 7)	Some due diligence required (see paragraph 12)
Industry body	May have suitable quality assurance system and other suitable requirements. The FAW and EFAW qualifications are non-regulated. Will need to be fully verified (see paragraph 8)	Full due diligence required
Independent	Independent training providers. Independents may have a system of quality assurance and other suitable procedures. The FAW and EFAW qualifications are non-regulated. Will need to be fully verified (see paragraph 9)	Full due diligence required

* The Voluntary Aid Societies are St John Ambulance, British Red Cross and St Andrew's First Aid.

5 First-aid training can be obtained through approved training centres of awarding organisations (AOs) that offer regulated qualifications in both FAW and EFAW that are nationally recognised. Qualification regulators (ie Ofqual, SQA or the Welsh Government) require the AOs to have dedicated quality assurance processes, and approve and monitor their training centres to ensure they deliver FAW and EFAW training in accordance with the criteria set out in paragraph 13.

6 Qualifications' regulators also require these AOs and their approved training centres to work in compliance with the Assessment Principles for First Aid Qualifications, which can be found on the Skills for Health website (www.skillsforhealth.org.uk) and are consistent with the criteria in paragraph 13. This gives employers 'ready-made' assurance of a training provider's competence to deliver appropriate training.

7 You may also find 'ready-made' assurance when considering the Voluntary Aid Societies. The Voluntary Aid Societies are together acknowledged by HSE as one of the standard setters for currently accepted first-aid practice (see paragraph 24), in so far as they relate to the topics covered in FAW and EFAW training courses. The Voluntary Aid Societies also work to similar principles of assessment, and employ a similar hierarchy of policies and processes to ensure training quality standards allied to those of regulated qualifications (see paragraphs 5 and 6). You may, however, wish to undertake some of the elements of due diligence proposed below.

8 You may also select training from a provider who is a member of a voluntary industry accreditation or quality assurance scheme. HSE is not in a position to verify the level of assurance that an employer can assume when a training organisation is a member of these voluntary accreditation schemes and therefore employers should undertake all the elements of due diligence listed below. Such requests will be expected by these training providers who would be happy and prepared to provide the information required upon request.

9 If you select training from an independent organisation with no affiliations, all elements of due diligence covered in this guidance (the five criteria listed in paragraph 13) should be undertaken in full to establish whether the organisation is competent.

10 Where your first-aid needs assessment identifies, or you choose to use qualifications other than FAW or EFAW to demonstrate workplace first-aid competence, you should use elements of the due diligence below to ensure that the training provider is competent and any alternative qualification is fit for purpose.

11 There may be alternative methods of demonstrating competence in first-aid training to those listed below, and responsibility for considering and deciding whether such alternatives are acceptable lies with you – the employer – in selecting a training provider.

12 Should an employer decide to provide first-aid training in-house they will need to make sure that the first-aid training is fit for purpose by ensuring:

- the content of any first-aid training is appropriate (see paragraph 11) and that elements of the syllabus in common with FAW or EFAW (see Appendices 1 and 2) are delivered in accordance with currently accepted standards for first-aid practice (paragraph 24);
- in-house individuals acting as trainers/assessors have the necessary skills, qualifications and competencies expected of those working for an external training provider (paragraph 15);
- a system of quality assurance is in place ensuring that the competence of trainers/assessors is regularly reviewed by competent 'verifiers'. These systems should be reviewed on an annual basis by a competent person independent of those directly involved in the delivery/assessment of this training (paragraph 17);
- class sizes are appropriate and take account of the needs and capabilities of those undertaking any training (paragraph 21 and 22);
- certificates issued contain information in accordance with paragraph 33;
- equipment provided is suitable and sufficient (paragraph 17);

- training consists of sufficient, minimum contact training time (Table 2).

For compliance purposes you may find it beneficial to maintain good records.

13 The guidance covers what you should expect and check for when you select a training provider, including the following five criteria:

- the qualifications expected of trainers and assessors;
- monitoring and quality assurance systems;
- teaching and standards of first-aid practice;
- syllabus content; and
- certification.

