



# **ACT FIRST AID IN THE WORKPLACE**

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## **CODE OF PRACTICE**

April 1994

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# ACT First Aid in the Workplace Code of Practice

## FOREWORD

### ***ACT Occupational Health and Safety Act 1989***

The ACT *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1989* (the Act) provides for the means of developing, administering, and enforcing occupational health and safety standards in the ACT, with emphasis on prevention.

The ACT Occupational Health and Safety Council has the function of developing occupational health and safety standards and recommending them to the Minister who is responsible for implementing them and ensuring their enforcement via the ACT *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1989*.

The Act places certain general duties of care on employers, employees, self-employed persons, manufacturers, designers, importers and suppliers.

The primary duty (Section 27 of the Act) is imposed on employers to take all reasonably practicable steps to protect the health, safety and welfare at work, to provide and maintain so far as is reasonably practicable for employees, a working environment that is safe and without risks to health.

Under the general duty of care, Section 27 (2) (i) of the Act requires the employer “to provide appropriate medical and first-aid services for the employees”

Employees have a duty to act responsibly and perform their work in accordance with safety standards applied by their employer, the Regulations or relevant Codes of Practice. They are expected to take reasonable care to protect the health and safety of themselves and others (Section 30 of the Act).

This Code of Practice contains the most up to date assessment of first aid requirements in the workplace and it is the view of the Occupational Health and Safety Council that it should replace the first aid provisions of the *Scaffolding and Lifts Act 1957* at the earliest opportunity.

### **Codes of Practice**

The ACT *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1989* provides for Codes of Practice, for giving practical guidance, on specific areas of work, to employers, self employed persons and employees enabling them to achieve the standard of health and safety required of them under the general duties of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1989*. Codes of Practice are approved by the Minister under Section 87 of the Act.

Codes of Practice are designed to be used in conjunction with the ACT *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1989* and associated regulations, but do not have the same legal force.

A Code of Practice may be used as evidence in legal proceedings to show that a person has failed to meet a standard set out in the Act or regulation, unless that person can establish that their alternate method provides equivalent or better standards of safety.

An Inspector appointed under the Act may cite a relevant Code of Practice when issuing an improvement or prohibition notice. Failure to comply with an improvement or prohibition notice is an offence.

### **How Codes of Practice are Developed**

The development of this Code of Practice involved extensive tripartite consultation between government, employer and employee representatives. The resultant draft document was endorsed by the ACT Occupational Health and Safety Council for public comment and released. The comments received were analysed, assessed and considered by the tripartite process and changes made where appropriate.

The ACT Occupational Health and Safety Council recommended to the Minister the final Code of Practice. The Minister then approved the Code of Practice.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Title

This code of practice shall be cited as the ACT First Aid in the Workplace Code of Practice.

### 1.2 Authority

This Code of Practice approved pursuant to Section 87 of the ACT *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1989* (the Act) shall have effect from 22 April 1994.

### 1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Practice is to provide practical guidance for the provision of First Aid in the workplace.

## 2. DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

### In this Code of Practice:

“**Employee**” means a natural person who is employed under a contract of service.

“**Employer**” means a person who employs a natural person under a contract of service.

“**First aid personnel**” shall mean those holding current approved first aid qualifications from, for example, St John Ambulance Australia or the Australian Red Cross Society.

“**First aid service**” shall mean a service which has as its main objectives the provision of emergency and appropriate first aid treatment for persons suffering illness or injury at work.

“**Premises**” includes:

- (a) a structure, building, aircraft, vehicle or vessel;
- (b) a place (whether enclosed or built upon or not); and
- (c) a part of premises (including premises of a kind referred to in paragraph (a) or (b)).

**“Reasonably Practicable”** means reasonably practicable having regard to:

- (a) the severity of the hazard or risk in question;
- (b) the state of knowledge about that hazard or risk and any ways of removing or mitigating that hazard or risk;
- (c) the availability and suitability of ways to remove or mitigate that hazard or risk; and
- (d) the cost of removing or mitigating that hazard or risk.

