



## **First Aid as a Life Skill**

Training Requirements for Quality Provision  
of Unit Standard-based and Revalidation  
First Aid Training and Assessment

*Version 3.3 September 2023*

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## Introduction

This document has been developed to outline requirements for training providers, learners, and employers in relation to first aid training and revalidation, based on current Toitū te Waiora (TTW) unit standards 6400 series.

The concept of 'First Aid as a Life Skill' refers to the fact that it is a skill that enables individuals to manage the demands and challenges of life effectively. To grow first aid as a life skill in New Zealand, it is paramount that the minimum knowledge and skills required are consistent across all providers and kept as simple as possible.

'First Aid as a Life Skill' exists as a 'living document', designed with the intention to link various relevant documents and provide users with a single source of reference. The document is reviewed six monthly and amended in line with any requirement changes or updates.

Toitū te Waiora became the standard-setting body (SSB) (October 4, 2021) and works in conjunction with:

- New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA)
- The Association of Emergency Care Training Providers (AECTP), recognised as the peak body for the first aid training industry.

Other industry stakeholders:

Acknowledgements to:

- Hato Hone St John
- New Zealand Red Cross
- New Zealand Resuscitation Council.

This document has four sections:

### **Section One: First Aid Framework**

Outlines New Zealand's first aid framework and intends to represent a minimum level of first aid knowledge that AECTP and TTW would like all New Zealanders to possess.

### **Section Two: First Aid Training Requirements**

Outlines NZQA requirements for providing unit standard based first aid training and assessment.

### **Section Three: First Aid Training Guidelines**

This section ensures that the delivery of first aid training in New Zealand is consistent. It contains the guidelines expected to be used by registered and accredited first aid training providers.

### **Section Four: Compliance Documentation**

The latest updates of all first aid related documents needed to deliver unit standard based first aid training and assessment and the requirements for providing revalidation courses.

## Section One: First Aid Framework

This section outlines the minimum level of first aid knowledge and skill that TTW and AECTP would like New Zealanders to possess. Like any framework, additional knowledge and skills can be added on top of the foundational level to ensure individuals and organisations have the correct level of training that aligns with their unique context and meets their unique risk profile.

All first aid teaching must be consistent with good clinical practice and align with the Section Three: First Aid Training Guidelines.

The principles of DRSABCD should be applied to all First Aid situations and be a fundamental component of all first aid training.

### 1. Safety

Learners need to be able to assess the scene by identifying potential threats to their safety, the safety of the person in need, and bystanders. They also need to understand appropriate ways to manage any dangers that may be present.

### 2. Severity of condition

A basic assessment of an ill or injured person needs to be undertaken to determine whether there is an immediate life-threatening condition that requires first aid intervention and/or the requirement for an immediate ambulance response.

[www.stjohn.org.nz/what-we-do/when-to-call-111/](http://www.stjohn.org.nz/what-we-do/when-to-call-111/)

First aiders must be able to recognise and understand the following life-threatening medical emergencies and the requirement to call 111 without delay.

- Unresponsive or semi-conscious
- Cardiac arrest
- Difficulty breathing
- Choking
- Chest pain or tightness (heart attack)
- Signs of stroke
- Severe bleeding or bleeding that won't stop.

When a first aider assists an unwell or injured person, one of the first considerations they make concerns the type of help that is needed. Whether the person requires urgent medical attention (such as an ambulance or urgent care medical centre), routine medical attention (such as a visit to the GP), or no medical attention at all. It is far more common for first aiders to be faced with a less severe injury or illness that does not necessarily require an ambulance response. It is therefore important that first aiders have an understanding of the role Urgent Care Clinics, GPs, and other health providers play in managing non-life-threatening conditions. In addition,

the support available through helplines such as Health-Line in making the correct decision for an individual's circumstance.

### **3. Airway management for an unresponsive person**

Learners must know how to open the airway of an unresponsive person and how to position them on their side (recovery position) in a stable position with an open airway. These skills are potentially lifesaving.