14 There is no requirement for the checks you carry out when choosing a training provider to be formalised or written down, although it may be useful for you to retain a written record. By documenting the checks you have undertaken to confirm the competence of a training organisation, and retaining a record of those steps, you can demonstrate to an HSE or local authority inspector how you selected a training provider. The checklist in Table 2 can be used for this purpose.

Table 2 Checklist for evaluating the competence of first-aid training organisations

CHECK	YES	NO	NOTES
Trainers/assessors			
Do the trainers/assessors have a current FAW certificate or qualify for an exemption?			
Do the trainers/assessors have an appropriate training/assessing qualification?			
Quality assurance			
Is there a documented quality assurance plan designating an individual to take responsibility for quality assurance, including assessment of the performance of trainers/assessors at least annually?			
Does the designated person have a current FAW certificate or qualify for an exemption?			
Does the designated person have an assessing/verifying qualification?			
Is there a documented course evaluation procedure?			
Is there a documented complaints procedure?			
Teaching currently accepted first-aid practice			
Is FAW/EFAW taught in accordance with current guidelines on adult basic life support published by the Resuscitation Council (UK), and for other aspects of first aid, in accordance with current guidelines published by the Voluntary Aid Societies or other published guidelines that are supported by a responsible body of medical opinion?			
Training syllabus			
Does the course content adequately meet the needs of your workplace as indicated by your first-aid needs assessment?			

CHECK	YES	NO	NOTES
For FAW , does the syllabus include the topics listed in Appendix 1 and does the course include at least 18 training and assessment contact hours, over three days?			
For FAW requalification , does the syllabus include the topics listed in Appendix 1 and does the course last at least 12 training and assessment contact hours, over two days?			
For EFAW , does the syllabus include the topics listed in Appendix 2 and does the course last at least six training and assessment contact hours, over one day?			
For EFAW requalification , does the syllabus include the topics listed in Appendix 2 and does the course last at least six training and assessment contact hours, over one day?			
Certificates			
Do the certificates issued to students assessed as competent contain the name of the training organisation, the title of the qualification (eg FAW or EFAW), reference to the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981, the date of issue and confirmation the certificate is valid for three years? (If training is neither FAW nor EFAW the certificate should also list the learning outcomes of the syllabus on which candidates have been assessed.)			

Are the trainers/assessors competent?

15 Trainers/assessors should have knowledge and competence in first aid, as demonstrated by:

- a current, valid FAW certificate; or
- being registered and licensed as a doctor with the General Medical Council; or
- current registration as a nurse with the Nursing and Midwifery Council; or
- current registration as a paramedic with the Health and Care Professions Council; and
- a knowledge and competence in training and/or assessing, demonstrated by holding a training/assessing qualification such as those listed in Table 3; or
- working towards such a qualification with the objective of achieving it within two years, providing they have previous experience of first-aid training/assessing.

16 The list in Table 3 is not exhaustive but provides a guide to acceptable training and assessing qualifications. Trainers who also assess student competence should hold a qualification (or separate qualifications) that enables them to perform both of these functions. A training organisation may use different individuals to train and assess students and they should hold qualifications appropriate for their role.

Table 3 Acceptable training/assessing qualifications

Qualification	Train	Assess
A1 (D32/33) – Assess candidates using a range of methods	-	✓
A2 (D32) – Assess candidates' performance through observation	-	✓
Cert Ed, PGCE, B Ed, M Ed	✓	✓
CTLLS/DTLLS	✓	✓
English Nursing Board 998	✓	✓
First Aid at Work Trainer/Assessor qualification*	✓	✓
Further and Adult Education Teacher's Certificate	✓	✓
IHCD Instructional Methods	✓	✓
IHCD Instructor Certificate	✓	✓
Learning and Development Unit 9D – Assess workplace competence using direct and indirect methods	-	✓
Learning and Development Unit 9D1 – Assess workplace competence using direct and indirect methods	-	✓
Nursing mentorship qualifications	✓	✓
PTLLS	✓	-
PTLLS with unit 'Principles and Practice of Assessment'	✓	✓
QCF Qualifications based on the Learning and Development NOS for assessors	-	✓
S/NVQ level 3 in training and development	✓	✓
S/NVQ level 4 in training and development	✓	✓
TQFE (Teaching Qualification for Further Education)	✓	✓
Training Group A22, B22, C21, C23, C24	✓	-

