

First Aid Training in New Zealand

INFORMATION SHEET FOR EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

First aid is an important vocational subject. Over 56,000 New Zealanders had first aid training in 2010. Employers and employees spent over \$12 million* on first aid training in 2010. Both the Department of Labour and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) are interested in ensuring that first aid training is of a high quality and meets the needs of New Zealanders.

Between 2009 and 2010 the Department of Labour and NZQA brought in new requirements and published associated guidance for first aid training. These can be found through the links in the appendix of this document. NZQA continues to receive a significant number of enquiries from the public regarding first aid training. These enquiries indicate that there is some confusion among employers and employees regarding their first aid training responsibilities. This confusion has been compounded by the variety of terms and messages used in the marketing material of Education Organisations delivering first aid training.

This information sheet aims to answer common questions being asked around first aid training in New Zealand. Details of current and expiring NZQA first aid unit standards can be found below.

*This figure has been calculated based on a minimum average course cost, one days course attendance at the minimum wage, and the 2010 first aid credits reported to NZQA.

Relevant NZQA First Aid Unit Standards

ID	TITLE	LEVEL	CREDIT	STATUS
6400	Manage first aid in emergency situations	3	2	Expiring Dec 2013
6401	Provide first aid	2	1	Expiring Dec 2013
6402	Provide resuscitation level 2	1	1	Expiring Dec 2013
26551	Provide first aid for life threatening conditions	2	1	Current
26552	Demonstrate knowledge of common first aid conditions and how to respond to them	2	1	Current

N.B. These NZQA first aid unit standards cover the first aid foundation skills for New Zealanders. There are a number of additional first aid standards covering specialist skills required by paramedics, emergency care professionals and first aid trainers. These unit standards are managed by ElectroTechnology Industry Training Organisation, Agriculture Industry Training Organisation, InfraTrain New Zealand, Fire and Rescue Services Industry Training Organisation and Competenz. Agriculture Industry Training Organisation also manage unit standards that relate to first aid for animals.

1. What types of first aid training are available in New Zealand?

First aid is a life skill needed both at work and in the community. The type of training you undertake will depend on a variety of factors which might include: your personal interests and community activities; the risk-level of the environment in which you work or play; the requirements of your particular job or profession; or your need for a particular qualification.

Education Organisations offer a range of first aid courses that cater for a range of needs from short community courses with no qualification outcome, to courses with unit standard-based outcomes that meet specific workplace requirements.

2. What are the requirements for workplace first aid training in New Zealand?

Some workplaces have greater risks of injury and illness because of the type of work they do. These risks are important in deciding first aid requirements, because different first aid may be needed for different work activities. Circumstances that can affect your first aid needs include hazards common in your industry or workplace, dangerous chemicals or machinery used, dangerous activities like working at heights, the number of employees, and how far away you are from medical help.

Think about how to ensure first aid cover is provided on all shifts, and when some of your first aiders are on planned or unplanned absences. For guidance on how many, if any, trained first aiders your workplace needs, please refer to the Department of Labour's *First Aid for Workplaces – A Good Practice Guide*.



The Department of Labour and NZQA recommend that all first aid training is delivered by people working for an organisation that is registered with NZQA. All unit standards-based first aid training and assessment must be carried out by people working for an organisation that holds the appropriate consent to assess NZQA first aid standards.

Your particular employer, trade or profession may have specific first aid training requirements that you need to meet. Please refer to these when determining which first aid course you attend or send your staff to.

3. What is a first aid certificate?

A first aid certificate is issued by an Education Organisation registered with NZQA. A first aid certificate is evidence that the holder has completed a first aid training course that represents the minimum (core) skills and knowledge a workplace first aider should gain. These minimum skills must be demonstrated through achievement of either unit standards 6400, 6401 and 6402, or their replacement unit standards, 26551 and 26552.

A first aid certificate must be renewed every two years to remain current. A first aid certificate is renewed by completing a refresher course of training. Where a certificate has lapsed for more than two years and three months from the original date of issue, it will be necessary for the holder to complete a full first aid course.

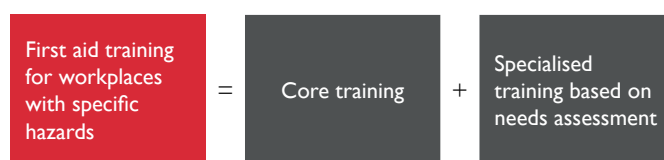
4. How do I know if an organisation advertising first aid training services is legitimate?

First aid training towards a workplace first aid certificate must be done through an Education Organisation that is registered as a training provider with NZQA and has consent to assess first aid unit standards. A list of registered Education Organisations who can assess first aid standards is available at www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/index.do?frameworkId=1415815793.