Cervical spine immobilisation is not seen as a basic first aid skill because this adds considerable complexity to airway management skills. Maintaining an open airway takes priority over any assumed cervical spine injury.

Recognise choking and the first aid actions to clear the airway.

### **4. CPR - Cardiopulmonary resuscitation**

First aiders need to be able to determine when CPR is required (unresponsive and not breathing normally), know how to perform effective CPR, know how to utilise an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED), and understand the importance of calling for help immediately.

Cardiac arrest remains a significant public health issue, with ischemic heart disease being the second most prevalent cause of death in New Zealand. Every year in New Zealand, over 2,000 people are treated for cardiac arrest in the community; however, only 11% survive. Furthermore, for every minute without CPR or defibrillation, a patient's chance of survival falls by 10-15%. Therefore, trained and confident first aiders are critical to making a lifesaving impact in the setting of out of hospital cardiac arrest.

Learning CPR will focus on adults, children, and infants, emphasising the correct rate, depth, recoil and site of chest compressions. Rescue breaths should ensure adequate chest rise without significantly interrupting chest compressions or defibrillation.

Familiarisation with AEDs is now essential to CPR instruction. Therefore, an explanation and demonstration of its use are to be carried out by the instructor in all courses covered in these requirements.

First aiders should be reassured that the risk of significant harm from delivery of chest compressions to an unresponsive person not in cardiac arrest is negligible and shouldn't be a concern when weighed against the benefits of providing compressions to someone who is in cardiac arrest.

## 5. Bleeding control

Learners should understand the difference between minor and severe life-threatening bleeding. In addition, a learner will know how to apply direct pressure to stop severe external bleeding.

Using a tourniquet to control bleeding should only be considered where life-threatening bleeding is present and bleeding cannot be controlled by direct pressure.

Control of life-threatening bleeding takes priority over CPR.

## 6. Common medical emergencies may include but not limited to:

First aiders should understand the most common and potentially significant medical problems, emphasising the recognition of symptoms rather than diagnosis. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Chest pain (emphasis on acute coronary syndromes)
- Stroke
- Seizures (including how to keep someone safe whilst having a seizure)
- Asthma
- Diabetic emergencies
- Anaphylaxis.

## 7. Common injuries may include but not limited to:

First aiders need to know how to manage the following common injuries:

- Burns (including chemical and electrical)
- Wounds (including gunshot, stabbing, embedded object, amputation)
- Fractures, dislocations, and soft tissue injury
- Head and spinal injuries
- Poisoning

## 8. Managing first aid in an emergency situation

First aiders need to know the basics of managing an emergency where more than one person may be involved.

The core principles include:

- Maintain safety for themselves, the person in need of care, and bystanders.
- It is normal to feel overwhelmed in an emergency situation. Therefore, emphasis should be on undertaking a DRSABCD assessment on each person in need while addressing any identified life-threatening issues.
- Organising the scene to enable quick and easy access for emergency services to take over care.

## Section Two: First Aid Training Requirements

This document should be read in conjunction with the [Worksafe New Zealand First Aid at Work guidelines February 2020](#).

### Provision of First Aid Training and Assessment

Training of first aid personnel in workplaces must be carried out by individuals employed by an organisation granted consent by NZQA to assess first aid unit standards.

### Instructor Provider Organisations

Training provider organisations with consent to assess first aid unit standard(s) will be subject to the appropriate [Consent and Moderation Requirements \(CMR\)](#) approved by NZQA. In addition, all organisation training and assessment staff must comply with the industry or sector-specific requirements for consent to assess.

### Assessment and Moderation

The assessor must have final sign-off and be confident of individual learner performance.

The minimum CPR manikin learner to ratio when teaching CPR is 1:4 in order to ensure all learners have sufficient time to practice and reinforce learning.

### Training and Qualification Requirements for a First Aid Instructor

Organisations offering first aid training must ensure that teaching and assessing staff have had training in standard based assessment. They will either have obtained credit for unit standard 4098, use standards to assess candidate performance, or are able to demonstrate equivalent knowledge and skills.