**“should”** indicates a recommendation.

**“Workplace”** means any premises where employees or self-employed persons work.

### **3. ESTABLISHING WHAT IS APPROPRIATE**

3.1 The facilities and personnel appropriate for the provision of the relevant service should be determined having regard to:

- (a) Size and layout of the workplace;
- (b) location of the workplace;
- (c) number and distribution of employees, including shift work arrangements;
- (d) nature and hazards of the work;
- (e) statistical information on accidents or illnesses and
- (f) distance from the workplace to the nearest available and appropriate medical service or occupational health service.

3.2 Having regard to each of the points outlined in 3.1 decisions to be made should include:

- (a) the contents of first aid kits;
- (b) the number and location of first aid kits;
- (c) suitable means of communication;
- (d) suitable transport for the sick or injured;
- (e) employee training and advice on availability of first aid assistance;
- (f) the number and training of first aid personnel;
- (g) first aid rooms and their contents;
- (h) the languages in which information should be provided.

- 3.3 First aid facilities appropriate to the hazards of the operations conducted should be readily available and maintained. Facilities should be determined following consultation with occupational health, safety and first aid personnel, employees and their Health and Safety Representative/s, and, if desired, representatives of St John Ambulance Australia or the Australian Red Cross Society.
- 3.4 Appropriate white on green safety signs should be provided to identify and locate first aid facilities. Refer to Section 5.14.

## 4. TYPE OF WORKPLACE

- 4.1 **In this code of practice all workplaces are required to have a Basic First Aid Kit as per Section 5.8.**

There are three types of workplaces categorised in this Code of Practice:

**Group A;**

**Group B;** and

**Group C**

- 4.2 Some workplaces present a relatively lesser risk of injury and consequent need for First Aid Services and are classified as **Group A**.

The **Group A** workplaces are workplaces where the principle activities do not present a significant risk of injuries and or diseases through normal workplace practices.

- 4.3 The **Group B** workplaces are all the workplaces which are not Group A nor Group C.

- 4.4 The **Group C** workplaces are mobile workplaces of aircraft, vehicles and vessels.

## 5. FIRST AID KITS

- 5.1 The minimum contents of a first aid kit are listed in Section 5.8. The first aid kit container is detailed in Section 5.9.
- 5.2 Additional modules should be added where specific hazards exist (eg use of hazardous substances, dangerous goods, particular types of machinery or equipment). Refer to Additional modules, Section 5.4(c) and section 11 for a Checklist.
- 5.3 Where a specific hazard exists, such as cyanide or pesticides, arrangements should be made to ensure prompt access to appropriate emergency or medical services with the capacity and facilities to deal with that hazard.

- 5.4 A minimum of one first aid kit for Group A and Group B workplaces should be provided. For every additional 50 employees at the workplace, at any one time, an additional First Aid Kit should be provided. First aid kits should be maintained by the employer and kept in a location to ensure that:
- (a) for employees with a regular workplace, the maximum distance between the employees usual work station and the nearest kit is 100 metres, subject to the requirement for specific hazard in 5.4(c);
  - (b) at least one kit is provided on each alternate level of a multi level workplace, subject to the requirements of 5.4(c);
  - (c) there is immediate access to appropriate facilities in areas of specific hazards, such as:
    - hazardous substances and dangerous goods - (eg, corrosives, cyanide, hydrogen fluoride, pesticides);
    - Machinery or equipment (eg. in construction, manufacturing, warehousing, logging, and mining industries as well as amusement devices).
  - (d) for workplaces which are mobile plant in civil construction Section 5.4(a) or Section 5.5 applies, whichever gives the most effective and/or appropriate access to the first aid kit.
- 5.5 First aid kits for Group C workplaces should be provided, maintained and located in the aircraft/vehicle/vessel by the employer.
- A small personal kit may be appropriate for individuals travelling by foot or non-motorised transport. Consideration should be given to the degree of isolation of the workplace.
- 5.6 First aid kits should be located so as to be clearly accessible to employees and the location signed so as to be clearly visible to all concerned. Refer to Section 5.14.
- 5.7 Basic first aid kits should be in the care of a designated person taking into account the additional requirement for first aid personnel in Section 7.
- 5.7.1 A designated person (would be the trained first aid personnel if they are required) to be responsible for:
- (a) familiarising themselves with the contents of the kit;
  - (b) familiarising themselves with the book accompanying the kit;
  - (c) facilitating the use of the kit when required, and
  - (d) reasonable restocking.
- 5.7.2 Employees should normally contact the designated person. In the absence of the designated person those accessing the kit should advise the designated person at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.8 All workplaces are required to have available a minimum of one Basic First Aid Kit which is applicable to their type of workplace (see Section 4).