5. What first aid courses currently being offered meet the minimum requirements for workplaces?

Courses based on either unit standards 6400, 6401 and 6402, or their replacement unit standards, 26551 and 26552 represent the core skills and knowledge a workplace first aider should gain. The 6400 series of standards will expire in December 2013 and will no longer be available for Education Organisations to offer, though people holding these unit standards will remain trained first aiders and can attend refresher courses based on unit standards 26551 and 26552.

Where there are specific hazards in a workplace that are not adequately addressed through the minimum skills covered by 26551 and 26552, then a tailored course of training may be required. Employers should conduct a Workplace First Aid Needs Assessment to determine what skills and knowledge their employees need training in, **over and above** those covered in 26551 and 26552. The employer should then find an Education Organisation who is able to offer a tailored course that covers these additional skills.



6. What is a refresher course?

A refresher course is offered by an Education Organisation registered with NZQA and is completed to ensure the holder of a first aid certificate has current first aid skills and knowledge. On successful completion of a refresher course a new first aid certificate is issued which is valid for a further two years. Refresher training can be completed at a different Education Organisation than the Education Organisation through which the original course of training was completed.

If you have attended a first aid refresher course advertised as being based on NZQA first aid unit standards, and you have been told by your assessor that you have successfully met the assessment requirements of the unit standards, then the first aid training provider must report results to NZQA and should issue you with a result notice.

7. My employer requires me to provide evidence of the first aid standards I have gained. However this has not been recorded by the provider on the first aid certificate I have gained. What should I do?

If you have attended a first aid course advertised as being based on NZQA first aid unit standards, and you have been told by your assessor that you have successfully met the assessment requirements of the unit standards, then the first aid training provider must report results to NZQA and should have issued you with a result notice. Results can be recorded directly on your certificate or in an accompanying result notice. It is the responsibility of the Education Organisation to ensure learners are hooked on to the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) and credits are reported. Results can also be requested directly from NZQA.

8. I currently hold unit standards 6400, 6401 and 6402. After December 2013 will the expiry of the 6400 series impact on my ability to remain current in first aid by attending refresher courses?

The expiry of the 6400 series will not impact on your ability to keep attending refresher courses. To be accepted onto a refresher course you must hold either the 6400 series of standards or 26551 and 26552. After December 2013 many Education Organisations will be offering refresher courses based on 26551 and 26552. Holding the 6400 series will still enable you to attend these refresher courses.

9. I have noted that some Education Organisations are advertising first aid courses based on a combination of old and new NZQA first aid standards. I thought the new standards replaced the old ones?

In December 2010 unit standards 26551 and 26552 replaced unit standards 6400, 6401, and 6402. Because the review of first aid standards impacted on a large number of industry qualifications, a transition period was put in place to gradually phase out the 6400 series of unit standards. This transition period ends in December 2013. During this transition period Education Organisations are encouraged to move to offering 26551 and 26552 based training, however unit standards 6400, 6401 and 6402 may still be offered during this period.

At present Education Organisations are permitted to offer courses based on any mix of first aid standards they feel meets a market need. However, employers and employees should be aware that a course based on 26551 and 26552 alone represents the core skills and knowledge a workplace first aider should gain. In some cases learners who are also attending first aid courses to gain credits for an industry qualification might be disadvantaged by attending a course based on a mixture of 6400 series standards and 26551 and 26552. Please refer to question 11 for details.

10. Why were the 6400 series replaced with 26551 and 26552?

In December 2010 the 6400 series of standards were replaced with 26551 and 26552. This was done: to align NZQA first aid unit standards with the first aid framework developed by a panel of clinicians and first aiders in 2005; and to clarify and simplify the assessment requirements for NZQA first aid standards. The benefits of doing a course based on the new unit standards is that the assessment requirements for your course will be the same as those for all other first aiders and your course will be based on current first aid best practice. Remember, the 6400 series of unit standards will have expired in December 2013.

11. I am currently completing a qualification that contains one or more of the 6400 series as a compulsory standard. Will the expiry of these standards mean that I cannot complete my qualification?

Before registering the new first aid standards 26551 and 26552, NZQA worked with Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) to develop a transition arrangement for the 250+ industry qualifications that were impacted by the review of first aid standards. This arrangement has created a series of exemptions that will apply when a learner wants first aid unit standards to count towards an industry qualification. The first aid exemptions are as follows:

QUALIFICATION REQUIRES	EXEMPTION APPLIED
6400	26551 & 26552
6401	26552
6402	26551
6400, 6401 & 6402	26551 & 26552
6401 & 6402	26551 & 26552
Domain Core Health	26551 & 26552

For example, if your industry qualification requires you to gain unit standard 6400, you can complete unit standards 26551 and 26552 instead and still gain your qualification.

Any specific queries regarding your own situation can be directed via e-mail to tertiaryrecords@nzqa.govt.nz. You will need to supply your name, National Student Number (NSN) and the qualification and version that you are seeking to complete.

