



Where ideas work

Workplace First Aid Requirements for November 1, 2024

Updated September 13, 2024

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New First Aid Requirements for BC Workplaces

Requirements for first aid in all BC workplaces – including the Public Service – are changing. WorkSafeBC made these changes in the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR), and they take effect on November 1, 2024.

All Public Service workplaces will have to complete a new first aid assessment to determine their new first aid requirements. The first aid assessment includes new factors to be considered and different requirements for levels of training, first aid kit contents and other equipment.

The first aid assessment using the new criteria must be completed by all workplaces before November 1, 2024. This timeline is to ensure that a first aid attendant with the right training is available during the operational hours of the workplace, and that the workplace has the appropriate supply of first aid equipment.

WorkSafeBC has an information video available at on their [website](#) and on [YouTube](#) .

Who is responsible for completing a first aid assessment and ensuring adequate levels of first aid attendants, supplies, and procedures?

WorkSafeBC requires employers to ensure first aid services are provided at their workplaces. People leaders, on behalf of their Ministry employer, are responsible for the following:

- Completing an annual first aid assessment. A new first aid assessment must be completed by November 1, 2024.
- Providing required first aid equipment, facilities, and supplies that meet the new WorkSafeBC requirements
- Making sure all staff are aware of first aid services and procedures
- Making sure first aid attendants' schedules permit adequate coverage during regular working hours
- Always having adequate first aid attendant backup when necessary
- Ensuring first aid attendants have been trained, tested, certified and re-certified as required by the [Occupational Health and Safety Regulation](#)
- Completing a yearly first aid drill
- Making sure that the appropriate financial allowance level is paid to Intermediate or Advanced first aid attendants. Read more at [Licenses and Certificates](#)

On behalf of the employer, a people leader may assign a representative to complete a first aid assessment and/or manage the first aid program. The people leader remains responsible for ensuring that the workplace complies with regulatory requirements.

What is a First aid assessment?

All workplaces must complete a new first aid assessment prior to November 1, 2024.

The assessment should be conducted as soon as possible. The new first aid requirements may change the first aid program currently in place in your workplace.

The criteria for the new first aid assessment include:

- The number of workers at your workplace
- The travel time from the workplace to the closest BC ambulance station
- Accessibility of the workplace to BC Ambulance Staff
- The work activities undertaken at your workplace

The assessment considers these criteria and establishes the level of training and equipment required for your workplace. Additionally, your workplace must consult with the joint occupational health and safety committee and/or staff to review the types of injuries that are likely to occur in the workplace. This ensures that the minimum first aid services provided are sufficient for promptly treating and transporting injured workers.

How does my workplace complete a first aid assessment?

Workplace Health and Safety at the BC Public Service Agency is providing an online assessment tool to help workplaces assess their first aid needs, produce a summary and help with customizing first aid procedures to your workplace. The tool will be available for use as of October 1, 2024.

The online assessment tool will assist most workplaces with determining their first aid needs. Staff from Workplace Health and Safety are available to assist with assessments that the online assessment tool is unable to complete.

How often will my workplace have to complete a first aid assessment?

After completing your initial new first aid assessment, a documented annual review is required to ensure nothing has changed and that appropriate first aid training levels and equipment systems are appropriate.

A new and complete first aid assessment is required if any of your workplace conditions have changed since the initial assessment. For example, changes in the number of staff, changes to your workplace location, or the introduction of new activities into your workplace.

Does my workplace have to change our first aid procedures?

The online assessment tool allows information on your existing first aid procedures to be entered. The assessment will produce an updated set of procedures including information on completing a first aid drill.

Do workplaces have to complete a first aid drill?

Like the current first aid regulations, all workplaces requiring first aid must complete an annual first aid drill to evaluate effectiveness. This is for all workplaces, whether indoors in buildings or outdoors doing field work.

A first aid drill must also be held if there have been substantive changes to written first aid procedures. The first aid online assessment tool provides procedures for a first aid drill.

For workplaces that will only be in place for a short duration (e.g. less than a year) the first aid drill should be held quickly after the workplace is established to test first aid response time, equipment and procedures.

Has first aid training changed?

Yes. To align with other provinces and national standards the first aid courses have new names, and the content has been updated:

- **Basic** first aid training (course length 1 day) is equivalent to the old **Level 1** training

- **Intermediate** first aid training (course length 2 days) is equivalent to the old **Level 2** training
- **Advanced** first aid training (course length 10 days) is equivalent to the old **Level 3** training

The new courses are available from the same providers that workplaces have used in the past.