The total number of Basic First Aid Kits required in Group A and Group B workplaces is to be determined by the factors outlined in Section 5.4.

<b>Basic First Aid Kits Contents List</b>	<b>Quantity for Group A and Group B workplaces</b>	<b>Quantity for Group C workplaces</b>
Adhesive plastic dressing strips, sterile, packets of 50	1	1
Adhesive dressing tape 2.5cm x 5m	1	1
Bags, plastic (for amputated parts) small 150mm x 100mm	1	1
medium 200mm x 150mm	1	1
large 400mm x 200mm	1	1
Dressing, non adherent, sterile 7.5cm x 7.5 cm	2	2
Eye pads, sterile	3	1
Gauze bandages 100mm	2	1
Gauze bandages 50mm	2	1
Gloves, disposable single	6	4
Rescue Blanket	1	nil
Safety pins, packet	1	1
Scissors, blunt, short nosed, minimum length 12.5cm	1	1
Splinter forceps, stainless steel	1	1
Sterile eyewash solution, 10ml single use ampoule	6	3
Swabs, packet of 10, prepacked, antiseptic	2	1
Kidney dish	1	1
Triangular bandages	6	2
Wound dressing No 14	2	1
Wound dressing No 13	2	1
Antiseptic 250ml - Savlon or equivalent	1	1
Disinfectant 250ml - Betadine, Iodine or equivalent	1	1
Guidance note from The Australian Red Cross Society or St John Ambulance Australia on DRABC (Danger Response Airway; Breathing; Circulation).	1	1

Guidance note from The Australian Red Cross Society or St John Ambulance Australia on RICE management for bruises.	1	1
St John Ambulance Australia book First Aid Vol 1 or The Australian Red Cross Society First Aid Manual	1	Nil

Note: The Minister for Industrial Relations approved an amendment to the ACT First Aid in the Workplace Code of Practice on 21 April 1997 to remove Paracetamol from the table under paragraph 5.8.

5.9 The First Aid Kit container should:

- (a) be constructed of impervious material, be dustproof and of sufficient size to adequately house the contents prescribed, preferably with separate internal compartments;
- (b) be capable of being sealed and be fitted with a carrying handle, it should never be locked;
- (c) be marked on the outside with a sign coloured white on green with the words "FIRST AID" and/or a symbol as illustrated in Section 5.14.
- (d) have attached to the inside of the lid the first aid items listed in Clause 5.8, emergency telephone numbers and the phone number and location of the nearest first aid personnel (including appropriate details for mobile employees);
- (e) be kept clean.

5.10 The first aid kit should be located:

- (a) in a prominent and accessible position. The location should be identified with a suitable sign as illustrated in Section 5.14.
- (b) in an accessible position and ready for use when required in a mobile workplace.

5.11 Clearly legible notices advising the name/s of the person/s responsible for rendering first aid, including their work location and work phone numbers, should be displayed in prominent positions.

5.12 The First Aid kit contents should be replenished as soon as practicable after use and regular checks made that the contents are as listed and have not deteriorated.

