

Guidance for Designated First Aiders During COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a complete reassessment of how regular business is conducted, including the provision of first aid for injured or ill workers. The following guidance is intended to help address questions or concerns about the duties of a designated first aider during COVID-19.

Volunteering

Being a designated first aider is a voluntary duty. Your continued work as part of the designated first aider program is appreciated, and vital to first response. Nevertheless, there is inherent risk in providing first aid, and more so than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, if you are a current designated first aider who does not wish to continue as part of the program, please advise the [Office of Risk Management](#). You do not need to provide a reason to resign from first aider responsibilities. The Office of Risks Management will make arrangements to retrieve and redeploy your first aid kit(s) and building signage.

Responsibilities

The primary and secondary [responsibilities of designated first aiders](#) as part of the first aid program are unchanged. These include:

- Providing first aid within the scope of your training
- Requesting assistance from Protection Services (if/when required)
- Keeping written records of first aid treatment provided
- Ensuring the first aid kit assigned to you contains the required items
- Inspecting the kit quarterly

If you are working remotely, please advise the Office of Risk Management to ensure that suitable arrangements are made for first aid coverage in the building where you would normally work.

Campus Coverage

Many first aiders will continue to work remotely as part of the phased reopening plan. Every possible effort will be made to ensure that first aid kits remain available for personnel in operational buildings. As part of the phased reopening plan, the Office of Risk Management will work to ensure that there is sufficient first aid coverage in operational buildings.

Training

To adhere to government guidelines regarding COVID-19, the [Workplace Safety and Insurance Board \(WSIB\)](#) has advised that all first aid providers suspend in-person courses temporarily to ensure physical distancing. All certifications that expired after March 1, 2020 have been automatically temporarily extended until June 30, 2021.

Where additional first aiders are required, training workshops will be conducted remotely (e.g., via Microsoft Teams). An [approved first aid training provider](#) will conduct the training. Upon completion,

the training provider will issue the participant an interim certificate for the knowledge acquisition portion of the workshop. Practical skills training will be completed at a future date when physical distancing restrictions have been lifted. In order for a participant to receive full credit for the workshop, the first aid provider must be able to evaluate their skills. The Office of Risk Management will maintain a list of persons requiring practical skills training.

Providing First Aid in the Context of COVID-19

The following guidance is intended to assist in the provision of workplace first aid in the context of COVID-19. Personnel on campus must [fulfill minimum requirements](#) before coming to campus (such as self-assessments), so individuals in the workplace should not be symptomatic. The following guidance has been adapted for university use from the resources linked at the end of this document. **A first aider should always ensure their own health and safety prior to offering first aid.**

General guidelines

- Help the injured person to the extent reasonable, including:
 - Providing first aid
 - Requesting further assistance from Protection Services
 - Providing comfort and reassurance to the injured person
- Maintain a physical distance of 2 metres (6 feet), where possible.
- Minimize contact with materials and equipment.
- Minimize the number of first aiders and other people in direct contact with the injured individual.
- Minimize contact with bodily fluids, saliva and respiratory droplets.
- Discard all personal protective equipment (PPE) following use or contamination.
- Wash hands and all affected surfaces with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds. Where washing facilities are not readily available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol).
- Don PPE in [accordance with recommended practices](#). Please be diligent regarding use of PPE and conserve available supply, where possible to do so. PPE is recommended to include:
 - Gloves
 - Surgical / procedure mask
 - Eye protection (goggles or face shield)
 - Gown

First Aid Assessment

- Prior to attending the scene of a first aid call, assess remotely (what occurred, what level of intervention is required, to what extent there is reason to believe that there is a risk of COVID-19, etc.).
 - If major intervention is required (ambulance, hospital care, etc.) contact Protection Services for assistance in coordinating the response of civic authorities. Relay the information acquired to date.

- If minor intervention is required (bandaging, minor burn treatment, etc.) proceed to the scene and provide assistance. Protection Services may also be contacted for assistance. Relay the information acquired to date.

Arrival on Scene

- Upon arrival on the scene, maintain an initial physical distance of 2 metres and assess the situation, signs of injury and hazards in the area. Confirm with the injured person what occurred and ask about any underlying conditions or additional information. Proceed as follows:
 - Minor injury (minor laceration, bruising, burn, etc.)
 - Suggest that the injured person self-treat while the first aider provides guidance and supplies from a physical distance (2 metres).
 - Moderate injury / unable to self-treat
 - Provide first aid treatment in accordance with training received.
 - Major injury / ambulance required
 - Advise Protection Services.
 - Provide first aid treatment in accordance with training received.
- Continuing providing first aid in accordance with training received until the arrival of relief (Protection Services, paramedics, etc.).

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

- Check for signs of breathing, while maintaining distance (e.g., observe chest cavity).
- Contact Protection Services at ext. 5411 or 613-562-5411.
- [Locate the nearest, accessible AED](#). Apply the pads to the injured person and follow the verbal instructions provided by the AED.
- Lay a cloth, towel, or clothing over the injured person's mouth and nose to prevent any potential spread of the virus through contaminated air or saliva.¹² If breathing resumes ensure the cloth is not interfering with respiration or causing choking.
- Conduct **compression-only CPR; do not give artificial respiration unless circumstances allow for such (bag-valve mask, drowning, etc.)**.
- During compressions, push hard and fast in the centre of the chest with one hand on top of the other. Time compressions to approximately 100-120 beats per minute.
- Do not stop compressions until the ambulance arrives or you observe signs of life. Inform paramedics of care provided.

Incident Hand-Off

- Relay information acquired during first aid intervention to relief personnel.
- Remove PPE.
 - Immediately dispose of single-use items (gloves, disposable masks, etc.). Remove equipment without contaminating your person in [accordance with the recommended practices](#) and wash your hands.

¹ [Red Cross – First Aid Protocols for an Unresponsive Person During COVID-19](#)

² [Lifesaving Society – Information Bulletin – COVID-19 Resuscitation and First Aid Recommendations](#)

- Clean any reusable PPE (e.g., eyewear) using a clean cloth, wiping with soap and warm water from the inside to the outside. Rinse and allow to air-dry. Ensure that surfaces are treated for a minimum contact time.
- Wash hands and all affected surfaces with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds. Where washing facilities are not readily available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol).
- Record treatment and actions on [Appendix 1 of the Designated First Aider guidelines](#).

Protection from Civil Liability

Workplace first aiders continue to be protected from civil liability during the course of their intervention to the extent provided for under the [Good Samaritan Act](#) and [Chase McEachern Act](#).

Reporting COVID-19 Exposures During First Aid

All actual or potential exposures to COVID-19 must be reported using the following process:

- Notify [Health and Wellness](#).
- Follow Health and Wellness instructions, which may include testing at a local assessment centre and/or self-isolation.
- Submit an [Accident, Incident, Occupational Illness or Near Miss](#) report.
- Any worker who may have been exposed to COVID-19 or who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 will not return to work until they have been cleared to do so by the appropriate medical authority.

Resources

- [Heart and Stroke Foundation – Modification to Public Hands-Only CPR during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Red Cross – First aid protocols for an unresponsive person during COVID-19](#)
- [Lifesaving Society – COVID-19 Resuscitation & First Aid Recommendations](#)
- [Workplace Safety and Insurance Board – First Aid Program](#)
- [Public Health Ontario – Infection Prevention and Control for First Responders Providing Direct Care for Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Patients](#)
- [Putting on Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#)
- [Taking off Personal Protection Equipment \(PPE\)](#)