The organisations must be able to ensure that teaching and assessing staff have obtained credit for adult education unit standards or have evidence of their ability to use learner-centred techniques consistent with unit standards such as those found in the [Delivery of Adult Education and Training](#) domain on the Directory of Assessment Standards (DAS).

The organisations must be able to ensure that instructors have:

- Achieved current first aid unit standards
- Achieved unit standard 4098 and unit standards in adult education or are able to demonstrate equivalent skills and knowledge
- Achieved unit standards in the [Emergency Care - First Response](#) domain 29321 or are able to demonstrate equivalent knowledge and skills



- a current New Zealand Resuscitation Council Emergency Care Instructor Certificate at Level 2 (ECI 2) as specified in the New Zealand Resuscitation Council guidelines; or are able to demonstrate equivalent knowledge and skills.

Teaching and assessing staff must be given opportunities to maintain currency and must provide evidence of up-skilling in best practices in first aid tutoring and first aid practice. In addition, currency must be demonstrated through participation in revalidation training and other professional development programmes annually.

### **Unit Standard-based First Aid Training and Assessment**

NZQA will monitor quality-assured training through organisational evaluation. For training, where the assessment is against unit standards, then this assessment will also be moderated by TTW (SSB) through national external moderation as per the [Consent and Moderation Requirements for First Aid \(CMR 0230\)](#)

The duration of first aid training must meet the following minimum requirements and the criteria of the unit standard:

- For unit standards 6400, 6401, and 6402 – a minimum of 12 hours training and assessment, including three 15-minute breaks. Lunch breaks excluded.
- For unit standards 6401 and 6402 – a minimum of eight hours training, including two 15-minute breaks. Lunch breaks excluded.
- The duration of first aid training may take account of:
  - class sizes
  - capabilities of the learners
  - the identified hazards and risk associated with the workplace they may be working in (where practicable).

Unit standard achievement must be recorded on the learner's New Zealand Record of Achievement, maintained by NZQA.

### **First Aid Revalidation Training**

To maintain a valid NZQA unit-standard-based first aid certificate, certificate holders are required to undergo six hours of revalidation training every two years.

Revalidation training should occur before the first aid certificate expires, however, there is a three-month grace period following expiry for the learner to complete this training. If revalidation training does not occur before the first aid certificate expires or during the three-month grace period, the learner will be required to re-take first aid training and assessment for the unit standard(s) to obtain a new first aid certificate.

For guidance on revalidation training, refer to [Worksafe New Zealand First Aid at Work guidelines February 2020](#).

## Unit Standard 6400 Training

To obtain unit standard 6400 when the learner has previously achieved unit standards 6402 and 6401, the learner must possess a current first aid certificate or respective revalidation certificate.

There are two options available for this training:

- Attend the 6400 portions of a 12-hour course covering unit standards 6402, 6401 and 6400.
- Complete a stand-alone four-hour course for unit standard 6400.

It is important to note that, on its own, the four-hour training and assessment for unit standard 6400 does not count as revalidation training.

To fulfil the revalidation requirement, learners must undertake the appropriate training in accordance with their current first aid or revalidation certificate that enabled them to attend the Unit Standard 6400 training.

## First Aid Certificates

The first aid certificate issued by a training provider serves as evidence that the holder has successfully completed all necessary the training requirements and fulfilled the criteria specified in the unit standards. First aid certificates are valid for a period of up to two years.

Unit Standards 6400 series and associated revalidation certificates are to include:

- Standardised title.
- Unit standards the learner was assessed against.
- Achievement date.
- Period certificate is valid, i.e. two years.
- NZQA provider number.

The following table outlines the standardised names for NZQA 6400 series unit standards, and associated revalidation certificates:

Unit Standards	Certificate Title	Revalidation Certificate Title
6402, 6401, 6400	New Zealand First Aid Certificate	New Zealand First Aid Revalidation Certificate
6402, 6401	Foundation First Aid Certificate	Foundation First Aid Revalidation Certificate
6402	Provide Basic Life Support Certificate	No associated revalidation certificate.
6400	NZQA Unit Standard 6400 Training	No associated revalidation certificate.



