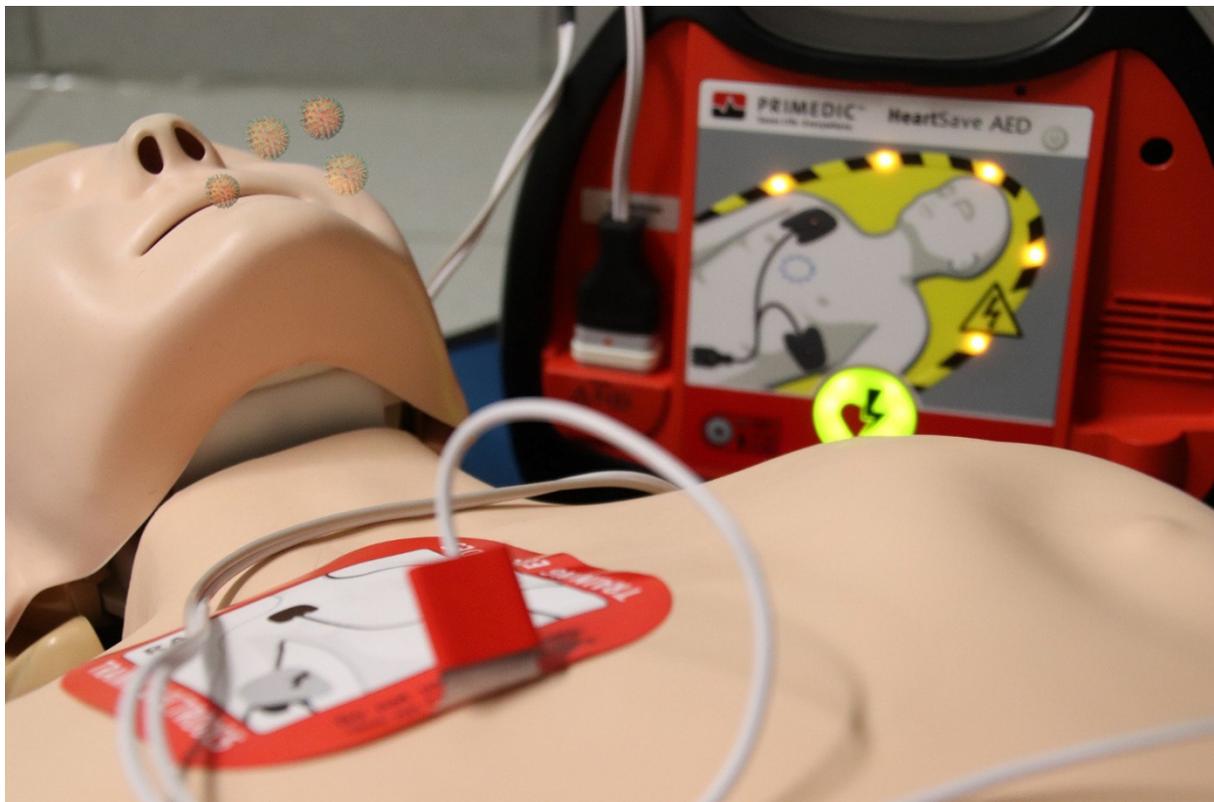


Safety Note 77

2nd Edition, January 2021

COVID 19—FIRST AID UPDATE



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INTRODUCTION

For a minority of people Covid-19 is a potentially serious disease and First Aiders and others may have concerns about the risk of infection arising from first aid treatment in the workplace. However, failing to provide first aid can also have serious consequences and the University is committed to providing a suitable level of first aid provision.

This Safety Note is intended to assist First Aiders take reasonable precautions against Covid-19 infection. It provides information on guidance issued by the UK Government and the British Resuscitation Council. This guidance should be considered alongside Safety Notes 76-78.

The potential for Covid19 transmission should typically be low because staff and students with even mild relevant symptoms, or under an isolation instruction issued by the Test & Track system, have been instructed to strictly avoid coming onto campus or other University premises. During first aid treatment the risk of transmission remains low but cannot be entirely eliminated. Good hygiene, together with the use of appropriate techniques and gloves, reduces this risk even further.

Additional items of PPE for use by First Aiders are being included into the first aid kits managed centrally by Building Support Officers. These are the kits most likely to be used on members of the general public, who may not be aware of University instructions.

PREPAREDNESS RESPONSIBILITIES

Heads of Schools/Functions are recommended to review their First Aid Needs Assessment (FANA), and relevant task-specific risk assessments, to consider what first aid provision is required. For very low occupancy workplaces also see Safety Note 75. Where occupancy is very low it may be possible to provide first aid coverage through liaison with a neighbouring building – if considering this solution consult the HSS Liaison Advisor covering your School or Function.