* Where this qualification is not linked to a regulated training/assessing qualification listed in Table 2, by 1 October 2015 the qualification will no longer be considered valid for the purposes of demonstrating competence to train or assess first aid.

Is there a quality assurance system in place to monitor the quality of training?

- 17 The training organisation should have:
- a suitable and documented quality assurance plan designating an individual to take responsibility for quality assurance, including assessment of the skills of trainers/assessors at least annually. This 'designated person', who can be from inside or outside the organisation, should be independent of training delivery and demonstrate competence for their role (see paragraphs 18 and 19);
 - a documented course evaluation procedure that includes feedback from students;
 - a documented complaints procedure;
 - a mechanism for retaining a detailed record of assessments for each student and store those records for a minimum of three years after completion of the course;
 - sufficient quantity of well-maintained equipment that permits students to complete their training and assessment within the appropriate number of contact hours;

- where training is provided in blocks, these blocks should be not less than two hours in duration and ensure the candidate has completed the course and the assessment within a reasonable time frame, ie for 3-day FAW – 10 weeks, 2-day requalification FAW – 6 weeks, and EFAW – 3 weeks.

18 The designated person should have knowledge and competence in first aid, as demonstrated by:

- a current, valid FAW certificate; or
- being registered and licensed as a doctor with the General Medical Council; or
- current registration as a nurse with the Nursing and Midwifery Council; or
- current registration as a paramedic with the Health and Care Professions Council; and
- an in-depth knowledge of the subject of first aid and first-aid training.

19 The designated person should also have knowledge and competence in assessing and verifying qualifications, as demonstrated by:

- an assessing qualification such as those listed in Table 3; and
- a verifying qualification such as those listed in Table 4; or
- working towards such a qualification with the objective of achieving it within two years, providing they have previous experience of verifying first-aid training and assessing qualifications.

20 The list in Table 4 is not exhaustive, but provides a guide to acceptable verification qualifications.

Table 4 Acceptable verifying qualifications

Qualification
D34 – Internally verify the assessment process
D35 – Externally verify the assessment process
V1 – Conduct internal quality assurance of the assessment process
V2 – Conduct external quality assurance of the assessment process
Level 4 Award in the internal quality assurance of assessment processes and practice
Level 4 Award in the external quality assurance of assessment processes and practice
Level 4 Certificate in leading the internal quality assurance of assessment processes and practice
Level 4 Certificate in leading the external quality assurance of assessment processes and practice

Have training providers demonstrated that they work to accepted standards for training?

21 Training organisations should demonstrate that class size is appropriate. For example where first-aid training is provided in class sizes of greater than 12, unless additional trainers and/or assessors are provided there may be concerns over addressing the training needs of individual candidates or adequately assessing their competence.

22 Where your candidates for training have learning or communication difficulties these should be communicated to your training provider. The training provider should then make reasonable adjustments to accommodate their learning needs, eg provision of additional learning support.

23 Where candidates have a disability, training providers should make reasonable adjustments during the period of training. However, at the formal (summative) assessment stages the candidate must demonstrate their first-aid competence without assistance of any kind.

Is first aid taught in accordance with currently accepted first-aid practice?

24 Training organisations should teach the first-aid management of injuries and illness, in relation to the topics covered in FAW/EFAW training courses, in accordance with:

- current guidelines published by the Resuscitation Council (UK); and
- the current edition of the first-aid manual of the Voluntary Aid Societies (St John Ambulance, British Red Cross, St Andrew's First Aid); or
- other published guidelines, provided they are in line with the two above or supported by a responsible body of medical opinion.

