

# Medication in First Aid Kits

## OHS information for employers

This Safety Bulletin outlines the requirements of specific sections of Alberta's legislation that are relevant to work site first aiders. Anyone responsible for providing first aid services at the workplace needs to understand what is required by law. In the provision of first aid, the casualty's health and safety is the primary consideration, and it is important for the first aider to first do no harm in the provision of first aid.

First aiders are to be competent when providing care. The Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Code defines "competent" in relation to a person, to mean "adequately qualified, suitably trained and with sufficient experience to safely perform work without supervision or with only a minimal degree of supervision."

The goals of a first aider are to preserve life, alleviate suffering, prevent increased severity of the injury or illness and promote recovery. In approved workplace first aid courses in Alberta, first aiders are taught that they may assist an individual with his/her own medication, in cases where the individual is unable to take the medication without assistance.

### So What's the Issue?

There are ongoing questions regarding the inclusion of medication in First Aid Kits.

### What are the Work Site Requirements?

It is required that employers provide and maintain First Aid kits in their workplaces that meet the requirements as designated in the Alberta OHS Code. Additional equipment or supplies may be indicated as a result of a hazard assessment.

### Recommendations

The inclusion of medication in first aid kits falls outside of the scope of first aid. Routine inclusion of over-the-counter medications in first aid kits is not recommended as there are potential adverse outcomes.

If it is determined that it is necessary to provide medication at the work site, a physician should write policy and procedures to cover their use. Health care professionals would then be designated to administer medications. If there are medications at the worksite, it is important that there is a regular process to check that these medications are not expired.

#### Did You Know?

In Alberta, first aiders are allowed to assist individuals with their own prescribed medications if the casualty identifies the medication on his/her own and is unable to take it without assistance.

# Medication in First Aid Kits

## Contact Us

### OHS Contact Centre

Edmonton & Surrounding area

- 780-415-8690

Throughout Alberta

- 1-866-415-8690

Deaf or hearing impaired:

- 780-427-9999 (Edmonton)
- 1-800-232-7215 (Alberta)

### Website

[work.alberta.ca/ohs-contact-us](http://work.alberta.ca/ohs-contact-us)

## Get Copies of OHS Act, Regulation and Code

Alberta Queen's Printer

[www.qp.gov.ab.ca](http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca)

Occupational Health and Safety

[work.alberta.ca/ohs-legislation](http://work.alberta.ca/ohs-legislation)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[First Aid Records \(FA009\)](#)

[Quality Management Plan Requirements for First Aid Training in Alberta Workplaces \(FA010\)](#)

[Workplace First Aiders and Legal Requirements \(FA011\)](#)

[Developing a First Aid Plan \(FA012\)](#)

[Oxygen Equipment and Related Training Requirements at Work Sites \(FA013\)](#)

[Automated External Defibrillators in the Workplace \(FA015\)](#)

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