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Did You Know...

Your organization may need to have first aid supplies available in the workplace?

Employer Risks and Exposures

OSHA's General Industry Standard §1910.151(b), which covers office environments and industries not included in its Agriculture, Construction, or Maritime Standards, states:

"In the absence of an infirmary, clinic, or hospital in near proximity to the workplace which is used for the treatment of all injured employees, a person or persons shall be adequately trained to render first aid. Adequate first aid supplies shall be readily available."

OSHA does not provide a specific list of the first aid supplies that it considers adequate. However, in an appendix to Standard §1910.151, it states that the first aid supplies listed in the American National Standard (ANSI) provide an example of the minimum contents of an adequate first aid kit. Examples of first aid supplies listed in the ANSI standard include, but are not limited to, antiseptic, adhesive bandages, adhesive tape, sterile pads, and analgesics.

First aid requirements are more specific for other OSHA standards. For example, Construction Standard §1926.50(d)(2) requires employers to put first aid kits in weatherproof containers with individual sealed packages for each type of item. The kits must be checked prior to being sent to a job site and at least weekly thereafter.

Failure to comply with OSHA regulations can result in citations and fines of up to \$7,000 for noncompliance.

Avoiding Disaster

If the General Industry Standard applies to your organization, determine if an infirmary, clinic, or hospital is in "near proximity" to each of your work sites. If the answer is "yes," no first aid supplies are required on-site by OSHA. However, a basic first aid kit is still recommended as a

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good business practice. In addition, it is highly recommended that you have a policy explaining your workplace accident/injury procedures that is disseminated to all employees.

If medical facilities are not in “near proximity” to one or more of your work sites, you will need to provide a first aid kit and at least one employee on-site who is trained in first aid. The OSHA standards do not define “near proximity.” In various interpretation letters, OSHA has indicated that a 3 - 4 minute response time is required for work sites where life threatening or permanently disabling injuries or illnesses can be expected and up to a 15 minute response time where non-life threatening injuries or illnesses can be expected.

To determine the specific type and quantity of first aid supplies needed, the OSHA regulations recommend that employers assess their individual workplaces by, among other things, reviewing their OSHA injury and illness logs, the work processes that are likely to cause injury, and any chemicals or other hazards present in the work environment. OSHA recommends that employers also take advantage of local resources, such as fire departments and medical professionals, in determining the supplies needed.

For more information about OSHA or first aid kit requirements, contact AMTEK's Human Resource Hot Line at 1.800.457.8829.

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