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The naming convention of NZQA 6400 series certificates is to commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2023.

The New Zealand First Aid Certificate is the recommended course for workplace first aid training.



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## Section Three: First Aid Training Guidelines

The following [New Zealand Resuscitation Council](#) guidelines are to be used to ensure consistency in delivery of first aid training in New Zealand.

[ANZCOR Guideline 2: Managing an Emergency](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 3: Recognition and First Aid Management of the Unconscious Person](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 4: Airway](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 5: Breathing](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 6: Compressions](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 7: Automated External Defibrillation in Basic Life Support](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 8: Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation CPR](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline: Basic Life Support Summary of Changes April 2021](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.1.1: First Aid Management of Bleeding](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.1.3: First Aid Management of Burns](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.1.4: First Aid Management of a Head Injury](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.1.5: First Aid Management of Harness Suspension Trauma](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.1.6: First Aid Management of Suspected Spinal Injury](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.1.7: First Aid Management of a Crushed Victim](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.2.1: First Aid Management of a Heart Attack](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.2.2: First Aid Management of a Stroke](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.2.3: First Aid Management of Shock](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.2.4: First Aid Management of a Seizure](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.2.5: First Aid Management of Asthma](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.2.7: First Aid Management of Anaphylaxis](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.2.9: First Aid Management of a Diabetic Emergency](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.2.10: The Use of Oxygen in Emergencies](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.2.11: First Aid Management of the Agitated Person](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.2.12: Recognition and First Aid Management of the Seriously Ill Person including Sepsis](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.3.2: Resuscitation in Drowning](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.3.3: First Aid Management of Hypothermia and Cold-Related Injuries](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.3.4: First Aid Management of Heat-Induced Illness \(Hyperthermia\)](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.4.2: First Aid Management of a Spider Bite](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.4.3: First Aid Management of Envenomation from Tick Bites and Bee, Wasp and Ant Stings](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.5.1: First Aid Management of Poisoning](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline 9.5.2: First Aid Management of Opioid Overdose](#)

[ANZCOR Guideline: First Aid Summary of Changes April 2021](#)



## Section Four: Compliance Documentation

The latest updates of all first aid related documents needed to deliver unit standard based first aid training and assessment and the requirements for providing revalidation courses.

[Unit standard 6402](#)

[Unit standard 6401](#)

[Unit standard 6400](#)

[Consent and Moderation Requirements for First Aid \(CMR 0230\)](#)

[Worksafe First Aid at Work guidelines February 2020](#)



AECTP

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## Version History

Version	Summary of changes
Version 3 July 2023	Toitū te Waiora inherited this document, along with the unit standards associated with First Aid from the previous SSB, The Skills Organisation. This version supersedes all previous versions of this document.
Version 3.1 August 2023	<p>Page 9.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a current New Zealand Resuscitation Council Emergency Care Instructor Certificate at Level 2 (ECI 2) as specified in the New Zealand Resuscitation Council guidelines; or are able to demonstrate equivalent knowledge and skills.</li> </ul> <p>Above bullet point added.</p> <p>Consistent wording of 'or are able to demonstrate equivalent knowledge and skills' updated throughout document.</p>
Version 3.2 August 2023	<p>Page 9.</p> <p><b>First Aid Revalidation Training</b> Further clarification added. Learners have a three-month grace period following expiry of the First Aid certificate to complete Revalidation Training.</p>
Version 3.3 September 2023	<p>Page 9.</p> <p>Rewording of bullet pointed text and addition of: Lunch breaks excluded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For unit standards 6400, 6401, and 6402 – a minimum of 12 hours training and assessment, including three 15-minute breaks. Lunch breaks excluded.</li> <li>For unit standards 6401 and 6402 – a minimum of eight hours training, including two 15-minute breaks. Lunch breaks excluded.</li> </ul>

**Date of next review:** January 2024



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