5.13 Additional Modules that may be required to be added to the basic First Aid Kit are:

5.13.1 First Aid - Eye Injuries

The First Aid Kit should contain an additional quantity of 6 x 10ml sterile eye wash ampoules; 4 sterile Eye Pads; 1 roll of adhesive tape 1.25cm; and

associated guidance note or pamphlet from The Australian Red Cross Society or St John Ambulance Australia.

#### 5.13.2 First Aid - Burns

The First Aid Kit should contain an additional quantity of 4 assorted size dressings; 1 sterile sheet; and associated guidance note or pamphlet from The Australian Red Cross Society or St John Ambulance Australia.

#### 5.13.3 First Aid - Remote Areas

The First Aid Kit should contain a firm roller bandage; additional quantity of 6 x 10ml sterile eye wash ampoules; 4 sterile Eye Pads; 1 roll of adhesive tape 1.25cm; spray or wipe aluminium sulphate 20% (eg Stingose); 15+ sun screen protection; and associated guidance note or pamphlet from The Australian Red Cross Society or St John Ambulance Australia.

#### 5.13.4 First Aid - Injuries as a result of exposure to hazardous substances.

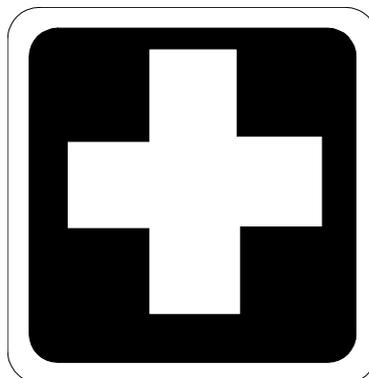
Copies of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) of the hazardous substances at the workplace should be located near the First Aid Kit and the first aid procedures on the MSDS should be followed. This includes having the required items, appropriate to a first aid kit, in the First Aid Kit, as recommended by the MSDS.

#### 5.14 In workplaces where there are specific hazards additional equipment may be required, eg emergency showers, free standing eye wash units.

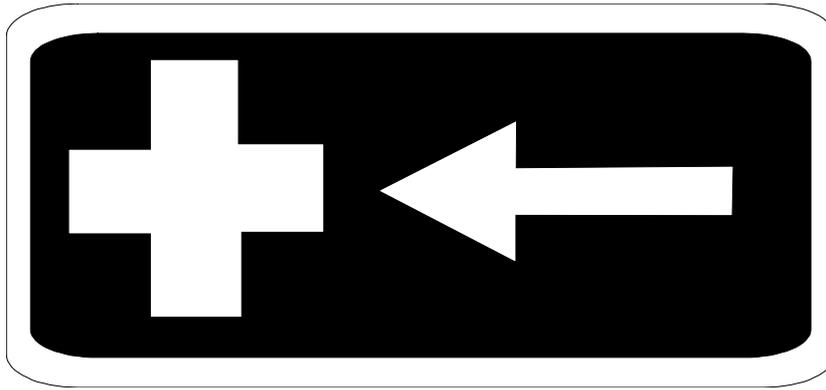
In the case of hazardous substances and dangerous goods the additional needs can be determined from the applicable Material Safety Data Sheets.

First Aid personnel should be appropriately trained in the use of the first aid required items and additional needs, due to the possibility of exposure of employees to the hazardous substances.

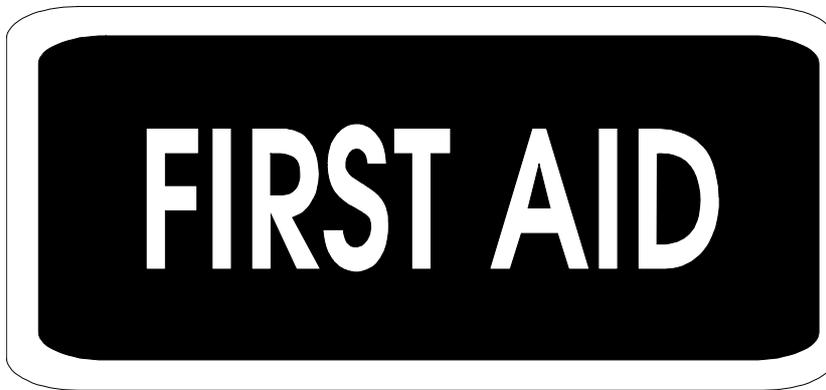
#### 5.15 Examples of suitable first aid signs:



**Symbolic First Aid Sign** - white cross on green background.



**Symbolic First Aid Sign to indicate direction to First Aid** - white cross and arrow on green background to advise employees of the location of the nearest first aid kit.



