

First Aid Provision during COVID-19

While reducing staffing levels, it is likely that businesses have inadvertently furloughed first aiders. What do businesses need to do to ensure they still remain compliant with Health and Safety regulations?

With businesses on reduced staffing levels, it is likely your first aid provision may have been affected. If you have furloughed staff, this may have inadvertently included first aiders. This can cause issues in the workplace; for example, if the first aider was responsible for checking the contents of the first aid box, that role will need to be passed to another staff member until staffing levels return to normal.

The first step is to review and update your first aid needs assessment. This will determine what you have in place now and what further measures need to be taken to ensure compliance. If you have fewer staff working because of furlough it may be that no further action is required, or you may need to consider suspending any high-risk activities you undertake.

There is another option that could be explored, if you do not have adequate first aid cover. Consider whether you can pool resources with a neighbouring business. They may have all their first aiders at work and have the spare capacity to assist you. If so, you will need to reflect this in your first aid needs assessment, highlighting the times and dates when they are available. Further, you will need to note what agreed system for contacting them will be introduced if you require their assistance, any qualifications they hold (FAW, EFAW) and any restrictions that may be imposed. It is important to make sure the first aiders have the necessary skills and experience that you require for your business. If such an arrangement is agreed, you should be open and honest with the types and frequency of accidents you have had in the past, as this will help the host business make an informed decision to ensure they have the capacity for their own company's first aid needs.

You may have first aiders that were due for their refresher course on or after 16th March 2020 to re-validate their certificate and found there were no courses being run because of coronavirus. The HSE has made an announcement that a three-month extension on existing certificates may apply to:

- Offshore Medic (OM)
- Offshore First Aid (OFA)
- First Aid at Work (FAW)
- Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW)

The HSE may ask you to explain what you had done to try and requalify and the reasons you were unable to do so.

Another situation that may have affected you is if you had staff already undergoing first aid training which became disrupted because of the coronavirus leaving unfinished modules to complete. In this situation, the HSE has said training can restart later providing a full recap of the previous training before the interruption is done before moving onto undelivered modules, and the awarding body is satisfied that you can show a full understanding of all aspects of the course content as well as the knowledge required and competencies at the end of the training.

During this national emergency if there are any changes to your staffing levels, remember to review and update your first aid needs assessment. This also applies if your host business is providing first aid cover where they have a change in the number of staff on site, so it is essential to keep in regular contact with them.

More information regarding health and safety considerations during the coronavirus pandemic is available on [rradarstation/](#) [Coronavirus AXA Hub](#).



Written by:

Steve Taylor, Health and Safety Advisor at rradar

Disclaimer:

This article has been provided as an informational resource for rradar clients and business partners. It is intended to provide general information only to employers in the current exceptional circumstances arising as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and is not intended to provide legal, taxation or commercial advice or address legal taxation or commercial concerns or specific risk circumstances of any particular individual or entity which should not be relied upon. No one should act on such information without appropriate professional advice after a thorough examination of the particular situation. Due to the dynamic nature of infectious diseases, circumstances may change and rradar cannot be held liable for the guidance provided. We strongly encourage readers to seek additional medical information from sources such as the World Health Organisation, Public Health England, Public Health Scotland and NHS.