12. Training providers are offering courses of varying duration. What is the minimum length of course I need to attend?

For courses based on unit standards 6400, 6401 and 6402 there must be a minimum of twelve (12) hours training and assessment. For courses based on unit standards 6401 and 6402 or 26551 and 26552 there must be a minimum of eight (8) hours training and assessment. For the practical components of these courses (e.g. CPR skills), the training and assessment must be done face-to-face between learner and assessor.

The theory or knowledge components of these courses can be completed using distance learning methods if desired. If distance learning methods are used then those components should be sufficiently resourced and instructionally designed to ensure valid learning and assessment outcomes.

Minimum hours for training and assessment do not apply where assessment is being conducted as part of a formal Recognition of Current Competency programme.

13. I have been shopping around for a suitable first aid course. I am slightly confused at the variety of terms used to brand the first aid courses different Education Organisations offer particularly their use of the term 'workplace course'.

Education Organisations are free to market their courses in any manner they see fit as long as they are not making misleading claims in their marketing material. You should base your choice of course on the individual needs of your workplace. Please refer to question 2 for the minimum training requirements for your workplace. A Workplace First Aid Needs Assessment should be based on guidance provided in the Department of Labour's *First Aid for Workplaces – A Good Practice Guide*. This is available from the link at the end of this document.

14. Is it acceptable to gain a first aid certificate through e-learning type delivery methods?

New technologies have opened up exciting new course delivery methods for learners and educators particularly for the 'knowledge' or theory components of courses. These new methods have made learning more accessible for rural New Zealanders and those who do shift work. New course delivery methods like online learning are, when professionally developed, suitable for the theory components of first aid courses. However the practical components of first aid courses like Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) must be delivered and assessed in traditional 'face-to-face' manner.

15. I recently tried to attend a refresher course at a different Education Organisation than the one I did my initial training with. The new Education Organisation told me that they did not recognise certificates that came from the initial Education Organisation and that I would either have to do initial training all over again with them or get refresher training through another Education Organisation. The initial training I did was with an NZQA registered Education Organisation so I am confused why another Education Organisation can refuse to recognise my first aid certificate?

First aid unit standards gained at any NZQA registered Education Organisation that has consent to assess NZQA first aid unit standards must be accepted in good faith by other Education Organisations as meeting the requirements to do refresher training. Achievement of these unit standards must be recorded on a learner's Record of Achievement. If you have achieved the first aid unit standards required for entry into refresher training and the new provider does not accept your entry, please lay a complaint with NZQA against the new provider. Competition between individual Education Organisations should not impact on learner access to refresher training.

16. What do I do if I have concerns about a first aid training provider?

Any quality assurance concerns employers, employees or other Education Organisations have regarding the training and assessment practices of an individual Education Organisation should be reported to NZQA for their attention. Where these concerns are valid, NZQA will take action against the Education Organisation. In some circumstances this action can lead to an Education Organisation losing their registration status. Complaints can be made by:

phone: 04 463 3000 or 0800 697 296
email: complaints@nzqa.govt.nz
post: NZQA Complaints and Feedback
PO Box 160
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

17. The Department of Labour's Guidance Notes on Providing First Aid Equipment, Facilities and Training contained a lot of information relating to first aid training. What is the status of this document?

The *Guidance Notes on Providing First Aid Equipment, Facilities and Training* were published in 2001 and replaced in September 2009 with the current *First Aid for Workplaces – A Good Practice Guide*. The *Guidance Notes* were replaced in order to reflect changes in legislation, align to the review of NZQA first aid standards, and reflect current good practice operating in a range of diverse workplaces across New Zealand. The current *First Aid for Workplaces – A Good Practice Guide* should be read in conjunction with NZQA's *First Aid as a Life Skill: Training Requirements for Quality Provision of Unit Standard-based First Aid Training*. Any information or guidance previously in the *Guidance Notes* but omitted from the two current Department of Labour and NZQA publications should be considered as having been superseded.

18. I completed my initial first aid training in Australia. Are Australian first aid courses recognised in New Zealand?

Yes, Australian first aid qualifications are recognised in New Zealand. Under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997 (TTMRA) a person who is registered to practice an occupation under an Australian law is entitled, after giving notice to the local registration authority for the equivalent occupation, to be registered and to carry on the occupation pending registration. This means that a first aid qualification gained in Australia can be deemed broadly comparable to one gained in New Zealand. To maintain currency in New Zealand, a person holding an Australian first aid certificate need only attend a biannual refresher course. This must be done within two years and three months of either the original course or the last refresher course.

Links to Department of Labour and NZQA requirements and guidelines

Department of Labour First Aid at Work – Factsheet

www.dol.govt.nz/publications/factsheets/first-aid-at-work.html

NZQA First Aid Training Requirements

www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/assessment-and-moderation/assessment-of-standards/assessment-support-material/first-aid-resources/