



## PLEASE NOTE

This document has been updated.  
The current version can be found at:  
[gcc-uk.org/guidance-first-aid](http://gcc-uk.org/guidance-first-aid)

# Guidance on First Aid in Emergencies

This guidance must be read in conjunction with The Code (2016) prepared by the General Chiropractic Council (GCC), which sets out standards for conduct, performance and ethics for chiropractors to ensure the competent and safe practice of chiropractic.

This guidance is not intended to cover every situation that you may face. However, it does set out broad principles to enable you to think through and act professionally, ensuring patient interest and public protection at all times.

To note: The GCC will review this guidance as necessary and update it as appropriate, and reapply the principles of the Code to any critical changes or new situations that may emerge.

---

Standards within the Code with reference to first aid knowledge and skills:

G1:

keep your knowledge and skills up to date, taking part in relevant and regular learning and professional development activities that aim to maintain and develop your competence and improve your performance and the quality of your work.

Other relevant standards are:

A6 treat patients in a hygienic and safe environment

Every chiropractor is likely to encounter potential traumatic and medical emergencies at some point in their professional life. Like all registered health care professionals chiropractors have a duty to their patients during emergencies.

Chiropractors therefore must develop and maintain competencies in recognising, assessing and managing emergency potential medical and traumatic conditions that may be encountered in chiropractic settings.

It is a requirement of our educational programmes that students are trained to deal with medical emergencies. Thereafter it is important that chiropractors keep their knowledge and skills up to date. Evidence shows how quickly skills erode and how standard first aid training does not necessarily address the needs of a healthcare professional.

## **Our expectations**

The GCC cannot tell you what provision you should make for first aid. As a health care professional it is your responsibility to understand the emergencies that can arise in your practice and the clinical environment. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are prepared to administer first aid in the event of a clinical emergency.

We expect all chiropractors to consider their own first aid knowledge and skills and determine whether or not they need to undertake further specific first aid training, discussing experiences and concerns amongst peers, based on actual scenarios.

You should start by considering whether your first aid skills and knowledge are sufficient, appropriate and current. It may be some time since you last undertook any training or it may be that you refresh your first aid competence on a routine basis.

In assessing your own first aid needs, and those of your clinic, you should consider:

- When you last undertook first aid training, noting that this should be regularly updated; nationally-recognised 'Emergency First Aid at Work' certificates are valid for 3 years
- The extent to which you need to undertake first aid training that takes into account the practice of chiropractic, for example in the provision of CPR and medical emergency first aid
- How you make risk assessments and assess whether you have adequate processes and procedures in your clinic
- Whether you employ others and how you ensure your employees are suitably competent. The Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 require employers to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to ensure their employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work. These regulations apply to all workplaces including those with under five employees and to the self-employed.

## **First aid training**

Many providers of first aid training are available offering a range of courses delivered in a range of different ways and designed for a variety of different people. We do not hold a list of accredited or appropriate providers.

It is for you as a chiropractor to identify a provider and a course that is suitable for you. When selecting a training provider, you must be confident it will deliver training with appropriate content for you as a chiropractor. This must take account of clinical practice and emergencies related to your patients including the vulnerable, elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions that may raise their risk of emergencies occurring. If you provide care at sports events specific training to deal with injuries, on field assessment and principles of injury management may be required.

The Royal College of Chiropractors provides guidance on suitable first aid training for Chiropractors (<http://bit.ly/EFAW4C>) and accredits courses that meet its recommendations. These include the tailored courses provided by <https://firstaidforlife.org.uk/>

### **Websites:**

- The Health & Safety Executive  
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/index.htm>  
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/legislation.htm> and  
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/business/areyou/employer.htm>
- The Health & Safety Executive, First Aid at Work Your questions answered, 2014, <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg214.pdf>
- The Resuscitation Council UK's Guidelines, 2021,  
<https://www.resus.org.uk/resuscitation-guidelines/>
- Register of qualifications, Ofqual, <https://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>

**First issued: March 2020**

**Updated: May 2021**