### **English text First Aid Sign**

**Note:** Signs may be constructed to suit individual requirements. All symbolic signs should comply with Australian Standard AS 1319 - Safety Signs for the Occupational Environment.

## **6. EMPLOYEE AWARENESS**

6.1 All employees should be provided with practical instruction in:

- (a) the nature of first aid facilities in the workplace;
- (b) the location of first aid kits;
- (c) the names and work locations including work phone numbers, of person/s responsible for rendering first aid; and
- (d) the procedures to be followed when first aid is required.

6.2 This instruction should occur when:

- (a) an employee first becomes employed;
- (b) there is a significant change in the personnel, workplace, nature or type of duties performed.

6.3 All employees should be advised and kept aware of first aid requirements in regard to specific hazards in the workplace.

## **7. FIRST AID SERVICES**

7.1 First aid service is a service which has as its main objectives the provision of emergency and appropriate first aid treatment for persons suffering illness or injury at work.

7.2 First aid personnel should be responsible for rendering first aid.

7.3 Employers should ensure that:

- (a) in any workplace first aid personnel are immediately available and/or on call at all times when employees are at work, subject to the requirements of 7.3(b) to 7.3(e) inclusive.
- (b) in any workplace where a specific hazard exists, (eg hazardous substances, dangerous goods, machinery or equipment) first aid personnel are made aware of that hazard and its possible effects, and are trained appropriately;
- (c) for an employee or group of employees where timely access to appropriate medical service is restricted due to casual or shift work, distance or location, at least one first aid person is provided for each group or subgroup, depending on the specific hazard . Refer to Section 8 for recommendations.
- (d) in Group A workplaces (see Section 4.2 for Type of Workplace) at least one first aid person is provided where there are 20 or more employees present at a workplace at any one time. Where there are more than 50 employees refer to Section 8 for additional first aid personnel.
- (e) in Group B workplaces (see Section 4.3 for Type of Workplace) where there are no specific hazards, at least one first aid person is provided where there are 20 or more employees present at a workplace at any one time. Where there are more than 50 employees refer to Section 8 for additional first aid personnel.

7.4 In small workplaces and workplaces where there is a specific hazard a first aid service may be needed.

7.5 Recommended levels of First Aid training as provided, for example, by St John Ambulance Australia or the Australian Red Cross Society are:

- (a) Senior First Aid Certificate - for persons designated as responsible for rendering first aid.
- (b) Occupational First Aid Certificate - for persons responsible for a first aid room.

7.6 The functions of the first aid personnel should be according to their training levels as in Section 7.5.

## 8. FIRST AID PERSONNEL

8.1 With reference to Section 7.3, the minimum numbers and ratios of additional first aid personnel to employees should be:

No. of employees present at a workplace at any one time	20-50	51-100	101-150	151-200	more than 200 employees
<b>Group A workplaces</b>	1	1	2	2	1 additional first aid person on basis of ratio 1:100
<b>Group B workplaces</b>	1	2	3	4	1 additional first aid person on basis of ratio 1:50.

8.2 These numbers of first aid personnel may need to be increased, depending on:

- (a) the size and layout of the workplace;
- (b) the location of the workplace;
- (c) the number and distribution of employees including casual and shift work arrangements;
- (d) the nature and specific hazards of the work;
- (e) known occurrences of accidents or illnesses;
- (f) the distance from the workplace to the nearest available and appropriate medical services.