Do workplaces have to send staff to new training before November 1, 2024?

Whether or not staff require new training depends on the results of your new first aid assessment.

For example, if the results of your new first aid assessment indicates that first aid training for your workplace is the same or a lower level than your current first aid level training, first aid staff do not require retraining until their current first aid certificate expires. For example:

Scenario 1:

A ministry workplace completes their new first aid assessment. The results indicate that one first aid attendant with Basic training is required. The workplace's current first aid attendant has Level 1 training and completed their training in June 2023. As Level 1 is equivalent to the new Basic level training, the first aid attendant is adequately trained for the ministry workplace and will not have to renew their training until June 2026 when their current certification expires.

Scenario 2

A ministry workplace completes their new first aid assessment. The results indicate that one first aid attendant with Intermediate level training is required. The current first aid attendant is Occupational First Aid (OFA) certified at Level 3 and they completed their training in August 2024. Level 3 is a higher level of training than the new Intermediate level (old Level 2). As a result, the workplace meets the new requirements for their workplace.

If the first aid attendant continues in their first aid role beyond their certificate expiry date (August 2027), they will need to retrain closer to, and ahead of, their certificate expiry date.

Scenario 3

A ministry workplace completes their new first aid assessment. The results indicate that one first aid attendant with Intermediate level training is required. The current first aid attendant has Level 1 training. Intermediate level training is a higher level of training than Basic training (old Level 1). As a result, the current first aid attendant must take an Intermediate level first aid training course to meet the new requirements for their workplace.

Current certificates are valid under the new regulation until their current expiration dates, i.e. three years from the date of the course.

Staff taking first aid training after September 1, 2024 will receive the new training.

Are there changes to first aid kits?

Yes. Suppliers in BC will be ensuring that first aid kits meet the new BC OHSR standards. These standards align with Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standards that are used by other provinces across Canada.

Will my workplace have to buy a new first aid kit?

If the results from your new first aid assessment indicate that your workplace's level of first aid does not change, you may only need to update the supplies in the kit. For example, if under the current regulations a workplace requires a Level 1 first aid kit, and under the new regulations requires a Basic first aid kit, the workplace may buy supplies individually to update the current kit or purchase a refill kit for a Basic first aid kit and add it to the current first aid kit.

If the results from your new first aid assessment indicate that your workplace's level of first aid has increased, a new kit is required to be purchased. For example, currently a workplace requires a Level 1 first aid kit, and the new assessment indicates that an intermediate kit is required, a new first aid kit will need to be purchased.

WorkSafeBC states:

Employers are expected to move to these new contents as new kits are purchased or supplies are replaced. Existing kits should be supplemented with any significantly different components required in the equivalent CSA-aligned kit;

however, there is no expectation for employers to dispose of existing first aid supplies that are substantially the same, with only minor differences in sizes or descriptions.

Does a separate first aid assessment for fieldwork have to be completed?

A first aid assessment must be completed for fieldwork. The work activity for fieldwork is different than the office workplace where staff are based or dispatched from.

If the same type of fieldwork is being completed in different workplace locations a single first aid assessment may be used for the multiple workplace locations.

Site specific first aid procedures, evacuation plans, check in/out etc. must be completed for each fieldwork location where staff will be working even if the same type of fieldwork is being completed. For example, plans for field work must include a plan to get the injured worker to a place that is accessible to BC Ambulance for transporting the worker to a hospital.

Is there an increase in first aid requirements for fieldwork?

A WorkSafeBC goal with the new first aid regulation was to focus on high-risk remote industries to ensure that adequate levels of first aid, equipment and transportation are in place. In some cases, this may increase the first aid requirements for your workplace.

Remote workplaces may see an increase in their requirements for emergency transport vehicles (ETVs) or require multiple levels of first aid attendants.

What does WorkSafeBC mean by “remote” and “less accessible”

A “remote” workplace means it is more than 30 minutes travel time from a BC Ambulance station under normal travel conditions and speed limit rules during working hours (i.e. not with emergency lights and siren).

A “less accessible” workplace is a workplace that:

- BCEHS Ambulance are unable to access travelling by land
- BCEHS Ambulance attendants are unable to safely access

Ambulance personnel are not permitted to enter hazardous areas and will not perform rescue activities. Workplaces that are “less accessible” must have first aid attendants with the appropriate level of training and equipment, and a plan to safely transport workers to a place accessible to BCEHS Ambulance.

Resources:

[WorkSafeBC New First Aid Requirements \(video\)](#)

[WorkSafeBC New First Aid Requirements web page](#)

[Licenses and Certificates](#)