

Independent Guide

Does my workplace need a defibrillator?



Independent workplace compliance

What is the current law on defibrillators in the workplace?

There are currently no laws enforcing the provision of defibrillators in the workplace, however the HSE state that your First Aid Needs Assessment may identify a defibrillator as a need. IOSH (Institution of Occupational Safety and Health), the British Heart Foundation and the Resuscitation Council UK do however recommend that they are available to save lives. This is a good example of where health and safety advice isn't just about preventing accidents, occupational ill health and avoiding fines/prosecution. The reason people have defibrillators is because morally they are a good idea, they can save lives and they indicate that the organisation is prepared to invest in proactive health and safety.

What is defibrillation?

A defibrillator is a device that sends an electric shock to the casualty to restore the normal pumping of the heart to re-start blood circulation. An automated External Defibrillator can interpret a casualty's heartbeat and automatically send an electric shock. It will not deliver a shock unless it detects the presence of a heart rhythm that requires defibrillation.

Why would I need a defibrillator?

30,000 people in the UK have a cardiac arrest outside of hospital each year and NHS data shows that just 18.5% of those people survive. The chances of surviving a cardiac arrest are increased if emergency treatment is given as soon as possible. Almost half of all casualties are resuscitated successfully when defibrillation is given in the first four minutes of the person collapsing.

What is the cost and how many defibrillators will we need?

Defibrillators cost in the region of £1000+. If you are considering purchasing defibrillators consider the size of your workplace such as access, age of workforce and distance from emergency services.

What type of training is required for using defibrillators?

Defibrillators are failsafe, easy to use and will guide the user on how to use them. First aid at work (FAW) courses and emergency first aid at work (EFAW) courses must include defibrillator training. If you decide to provide defibrillators in your workplace, training staff on how to use them will give them confidence to provide a speedy response in emergency situations. This recommendation is from the Health and Safety Executive.

This guide is of a general nature; specific advice can be obtained from Assurity Consulting. Assurity Consulting is the UK's leading independent compliance consultancy specialising in workplace health, safety and environmental solutions. We have over 30 years' experience of helping customers of all sizes, from across all sectors, manage their compliance responsibilities, making sure that their organisation is compliant, their employees are safe, their processes are cost effective and their management team is in control.



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