Some additional items of personal protective equipment and hand sanitiser are available where review of the FANA identifies the need. Requests for these items for inclusion in first aid kits (see below) should be made to Health & Safety Services via the local Health and Safety Coordinator (HSC).

Heads of Schools/Functions should also ensure all line managers of first aiders are aware of this Safety Note.

Line Managers should ensure that First Aiders within their teams are aware of this Safety Note and its recommendations.

First Aiders should familiarise themselves with the recommendations in this Safety Note. The HSE has extended the deadline for first aid requalification until 30 September 2020. If your qualification has expired, or is due to expire soon, contact your local HSC for advice.

Any staff with questions about First Aid should contact their local HSC for advice.

GUIDANCE FOR FIRST AIDERS

As well as the knowledge already gained during your first aid course, to be effective you need to:

- A. Be aware of the risks to yourself and others**
- B. Keep yourself and others safe**
- C. Give early treatment**
- D. Look after your own needs**
- E. Keep yourself informed and updated**

During the current global pandemic these skills are of even greater importance and can be utilised as follows:

A. Be aware of the risks to yourself and others

When approaching a casualty, there can be a risk of contamination, especially when close to a casualty to assess their condition. This is increased when assessing their breathing. Covid19 virus transmission is not yet fully understood, but similar viruses are spread in cough droplets and through body fluids.

B. Keep yourself and others safe

Make a judgement about your level of caution based on your knowledge of the situation. For example if you have been working with the individual that day, they previously showed no signs of illness, and the need for first aid clearly arises from a sudden injury, then the risk of infection is likely to be low. However, if the individual appears to be a casual visitor to campus and is coughing you may reasonably judge that you should proceed with greater caution for the protection of yourself and others.

Make every effort possible to not cough or sneeze over the casualty while you are assisting them.

Many incidents may not require you to get close to the individual. Consider if the individual can adequately help themselves by taking your instructions while you remain at a distance of at least 2 metres.

Where you judge it necessary to get closer UK Government advice is to wash your hands before (where practical) and after treating a casualty. Hand sanitiser can be used, if available. The University is currently encountering challenges sourcing bulk supplies of hand sanitiser. However, a small supply is being reserved for inclusion in first aid kits.

If you ask others for assistance consider what instructions you can give them to minimise risk to all.

Cover cuts and grazes on your hands with waterproof dressings before providing treatment. Wear gloves or cover hands when dealing with open wounds. Do not touch a wound with your bare hands. Use Dispose of all waste safely.

Familiarise yourself with the current guidance on CPR available from Resuscitation UK (see the link below). In brief, if you decide to provide CPR, first ensure an ambulance is on its way, and if you perceive a risk of infection do not put your cheek close to the individual's face, use a cloth to cover their mouth and nose, and provide only chest compression.

Remember to wash your hands, even if you wore gloves.
After the incident call the Estates Helpdesk on ext 7000 to alert Cleaning Services. They will consult local managers to determine whether enhanced cleaning is required. If in doubt, barrier off the relevant area and put up temporary signs to prevent entry until the situation has been assessed.

C. Give early treatment

Do not allow concern over Covid19 to prevent or delay you in calling for an ambulance or asking others to do so, where you judge this medically appropriate. Where the situation obliges you to proceed cautiously, due to a perceived heightened risk of infection, consider that ambulance staff can access more protective equipment and may be valuable in providing the assistance the individual needs.

D. Look after your own needs

After providing first aid assistance, even for a minor incident, ensure your line manager is informed. Ensure an incident notification is submitted via the University's online form here <https://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/health-and-safety/IncidentReportingandEmergencyProcedures/IncidentNotification/>
The notification should include any information which can help identify anyone you may have had close contact with – this can help with Track & Trace and if you are, or later become, concerned about possible Covid19 transmission.

The Covid 19 pandemic has caused major upheaval and worries for people across the globe and especially anyone who may be rendering first aid or called upon to do so. In such challenging times, you should look after yourself and your own needs. Ensure that you find time to discuss any fears or concerns you have

with someone you trust and preferably with your line manager. This will enable you, your manager and UoR community to better understand the impact of Covid 19 on the valued First Aid community within the university.

E. Keep yourself informed and updated

Research into Covid 19 is ongoing and guidance continues to be updated. Ensure that you update your knowledge on the latest first aid practices by using the following:

- **NHS111 Website** –
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- **Gov.uk Website** –
<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- **Resuscitation Council (UK)** –
<https://www.resus.org.uk/media/statements/resuscitation-council-uk-statements-on-covid-19-coronavirus-cpr-and-resuscitation/covid-community/>
- **St John Ambulance**
<https://www.sja.org.uk/get-advice/first-aid-advice/unresponsive-casualty/how-to-do-cpr-on-an-adult/>
- **British Red Cross**
<https://blog.redcrossfirstaidtraining.co.uk/what-can-i-do-as-a-first-aider-at-work-or-in-public-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>