## 9. FIRST AID ROOMS

9.1 In **Group A** workplaces (refer to Section 4.2) where the employer has more than 200 employees at a workplace at any one time, at least one first aid room should be provided.

9.2 In **Group B** workplaces (refer to Section 4.3) where more than 100 employees are at a workplace at any one time, at least one first aid room should be provided.

9.3 Where there is a specific hazard in accordance with Section 5.4(c) and 5.13 a first aid room may be needed.

9.4 Each first aid room and its contents should be the responsibility of a first aid person who holds a current Occupational First Aid Certificate (refer to Section 7.5).

9.5 The first aid room requirements

9.5.1 It is desirable that a first aid room should:

- be suitably located and have convenient access for transportation of those ill/injured;
- be well lit and ventilated
- be readily accessible to toilet accommodation;
- have a minimum floor area of 14 square metres; and
- have an entrance clearly marked "FIRST AID".

9.5.2 The following items should be provided:

- a First Aid Kit (refer Section 5.8);
- sink and wash basin with hot and cold water supply;
- soap, nail brush and disposable paper towels;
- work bench and/or dressing trolley;
- lockable cupboard for storage of medicines;
- cupboard for storage of dressings, utensils and linen;
- soiled dressings container with disposable lining;
- electric power points;
- couch with blankets, pillows and sheets and pillow cases;
- one armchair, two upright chairs and table or desk;
- telephone and/or emergency call system;
- portable stretcher;
- record keeping facilities

## 10. SUMMARY OF MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

The following chart is a quick reference only to use as a guide to determine the minimum requirements for the workplace.

<b>Type of Workplace</b> (Refer to Section 4)	<b>Basic First Aid Kit required?</b> (Refer to Section 5)	<b>First Aid Personnel required?</b> (Refer to Sections 3 and 8)	<b>First Aid Room required?</b> (Refer to Sections 3 and 9)
Group A	Yes. Additional kit required for every additional 50 employees	Yes if 20 or more employees.	Yes if greater than 200 employees.
Group B	Yes. Additional kit required for every additional 50 employees	Yes if 20 or more employees	Yes if greater than 100 employees.
Group C	Yes	See Sections 7.3 (b), 7.3(c) and 8.2	No.
		<b>Minimum training for First Aid Personnel who are not responsible for a First Aid Room is Senior First Aid Certificate</b>	<b>Minimum training for First Aid Personnel who are responsible for a First Aid Room is Occupational First Aid Certificate</b>

