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First Aid Kits
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26.9.11
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BS 8599 British Standard Workplace First Aid Kits

The BS above was updated with effect from 30/06/2011, and the standard replaces the BHTA-HSE 10, 20, and 50 persons first aid kits most employers currently have in the workplace.

The list of contents with indicated changes is shown below;

Nitrile Gloves - more quantity

Plasters - more quantity

Wipes - more quantity (*specification is sterile and now must meet the European CE marking rules*)

Medium and Large Dressings - fewer quantities

Triangular Bandages - fewer quantities

Finger Dressings - complete with an easy-fix adhesive tab

Burns Gel Dressing - modern burns gel dressing is added to meet the risk of burns, along with a conforming bandage to attach and retain it.

Adhesive Tape - an easy and inexpensive way to secure dressings and bandages. Safety pins are retained, allowing users a choice of application

Shears - for cutting clothing around wound sites to allow first aid treatment.

Foil Emergency Blanket - clinical shock presents one of the most serious life threatening risks to a casualty. Foil blankets enable first aiders to keep the casualty dry and warm.

Mouth to Mouth Resuscitation Device - incorporating a plastic one way valve, protects the first aider from infection from body fluid pathogens.

Eye Wash - ideal for travelling workers.

First Aid Guidance Leaflet - with latest HSE guidance.

It must be borne in mind, however, that for HSW purposes the Approved Code of Practice advises that first aid provision in the workplace is based on an employer's first aid needs assessment and whilst the ACOP gives a suggested list of contents, it clearly states that the contents of the box may vary depending upon the employer's assessment. Whilst many employers will simply purchase the new BS 8599 kits as the easiest option, others with different contents or even existing kits may still be perfectly satisfactory. The ACOP published by the HSE giving guidance on the interpretation of the Regulations has not been altered.

The HSE summarises the position as follows; "Although there is a British Standard BS 8599 for first aid kits, it is not a regulatory requirement under HSW (First Aid) Regs 1981 to purchase kits that comply with this standard. Instead, the contents are dependent on an employer's first aid needs assessment. Options are, therefore;

- A first aid kit is provided which complies with BS 8599, and matches the first aid needs assessment, or;
- A first aid kit is provided which matches the first aid needs assessment, but may not comply with BS 8599".

End.