

Automated External Defibrillators in the Workplace

OHS information for employers

Introduction

Occupational Health and Safety supports the use of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) at the work site provided the employer ensures that AED use is integrated into the first aid program and emergency response plan at the site, and can be safely used in the specific work environment intended.

Background

AEDs can be effective at improving survival from sudden cardiac arrest due to ventricular fibrillation or ventricular tachycardia when their use is incorporated into an emergency response plan that includes early recognition, notification and response to the emergency, access of emergency medical services, early cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), early defibrillation, and timely advanced cardiac life support.

AEDs are approved for sale as medical devices by Health Canada, Medical Devices Bureau (MDB). They are regulated in Canada as medical devices. The manufacturer is required to license the AED. MDB imposes labelling requirements on these devices as required by the Canadian Medical Devices Regulation.

Labels must state indications and conditions for AED use including a requirement that they are used only by properly qualified individuals. Labels must also include directions for the safe use of AEDs in the manner intended. The OHS Regulation (AR 62/2003), Section 13 (1), requires that workers be competent to safely use the AED. AED training is a required component in the Advanced First Aid course.

Other first aiders may use AED equipment if they receive CPR training and AED training.

If the first aider is under the supervision of a licensed medical practitioner, the Alberta College of Physicians and Surgeons has guidelines covering responsibilities of the medical practitioner.

The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada has guidelines regarding AED use.

Did You Know?

The OHS Code, Part 1, defines “competent” in relation to a person; means adequately qualified, suitably trained and with sufficient experience to safely perform work without supervision or with only a minimal degree of supervision.

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Recommendations

In considering authorizing the use of AEDs at a work site, an employer should ensure assessment of specific needs of the work site including:

- whether AEDs can be safely used (e.g. not to be used in a flammable environment);
- the population at risk - identify hazards of the workplace that may increase risk of sudden cardiac arrest;
- existing emergency response plan; and
- availability of emergency medical services.

The employer should ensure AEDs are integrated into the existing emergency response plan and First Aid programs.

Anyone using an AED must be competent therefore; the employer must ensure appropriate training in CPR and AEDs for equipment that is present at the worksite. There also must be a system to ensure update of these skills and recertification.

The employer should ensure there is a quality assurance program in place that includes regular maintenance and inspection of AED equipment which includes: verifying the AED's status, checking the pad and accessories and batteries, and cleaning the AED, The record keeping process and emergency response plan should also be evaluated. Employers and workers should follow the manufacturer's specifications for AED use, care and maintenance.

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Contact Us

OHS Contact Centre

Edmonton & Surrounding area

- 780-415-8690

Throughout Alberta

- 1-866-415-8690

Deaf or hearing impaired:

- 780-427-9999 (Edmonton)
- 1-800-232-7215 (Alberta)

Website

work.alberta.ca/ohs-contact-us

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[First Aid Records \(FA009\)](#)

[Quality Management Plan Requirements for First Aid Training in Alberta Workplaces \(FA010\)](#)

[Workplace First Aiders and Legal Requirements \(FA011\)](#)

[Developing a First Aid Plan \(FA012\)](#)

[Oxygen Equipment and Related Training Requirements at Work Sites \(FA013\)](#)

[Medication in First Aid Kits \(FA014\)](#)

Get Copies of OHS Act, Regulation and Code

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Occupational Health and Safety

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