

First Aid Requirements: What You Need to Know for Compliance

Employers are responsible for first aid in the workplace to ensure injured workers receive prompt and appropriate treatment and, if needed, are transported to medical aid without delay. They are also responsible for ensuring their workplace has the required first aid equipment, facilities, means of transportation and attendants in place to treat injured workers.

In November 2024, WorkSafeBC introduced updated first aid requirements to help protect workers and improve response when injuries happen. These regulations ensure the right level of care is available when it's needed most,

especially in high-risk and remote environments. The updated regulations address worksite accessibility, first aid kits and attendants, drills and hazard ratings. Some forestry companies are still working through what these changes mean and what they need to do. Here's what you need to know about the requirements and how to stay compliant.



First Aid Assessments

Every worksite must have its own first aid assessment, and it must be reviewed at least annually to ensure your first aid services remain adequate. Each worksite must include accurate maximum worker counts, work hazard ratings, details about the location including remoteness or accessibility, and any barriers to care that might be present

Worksites must identify whether they are within or beyond 30 minutes of an ambulance station, which determines whether they are considered remote. Any site that is not easily accessible by BC Ambulance personnel is considered "less accessible".

Since each site is assigned a class (1 through 4) based on remoteness and rescue accessibility of the worksite, these details are critical. They determine your workplace classification which determine your first aid requirements. Most forestry operations fall into Class 4: remote and less accessible, which means their first aid requirements must meet the highest standards.

Also critical to identify on the first aid assessment are any barriers to care that may exist and remedies that will be implemented at the site. This could include including more cooling packs in first aid kits for hot summer worksites where risk of heat related illnesses is increased, or to the need for snowmobile training for all workers in the event that a rescue needs to be made in a snow-covered area not accessible by foot or vehicle. The assessment should also include redundancy to make sure you have enough first aid when the regular first aid attendant is sick or injured.

This first aid assessment must be documented and available at the worksite to workers, supervisors and WorkSafeBC prevention officers.

First Aid Procedures

Your documentation does not stop at your assessment. You are also required to clearly document and make available first aid procedures for the worksite that clearly outline:

- the equipment, supplies, facilities, first aid attendants and services available
- where first aid is and how to call for it
- how the first aid attendants are to respond to a call for first aid and what their authority over the treatment is,
- how transportation is arranged and who is responsible to call,
- prearranged routes in and out of the workplace and to first aid,
- and any details on barriers that may exist for either the worker or the first aid attendant.

Updated First Aid Kits

First aid supply requirements must align with your first aid assessment. Across all kit types, additional supplies are now required to meet the updated standards. [Review your kits](#) and make sure they meet regulatory requirements.

- Personal kits
- Basic (formerly Level 1)
- Intermediate (formerly Level 2)
- Advanced (formerly Level 3)

Depending on the kit type, updates may include:

- increased quantities of gauze and dressings
- wound and hand cleaning towelettes
- gloves and biohazard bags
- cold packs and eye injury supplies
- emergency blankets and splints
- a source of glucose for diabetic emergencies
- an updated contents list in each kit

First Aid Attendants

The updated regulations require having the right number of first aid attendants on site, each holding a valid certificate from a WorkSafeBC-approved training provider.

Since the training requirements for first aid attendants changed with the regulation update, companies cannot assume that their previous first aid preparations will be enough to meet the requirements under the new system. For most forestry worksites, the first aid requirements have **increased!** Special care must be made for those companies and worksites who previously only needed a Level 1 First Aid Attendant with Transportation Endorsement (2 days of training) as many of these same worksites now require an Intermediate First Aid Attendant with Transportation Endorsement (3 days of training).

First Aid Drills

First aid drills are now mandatory. And must not be treated as just a formality. They are a critical part of ensuring your emergency response plan works under real conditions. Drills should match the complexity and risk of your operation.

To make sure your procedures are effective, drills should involve your full first aid response system and reflect realistic conditions, such as hard-to-access locations, delayed emergency response times, actual transportation methods (where applicable) and realistic injury scenarios.

For Class 4 worksites, first aid drills must:

- take place at least once per year, though more frequent drills are required when conditions or the worksite changes (e.g. a crew change, weather conditions, new equipment, etc.).
- reflect real risks and remote conditions, with a variety of scenarios such as trauma, remote evacuation or communication failure
- test the entire response system, including new workers during onboarding
- be documented and used to improve your procedures

These drills are essential. It's not just about having a plan, it's about making sure it will work when it matters most.

Staying Compliant

The updated first aid requirements have been in place for over a year. It is your responsibility to ensure your company is compliant. Make sure you:

- review and complete a first aid assessment for every worksite
- confirm your hazard rating and worker counts are accurate
- verify your site classification based on accessibility
- upgrade first aid kits to meet current requirements
- ensure your first aid attendants have the required training

- communicate all changes and updated procedures to workers
- conduct first aid drills

The [BC Forest Safety Council has developed resources and tools](#) to help guide you through the process and make sure nothing is missed. You can also Visit [WorkSafeBC's website](#) for full regulatory requirements.

If you have further questions or need support, contact BCFSC at safeco@bcforestsafe.org or call 1.877.741.1060.