FIRST AID

Health & Safety Procedure Title:	**FIRST AID**		
Procedure Number:		Rev. Level	004
Written by:	Summerville Healthcare	Date:	May 2022
Edited by :	Hilda Joyce		
Approved by:	Mary Thomakutty	Commence	May 2022
Next Review Date:	May 2022	Review by:	Mary Thomakutty

Date	Rev Level	Revision Description	Reviewed by
2014		Original	
2017	1	No changes	
2020	2	COVID - 19	
2020	3	REVIEWED	
2021	4	REVIEWED	Mary Thomakutty

INTRODUCTION

All nursing homes should have a First Aid Policy and Procedure the extent of it depends on the size of the home, the number of residents and employees, the and diversity of the work being carried out.

First aid is the initial treatment given after an injury has been received. It may save lives; and if properly administered almost certainly assists and improves recovery. There are right and wrong procedures in first aid treatment and it is important that the person administrating the treatment is properly trained.

There are clear statutory responsibilities on providers concerning First Aid.

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FIRST AID RE-CERTIFICATION DURING PANDEMIC

PHECC is responsible for the provision of First Aid Certification and has confirmed that that if a Responders certification has lapsed and they are unable to complete recertification, it is acceptable for the Registered Institutions to continue to extend this period until such time that the situation is rescinded.

This departure from normal standards shall be limited to the duration of the COVID-19 crisis.
Please see following link to PHECC website where further information regarding extensions to current licences and certification is outlined.

Additional information for PHECC Responders, Registered Practitioners, Recognised Institutions, Approved Training Instructions and Licensed CPG Providers regarding PHECC Covid-19 advisory.

The First Aid Regulations require employers, based on a risk assessment, to have sufficient first aid equipment and trained first aiders in the workplace. The regulations do not specify the training standard, duration of training and retraining and recertification periods but the Authority will continue to recognise first aid responders existing certification during the COVID 19 pandemic. Those first aiders can continue to administer first aid in the workplace.

LAW/ REGULATIONS/GUIDELINES

The person-in-charge, in accordance with relevant legislation, promotes healthy and safe working practices through the provision of information, training, supervision and monitoring of staff under the following broad headings: First Aid
(National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland Health Information and Quality Authority 26.3)

Chapter 2 of Part 7 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations (S.I. No. 299 of 2007)

Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application)

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Regulations, Chapter 2 of Part 7: First Aid"
The Further and Education Training Awards Council (FETAC) Occupational First Aid Standards.

"first-aid" means – (a) in a case where a person requires treatment from a registered medical practitioner or a registered general nurse, treatment for the purpose of preserving life or minimising the consequences of injury or illness until the services of a practitioner or nurse are obtained, or First-Aid Regulations 2007

(b) in a case of a minor injury which would otherwise receive no treatment or which does not need treatment by a registered medical practitioner or registered general nurse, treatment of that minor injury;

"occupational first-aider" means a person trained and qualified in occupational first-aid. First-aid means either:

(a) Treatment in a life-threatening situation (e.g. heart stoppage or severe bleeding) pending medical help, or

(b) Treatment for minor injury (e.g. cuts or bruises). In relation to preserving life, the "chain of survival" concept is recognised.

This is based on four vital links to save a life:

(i) Early access
(ii) Early cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
(iii) Early defibrillation
(iv) Early advanced care.
(v) First-aid does not include the administration of drugs or medication.

FIRST AID

POLICY

At our Home there will be at least one employee on duty on a 24-hour basis who is qualified to administer first aid.

PURPOSE

To set out the mechanisms applicable to managing the first aid programme at the home.

SCOPE

All matters pertaining to first aid in the home.

RESPONSIBILITY

The provider has a duty to provide first-aid materials/equipment at all places of work where working conditions require it. Depending on the size and/or specific hazards of the workplace, trained occupational first aiders **must** also be provided.

The Nurse on Duty is the person likely to call an ambulance if necessary.

Where there are occupational first aiders, first aid boxes and kits should be under their control. Otherwise they should be under the control of a responsible person named in the Safety Statement.

The PiC will ensure compliance with this Policy & Procedure and with the HIQA Standards.

