

Guidance note, GN004

FIRST AID KITS

The University Health and Safety Committee asked that guidance be prepared on the contents and checking of first aid kits. The Approved Code of Practice from the Health and Safety Executive on first aid at work states:

First-aid containers

- 29 *The minimum level of first-aid equipment is a suitably stocked and properly identified first-aid container. Every employer should provide for each work site at least one first-aid container supplied with a sufficient quantity of first-aid materials suitable for the particular circumstances.*
- 30 *First-aid containers should be easily accessible, and placed, if possible, near to hand washing facilities. Employers assessing the need for first-aid provision on large sites should consider providing more than one first-aid container. First-aid containers should protect first-aid items from dust and damp and should only be stocked with items useful for giving first aid. Tablets and medications should not be kept.*
- 31 *There is no mandatory list of items that should be included in a first-aid container. Employers should decide what to include in the first-aid container from information gathered during their assessment of first-aid needs.*
- 32 *The contents of first-aid containers should be examined frequently and should be restocked as soon as possible after use. Sufficient supplies should be held in a back-up stock on site. Care should be taken to discard items safely after the expiry date has passed.*
- 33 *All first-aid containers must be identified by a white cross on a green background.*

Additional first-aid materials and equipment

- 34 *The assessment may conclude that there is a need for additional materials and equipment, for example scissors, adhesive tape, disposable aprons, individually wrapped moist wipes. These may be kept in the first-aid container if there is room. But they may be stored separately as long as they are available for use if required.*
- 35 *In particular circumstances the assessment might identify a need for items such as protective equipment, in case, for example, first aiders have to enter dangerous atmospheres; or blankets to protect casualties from the elements. These additional items should be securely stored near the first-aid container, in the first-aid room or in the hazard area, as appropriate. It is important that access to these*

items is restricted to people trained in their use.

- 36 Where mains tap water is not readily available for eye irrigation, at least a litre of sterile water or sterile normal saline (0.9%) in sealed, disposable containers should be provided. Once the seal has been broken, the containers should not be kept for reuse. The container should not be used after the expiry date.

Qualified first aiders will have received guidance on the contents of first aid boxes as part of their training.

Schools and Support Services should ensure, in particular, that arrangements are in place to satisfy the requirement of paragraph 32 in the guidance: *“The contents of first-aid containers should be examined frequently and should be restocked as soon as possible after use.”* To this end Schools and Support Services should ensure that arrangements are in place to identify all first aid boxes (including those which have been purchased by individual laboratories or workshops as well as those which have been purchased centrally) and to make sure that all boxes are checked on a regular basis. Some parts of the University have found it helpful to fit tamper evident seals to first aid boxes to highlight which boxes might need to be replenished. They have also found that the need to break the seal to gain access to first aid supplies encourages the reporting of accidents.