25 Where your first-aid needs assessment identifies, or where you choose to use qualifications other than FAW or EFAW to demonstrate workplace first-aid competence, you should ensure that common elements of the syllabus are taught in accordance with the same guidelines.

Does the first-aid training course cover an appropriate syllabus?

26 **First aid at work** – the training organisation should provide a syllabus covering the topics listed in Appendix 1. The training should last at least 18 hours (not including breaks) over a minimum period of three days.

27 **First aid at work requalification** – the training organisation should provide a syllabus covering the same topics as those in the initial first aid at work course (see Appendix 1). The training should last at least 12 hours (not including breaks) over a minimum period of two days.

28 **Emergency first aid at work** – the training organisation should provide a syllabus covering the topics listed in Appendix 2. The training should last at least six hours (not including breaks) over a minimum period of one day.

29 **Emergency first aid at work requalification** – the syllabus and duration of this course should be the same as for the initial EFAW course, ie six hours, not including breaks (see paragraph 28).

30 **Alternative qualifications** – where such qualifications are being used for the purposes of Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981, the syllabus should contain appropriate content to address the findings of the first-aid needs assessment. This is likely to contain elements common to, or indeed all the topics listed in the syllabus for FAW (see Appendix 1). The duration of training (not including breaks) should be based on comparison of the proposed syllabus content with that for FAW and the time adjusted accordingly.

31 HSE does not accept qualifications where training is delivered in a blended, e-learning or distance format for compliance with the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981.

Do certificates issued to students assessed as competent contain appropriate information?

32 The training organisation should only issue certificates to those students it has assessed as competent through demonstrating satisfactory knowledge, skills and understanding in all aspects of the training course.

33 The certificates should contain:

- the name of the training organisation;
- the name of the candidate;
- the title of the qualification (eg FAW or EFAW);
- reference to the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981;
- confirmation that the certificate is valid for three years;
- the commencement date;
- if the qualification is neither FAW nor EFAW, the certificate should also list the learning outcomes of the syllabus on which candidates have been assessed.

Appendix 1 Content of a first aid at work course

This information has been reproduced from Appendix 5 of the 2013 edition of *First aid at work*.¹

On completion of training, whether a full FAW course or a FAW requalification course, successful candidates should have satisfactorily demonstrated competence in all of the subject areas listed in Appendix 2 and also to be able to:

- administer first aid to a casualty with:
 - injuries to bones, muscles and joints, including suspected spinal injuries;
 - chest injuries;
 - burns and scalds;
 - eye injuries;
 - sudden poisoning;
 - anaphylactic shock;
- recognise the presence of major illness and provide appropriate first aid (including heart attack, stroke, epilepsy, asthma, diabetes).

Appendix 2 Content of an emergency first aid at work course

This information has been reproduced from Appendix 6 of the 2013 edition of *First aid at work*.¹

On completion of training, successful candidates should be able to:

- understand the role of the first-aider, including reference to:
 - the importance of preventing cross-infection;
 - the need for recording incidents and actions;
 - use of available equipment;
- assess the situation and circumstances in order to act safely, promptly and effectively in an emergency;
- administer first aid to a casualty who is unconscious (including seizure);
- administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation;
- administer first aid to a casualty who is choking;
- administer first aid to a casualty who is wounded and bleeding;
- administer first aid to a casualty who is suffering from shock;
- provide appropriate first aid for minor injuries (including small cuts, grazes and bruises, minor burns and scalds, small splinters).

References

1 *First aid at work: The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981. Approved Code of Practice and guidance L74* (Second edition) HSE Books 2009 ISBN 978 0 7176 6260 9 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/L74.htm (new edition to be published October 2013)

Further reading

First aid at work: Your questions answered Leaflet INDG214(rev1) HSE Books 2009 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg214.htm

Basic advice on first aid at work Leaflet INDG347(rev2) HSE Books 2011 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg347.htm

HSE's first aid at work website: www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid

Further information

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit www.hse.gov.uk/. You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

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