FIRST AID

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of the Regulations and guidelines "first aid" means: -
(a) in a case where a person requires treatment from a registered medical practitioner or a registered general nurse, treatment for the purpose of preserving life or minimising the consequences of injury or illness until the services of a practitioner or nurse are obtained, or
(b) in a case of a minor injury which would otherwise receive no treatment or which does not need treatment by a registered medical practitioner or registered general nurse, treatment of that minor injury.
(c) An "occupational first aider" is defined in the Regulations as a person trained and qualified in occupational first aid. Such training can only be provided by organisations or individuals on the Register of Occupational First Aid Training Providers.

PROCEDURE

Staff will be told of the first Aid arrangements in the home, including the names of the trained First Aider and the location of First Aid boxes. This information will be provided at induction.

Occupational first aiders are required to be trained and certified as competent at least once every 2 years by a registered occupational first aid training provider. Records of this training must be maintained.

The first aider in a nursing home will have a very large constituency with responsibility for residents, staff and visitors and this would suggest that a second person is available during day time. While there are no hard and fast rules the HSE (UK) suggest that there be one first aider for every 50 people.

The Nurse on Duty, if not the appointed first aider needs to be informed and will likely be involved in examining the recipient of the first aid, particularly if it is a resident. All applications of first aid in the home will be recorded in the incident / accident book, be it residents, staff or visitors.

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FIRST AID BOXES

A First Aid Box(s) should be provided and should contain only items which the first aider has been trained to use. It should not contain medication of any sort and it should be kept adequately stocked. Gloves and aprons should be provided for the use of the first aider.

The First Aid Box must be readily accessible and easily recognizable by a white cross on a green background.

The box will include at a minimum the following basic items:

- Individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings
- Coloured plasters should be provided in the Kitchen Box
- Sterile eye pads with attachments
- Individually wrapped triangular bandages
- Safety pins
- Medium sized, individually wrapped, sterile, unmedicated wound dressings 10cm x 8cm
- Large, individually wrapped, sterile, unmedicated wound dressings 28cm x 17.5cm

When mains water is not readily available 900ml of sterile water.

When deciding on the contents of the First Aid Box take into consideration the hazards likely to present a minor injury to a resident, employee or visitor.

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MANAGING THE FIRST AID BOX

Where there are occupational first aiders, first aid boxes and kits should be under their control. Otherwise they should be under the control of a responsible person named in the Safety Statement.

The contents of the boxes and kits should be replenished as soon as possible after use in order to ensure that there is always an adequate supply of all materials. Items should not be used after the expiry date shown. It is therefore essential that first aid materials/equipment be checked frequently, to make sure that there are sufficient quantities and that all items are usable.

COVID – 19

COVID-19 is primarily spread by person to person contact, transmission through close proximity to infected individuals and surface transmission. Therefore the infection control measures covered in your First Aid Responder training are now more important than ever.

As First Aid Responders you need to use universal precautions i.e. to behave as if everyone including yourself might be infected. It is also worthwhile knowing the common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- A fever (high temperature – 38 degrees Celsius or above);
- A cough – this can be any kind of cough, not just dry;
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.

COVID-19 symptoms can be similar to a cold or flu and may take up to 14 days to present.

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PRACTICAL STEPS TO MINIMISE THE RISK IN PROVIDING FIRST AID:

- Maintain the necessary physical distance as far as possible – can the casualty treat themselves e.g. direct them how to stop their nose bleed, treat minor injury.
- Put on your gloves, visor, apron and surgical mask if time is not critical and you are going to be close to the casualty.
- One First Aid Responder only treats the casualty unless a major emergency.
- Avoid touching your face and clean hands frequently with soap and water or if not available an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Afterwards, ensure you clean your hands using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer

RESOURCES AND UPDATES:

• PHECC COVID-19 Guidance

• HPSC CPR Lay Rescuers Guidance

• Health & Safety Office Updates

Bibliography

Guidelines on First Aid at Places of Work 2008 HSA 2008
Health and Safety in Care Homes, Sarah Tullett Age Concern, 1996
Health, Safety & Welfare Law in Ireland, Joseph Kinsella, 2012
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National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland Health Information and Quality Authority
The applicable Legislation and Regulations pertaining to Health, Welfare and Safety at Work
Health and Safety in Care Homes, HSE (UK) 2001.