

Does Your Workplace Safety Training Meet New OSHA Best Practice Recommendations?



The United States Department of Labor – Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recently released a new document, “Best Practices Guide: Fundamentals of a Workplace First-Aid Program.” The purpose of the guide is to present a summary of the basic elements of a first aid program at a workplace. Although the best practices guide is not a standard or regulation, it is intended to be helpful to employers in providing a safe and healthful workplace. With the help of the American Red Cross, it’s easy to develop, revise or implement a first aid program for your business that adheres to OSHA’s recommendations.

Listed below are just a few of the guidelines presented by OSHA. You can read the full document online at www.osha.gov.

OSHA Recommendation	American Red Cross Solution
Skills updates are an integral part of a successful first aid program. Studies show that skill retention begins to deteriorate in as little as six months after training in CPR and automated external defibrillator (AED) skills. For this reason, OSHA encourages skills review and practice sessions at least every six months, and recommends that staff have instructor-led retraining annually for life-threatening emergencies. First aid training for non-life-threatening response should occur periodically.	The American Red Cross CPR/AED certification is recognized for one year because we realize how important annual recertification is in the retention of lifesaving skills. Plus, the new Red Cross First Aid/CPR/AED for the Workplace, Schools and the Community Instructor’s Manual CD-ROM includes additional resources such as emergency scenarios to refresh employee training between yearly recertification.
Training programs should be up to date with current first aid techniques and knowledge. Outdated training and reference materials should be replaced or removed.	In March 2006, the Red Cross released a new First Aid/CPR/AED program, which is updated with the latest science for first aid, CPR and emergency cardiovascular care.

(over)



OSHA Recommendation	American Red Cross Solution
First aid training programs should have “hands-on” skills practice through use of manikins and partner practice.	Red Cross courses utilize both partner practice and skills practice on manikins. And our new “practice-while-you-watch” teaching method utilized in the new First Aid/CPR/AED program provides even more hands-on practice and individual guidance from the classroom instructor than before.
First Aid training programs should include instructor observation of acquired skills and written performance assessments.	American Red Cross certification is awarded only after participants pass a written exam and a hands-on skills test.
If an employee is expected to render first aid as part of job duties, the employee is covered by the Bloodborne Pathogen standard.	The American Red Cross Bloodborne Pathogens: Preventing Disease Transmission course meets the training component of OSHA’s Bloodborne Pathogens standard. This two-hour course can easily be added to employee first aid and CPR/AED training, and content for the course is now included in the new First Aid/CPR/AED program Instructor’s Manual and DVDs.
All worksites are potential candidates for AED programs because of the possibility of sudden cardiac arrest.	Your local Red Cross chapter can help facilitate the purchase of an AED for your workplace and train your employees in how to use it.
A workplace first aid program should comply with OSHA requirements related to first aid, and include first aid supplies and first aid equipment such as bandages.	The American Red Cross offers workplace first aid kits tailored to meet OSHA requirements, available for purchase through your local Red Cross chapter.

Additional key points in the Best Practices Guide include:

- Employers should make an effort to obtain estimates of EMS response times for all permanent and temporary locations for all times of day and consider the potential of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) when planning their first aid program.
- First aid supplies should be adequate and in an area readily available.
- The American Red Cross is cited as a resource for AED information and first aid training.

For more information, contact your local American Red Cross chapter, visit www.redcross.org or call (800) 667-2968.

