

First Aid Kits: What You Need to Know

By Alan Achatz, CCM, CHE

“What can go wrong, will.” This old axiom always seems applicable, which is why it is so important to keep an adequately stocked first aid kit ready for hazards individuals may encounter at your club.

What Should be in Your Kit?

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Medical and First Aid standard 29 CFR 1910.151(b) 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."

What are "adequate" first aid supplies? It depends on the hazards and types of injuries that may occur at your facility. OSHA's non-mandatory appendix A to 1910.151 states that a specific example of the minimum contents of a workplace first aid kit is provided in American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Z308.1-1998, Minimum Requirements for Workplace First Aid Kits. (Although the OSHA appendix continues to refer to the 1998 version of Z308.1, a 2009 version is now available.)

The American National Standards Institute coordinates the development and use of voluntary consensus standards in the United States and represents the needs and views of U.S. stakeholders in standardization forums around the globe.

ANSI Z308.1-1998 requires that the minimum acceptable contents of a first aid kit (for a small workplace) include:

- An absorbent compress;
- Adhesive bandages and tape;
- Individual-use antiseptics;
- Burn treatment applications;
- Sterile pads;
- A triangular bandage; and
- Medical exam gloves.

It also contains requirements for indoor and outdoor kits and provides guidelines for:



Additional Resources

www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3317first-aid.pdf

"OSHA, Best Practices Guide: Fundamentals of a Workplace First-Aid Program" shares the various elements to consider when developing a program.

www.osha.gov/SLTC/medicalfirstaid/index.html

OSHA's Safety and Health Topics page on medical and first aid.

- The standard sizes of cases;
- Unit packaging, including color coding;
- Specifications for the most commonly used items; and
- The arrangement of first aid materials for easy identification, removal and replacement.

You also should consider automated external defibrillator (AED) when selecting first aid supplies and equipment.

The ANSI standard provides general guidelines for what should be in your first aid kit. You might have different needs and different quantities for kits in various departments. You might even assemble a specially stocked kit who may assist trained professionals who may be on staff.

Where Do You Start?

Consider the following. What can happen at your club facility? What types of services do you offer? What facilities do you have? What is your geographic location and what weather extremes do you experience? What has happened in the past? What has happened at other clubs/businesses in the area? What insects, flora, fauna, reptiles and/or rodents are in the area? What natural disasters may happen in your area? What chemicals are on site? What tools and equipment are used by the various departments and employees? What might happen in the future?

All these questions comprise what could be called a hazard assessment. You also can request input and guidance from safety, health, medical and rescue professionals. After all this input is amassed, ensure that the necessary supplies are available to treat most (if not all) of these possible scenarios.

What Training Do Your Employees Have?

This question also can involve what safety equipment you have and what might be needed in your first aid kits. Do you have any AEDs? Have you done AED, CPR and first aid training?

Would you consider your employees first responders in case of an emergency?

Are they trained in universal precautions to the exposure of potentially infectious bodily fluids (a portion of the bloodborne pathogen standard)? Have you practiced worst-case scenarios?

Many employees have simple first aid training and can assist with cuts, possibly even perform the Heimlich maneuver to aid a choking victim, get the AED and hopefully be able to perform CPR; yet what about major trauma? What about burns? What about compound fractures?

Are any of your employees (or their spouses) firefighters, paramedics, nurses or in the medical field? If so, you already have a valuable resource. Consider utilizing all of their experiences.

Stocking Your First Aid Kits

It is important to recognize that your first aid kits have to be stocked. Consider delegating the duty to an in-house staff member, or if you like being assured the kit is stocked (and do not mind the additional costs), use an outside firm.

Are all those little packets in the kits required? Aspirin, non-aspirin, cold medications, hangover cures and so on? The answer is no. You do not need any of those items. If you do choose to supply all these ancillary items, they should be in the individual packets and not in the 500-count container.

Potential Additional Requirements

Certain additional OSHA standards have mandatory requirements to have first aid kits on site. For example, OSHA's logging operations standard (29 CFR 1910.266 Appendix A) could be applicable to your facility if the club is cutting wood on the course and then supplying firewood to the clubhouse. ■

About the author

This article was written by Alan Achatz, CCM, CHE, of Club Safety Solutions in conjunction with participants in the OSHA and CMAA Alliance. It does not necessarily reflect the official views of OSHA or the U.S. Department of Labor.

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