

Why a First Aid Kit?

by Marty Baumann

I'm sure most of you have the white and green metal or plastic box mounted on your shop wall somewhere. Mine is located in our locker room next to the sink. Like most people, I never look in the thing until I need to. But when should I need to? And when do I send my employees to an Emergency Room instead?

“First aid is the first attention that an injury or medical emergency will receive.”

The first question is best answered by answering the question: What is first aid? Simply put, first aid is the first attention that an injury or medical emergency will receive. It is not always the only medical attention that the situation will demand, but is it your “first reaction”. The second question is a little more complicated: When is a band-aid enough and when do I need medical attention given by a professional? The simplest answer is: If you have a doubt in your mind about care, send the injury out for assistance. If you find yourself thinking “Boy, there’s a lot of blood, maybe a band-aid isn’t enough...”, that should tell you to send the injured party along to the hospital or

emergency center. Any head injury should go for assistance and if a person loses consciousness, for any reason at all, they should be looked at by a medical professional.

So, all this brings me to the original question: Why a first aid kit? Primarily, the first aid kit is a convenience for your employees. But it is also there to help you through more serious situations before emergency personnel arrive or before you take your employee to an emergency room.

What should be in a first aid kit? The best advice on this issue is to include the same items you keep in your medicine cabinet at home (you do have a kit at home, don’t you). Aspirin, antacid, eye wash, band-aids, gauze & tape, scissors, tweezers and some bee sting swabs. I would also have a cold pack or two and some rubber gloves. Your eye wash station might be next to your first aid kit, but this is meant to be a separate safety item and I would not combine them. You need to remember, your first aid kit is a convenience item, it is not meant to replace medical attention.

There are many companies that specialize in setting up a safety or first aid cabinet for you and they will keep it up-to-date for you on a contract basis. This is a good idea if you don’t have much experience in this area or you are always too busy to run out for more aspirin.

In closing, I would hope that your medical/first aid kit is one of the first items you talk with your employees about while you go over your safety program. It can be an excellent benefit for your employees, it can buy some piece of mind, and it will give all your employees that “first” place to go in case of an on-the-job injury.



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