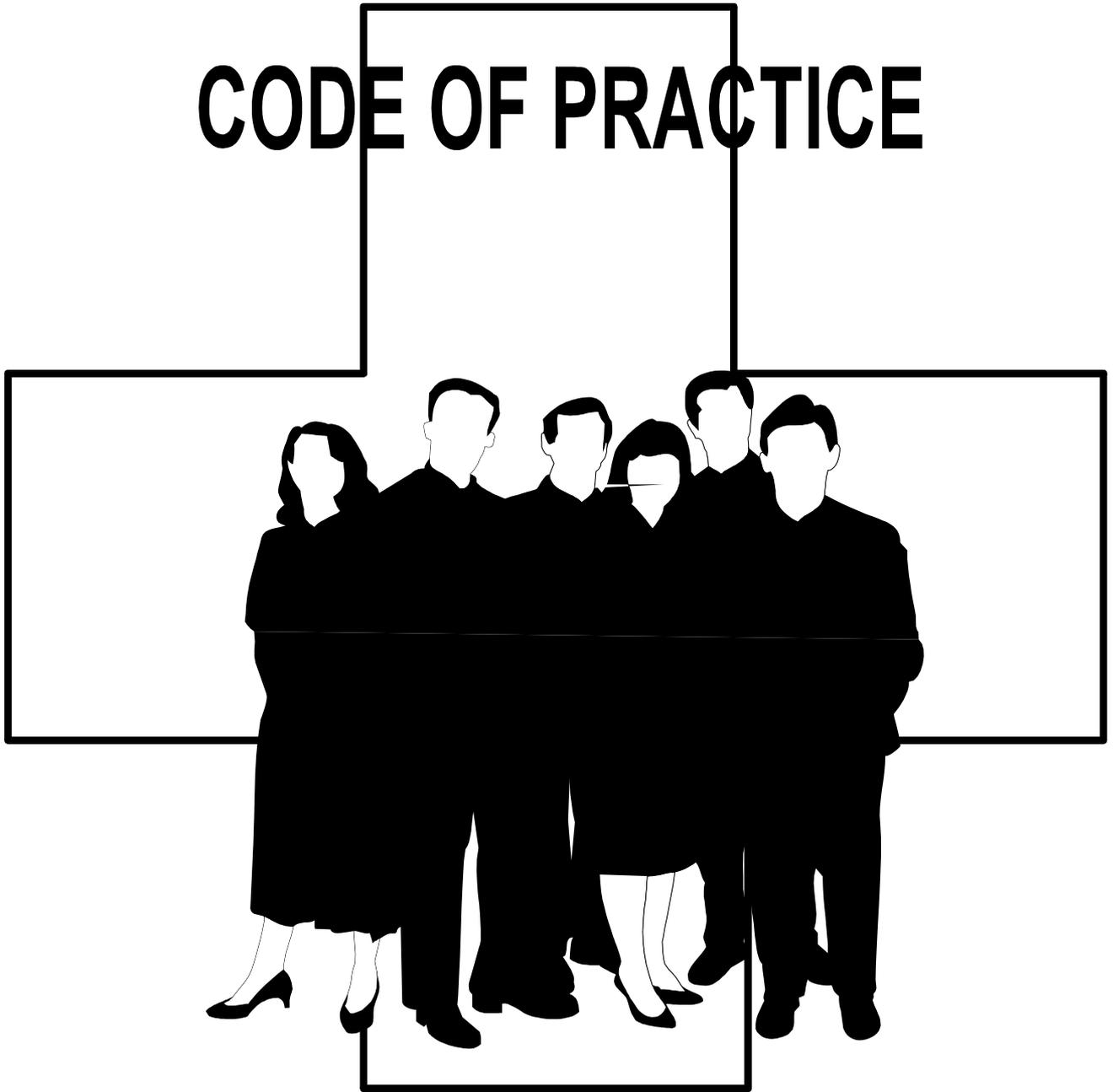
## 11. CHECKLIST FOR ASSESSING THE REQUIREMENTS FOR FIRST AID SERVICES IN THE WORKPLACE

1. How many persons are employed in the workplace?  
**Sections 4.1, 5.4**
2. Is the workplace isolated?  
**Sections 5.4, 5.5 and additional module - First Aid Remote areas.**
3. What type of workplace is it?  
**Sections 4; 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5.**

4. What specific hazards are in the workplace?  
**Sections 5.2, 5.3, 5.4(c), 5.13 and section 7.**
5. Do you have Material Safety Data Sheets for the particular hazardous substances or dangerous goods in your workplace?  
**Section 5.13.4.**
6. Do you have the first aid facilities listed on the Material Safety Data Sheets?  
**Sections 5.12.4 and 5.13.4.**
7. What is the distance from the workplace to the nearest available and appropriate medical service?  
**Sections 3.1 and 3.3.**
8. What is the incidence of accidents or illness in the workplace?  
**Section 3.1**
9. How many first aid kits are needed?  
**Sections 4.1 and 5.**
10. Are extra modules needed?  
**Sections 5.2, 5.4(c) and 5.13**
11. How many first aid personnel are needed?  
**Sections 7 and 8.**
12. Is a first aid room required?  
**Section 9.**
13. Who is responsible for the first aid room?  
**Section 9.4**
14. Has contact been made with the:
  - (a) ambulance service
  - (b) nearest available and appropriate medical service.**Section 3.1**

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**April 1994**