



## First aid kits: A good idea — besides OSHA requires them

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First aid is emergency care provided for injury or sudden illness before emergency medical treatment is available. The first-aid provider in the workplace should be someone who is trained in the delivery of initial medical emergency procedures. Every hotel should have someone available at all times who is trained in Standard First Aid and CPR. First Aid and CPR certifications should be kept current by attending retraining sessions. Contact your local Red Cross Unit or check at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) to arrange training. Knowledge of first aid and CPR are great skills to possess and is completely portable to your home, church, organization or next job. Hotels should have someone on each shift that is trained and current; do not forget the manager on duty, night auditor and the relief night auditor. Many hotels also require all security/loss prevention personnel to be fully trained and certified.



In 2010 there were almost 700,000 hotel associates employed in the industry. Over 35,000 associates experienced OSHA recordable injuries that year. This does not include minor injuries not requiring medical attention. Each year millions of people become hotel guests. Unfortunately, a number of these sustain injuries while at the hotel or return to the hotel with an injury which may need minor medical attention. Many of these guests will expect or at least hope the hotel has supplies to assist them.

### OSHA requirements

OSHA is somewhat nebulous about where and how many first aid kits must be provided in the workplace. The OSHA First Aid standard (29 CFR 1910.151) requires trained first-aid providers at all workplaces of any size if there is no “infirmary, clinic, or hospital in near proximity to the workplace which is used for the treatment of all injured employees.” In addition to first-aid requirements of 29 CFR 1910.151, several OSHA standards also require training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) because sudden cardiac arrest from asphyxiation, electrocution, or exertion may occur. CPR may keep the victim alive until EMS arrives to provide the next level of medical care. Please see the corresponding article on Hands-Only CPR for hotels in this issue.

### Where to locate first aid kits?

While OSHA mandates having a first aid kit in the workplace, where to locate them and how many to maintain is pretty much a judgment call. You just have to be sure to get it right if the OSHA inspector shows up. A large hotel with a large Security Department may keep the “main” first aid kit in the Security office. Smaller hotels may have the main first aid kit in Human Resource or Housekeeping. Regardless of where it is located, key employees must have 24-hour access to the main first aid kit as well as any other medical equipment such as an automated external defibrillator (AED) and/or oxygen supplies. Medical equipment that is not accessible around the clock is of no use if needed after hours.

In addition to the “main” first aid kit, for the sake of convenience and to save time, first aid kits may be provided in the Engineering shop (as engineering personnel frequently get nicks, cuts and minor burns), and at the Front Desk (not that front desk personnel have many injuries, but this is where guests will come first for a bandage). Being able to hand a guest

a bandage to cover a minor cut or a small pack of WaterJel to put on a burn they sustain while ironing a shirt or blouse can go a long way toward having a happy guest. If your hotel has a kitchen this is one place that should have a fully stocked first aid kit. Although not required by OSHA, blue bandages in the kitchen first aid kit can help prevent an ugly incident from occurring where the bandage falls in a food item and goes unnoticed until the guest finds it in their meal. Consideration should be given to the array of burn treatment products available. Supplementing the kitchen's first aid kit with a burn kit is a good idea.

### **What should be in your hotel's first aid kit?**

Oral medications are not required by OSHA and many risk consultants will recommend that hotels eliminate them from first aid kits. I have made that recommendation myself. There is certainly some liability when hotel provides anything that is ingested. Management can make an argument that providing over-the-counter medications to an employee will improve their productivity sufficiently to warrant any risk. Should Management decide to provide aspirin, antacid, etc., individually packaged doses should be provided. My past professional experience has shown that a department manager or supervisor should dispense these items, or the quantity consumed rises quickly.

The first aid kit is one of those things that most people do not think that much about until they need it. If it is readily available and well stocked they don't think about it again until next time. Various companies who service first aid kits make it very convenient to have a well stocked first aid kit. Once a month the representative comes in and checks all the first aid kits, puts in new supplies, gets the manager on duty to sign the invoice, and the hotel is "good to go" for the month. This frequently comes at a premium price and is open to abuse. The Director of Loss Prevention at a veteran hotel management company recently told me instructions had been given to the chief engineers at all their hotels to accompany the representative to ensure they are not overstuffing the first aid kits or replacing boxes of supplies that are only missing a few adhesive strips with new boxes.

My friends at Front Lines Sales came up with a full color photo of what is required in a first aid kit (see insert). This is placed inside the cover of the first aid kit. On a monthly interval, Security or Engineering personnel or the Manager on Duty should check the kit and order the needed supplies. This procedure prevents overstocking and eliminates potential questionable practices by some first aid kit sales representatives. The items are less expensive because the cost of the representative's salary and his van are not factored into the overhead.

### **AED's**

Hotels and most other employers are not required by OSHA to maintain an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED). However, many travel groups will stipulate a requirement in their RFP or booking agreement for AED's before booking a block of rooms at a hotel. As a 66 year old, overweight man I would encourage every hotel to learn more about the importance of maintaining an AED and training staff how to use it. It truly is a life saving device and its benefits cannot be replicated without it. And they are very easy to use. Business pressure and the competitive nature of the hospitality industry has eventually led many luxury, deluxe, and mid-scale hotels to purchase AED's and train their staff on their use. Should Management decide to purchase an AED it is imperative that appropriate staff members are trained and certified how to use it. And don't forget to establish an inspection and maintenance program, then document this! ✧

*(Jesse Denton is an independent loss prevention consultant based in Atlanta, GA. He possesses over 43 years of experience, the last 25 years with major hotel and insurance companies in the hospitality industry. Jesse works with Front Line Sales and can assist your hotel in securing first aid kits and AEDs and procuring first aid supplies in an efficient and affordable manner. He is available for consultation and may be reached via e-mail at: [jldentonjr@bellsouth.net](mailto:jldentonjr@bellsouth.net) or by phone at 678-694-8586.)*