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| Frequently Asked Questions |
| First Aid Services |
| OFFICIAL |

# First Aid Services, Victoria

All first aid services (FAS) providing commercial first aid in Victoria are required to be licenced under the *Non-Emergency Patient Transport and First Aid Services Act 2003* (the Act). Licenced first aid services are required to comply with the Non-Emergency Patient Transport and First Aid Services (First Aid Services) Regulations 2021 (the Regulations).

The aim of the Act and the Regulations is to provide minimum standards in the provision of first aid across events, industrial settings and sporting facilities.

# Role of the Health Regulator

The Health Regulator within the department is responsible for the regulation of the first aid service sector. Authorised officers are responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance of first aid services with the Act and Regulations. Authorised offers conduct both desktop and on-site inspections.

# Definition of a First Aid Service

A first aidservice is a service offering or providing first aid in exchange for payment or financial reward. Please note that financial reward includes any payment ‘in kind’ e.g. an exchange for goods, gifts, benefits or to ‘cover costs’.

# Do all first aid services offer the same level of first aid?

No. First aid services are divided into three distinct classes: basic, intermediate, and advanced. The first aid service can only operate their first aid service at the level they are licenced.

**Basic:** The minimum clinical staff level is a trained first aid officer holding a relevant certificate III qualification or below. Basic first aid services have access to ‘over the counter’ medications and are trained and equipped to adequately cater for **minor** injuries or illnesses which would not usually require referral to another health care provider or hospital for ongoing care, for example simple wounds, sunburn, sprains and strains.

**Example Event types (*please note that this list is not exhaustive*):**

Low risk event profile- the event nature and patron demographics, numbers and behaviours have a low probability of patient injury and or illness. For example,

* community and school sport
* local fete
* roadshow

**Intermediate:** The minimum clinical staff level includes certificate IV or diploma trained first aid officer and some registered health professionals. Intermediate first aid services have access to some scheduled medications and are trained and equipped to adequately cater for **significant** injuries or illnesses which may require referral to another healthcare provider or hospital for ongoing care, for example fractured bones.

**Example Event types:**

Medium Risk event profile- the event nature and patron demographics, numbers and behaviours have a medium probability of patient injury and or illness. For example,

* low speed motorsport
* low impact equestrian events
* small festivals

**Advanced:** The minimum clinical staff level includes registered health professionals, such as registered paramedics, registered nurses, and registered medical practitioners, including anaesthetists and critical care physicians.

Advanced first aid services have access to additional scheduled medications and are trained and equipped to adequately cater for **serious** injuries or illnesses which often require referral to another healthcare provider or hospital for ongoing care. For example, traumatic head injured patients who have been intubated. In addition, advanced first aid services may offer primary care services, such as suturing and anti-biotic administration.

**Example Event types:**

High risk event profile- the event nature and patron demographics, numbers and behaviours have a high probability of patient injury and or illness. For example,

* high speed motorsport
* high impact equestrian
* pyrotechnic/explosives
* geographically isolated or dispersed
* aquatic motorsport
* large festivals, including multi day events.
* event size > 10k
* new events, with moderate level risk (nil prior event history)

# Do volunteer first aid associations need a licence?

Volunteer first aid associations do not require a first aid service licence as this is not considered a first aid service as per section 42H of the Act. Remember, any payment ‘in kind’ or to ‘cover costs’ would constitute commercial provision of first aid services and therefore a licence is required.

# My workplace has designated me as a First Aider responsible for providing first aid to staff, do I need to be licenced?

No. An individual who is employed by an organisation to provide first aid to persons employed or engaged by that organisation in the course of the business carried on by the organisation is exempt from being licenced as per section 42H(d) of the Act. (for example, a person who is employed in an office setting to provide first aid to staff of that office is not required to be licenced).

# Life Saving Victoria

Life Saving Victoria and lifesaving clubs are exempt from first aid licensing as per section 42H of the Act. The definition of a lifesaving club is a ‘club formed for the purposes connected with the patrolling of any part of the coastline of Victoria by persons for the purposes of assisting other persons in difficulty in water’.

# What is the difference between a sports trainer and a first aid service?

Whilst a sports trainer may hold first aid qualifications, a sports trainer’s primary role is not first aid. The scope of practice of a sports trainer is limited to in-event preventative care, such as strapping, taping, and massage (these are not considered first aid). A sports trainer cannot provide clinical staff, equipment or medications to manage first aid presentations such as cardiac arrest, anaphylaxis, asthma, endocrine emergencies and traumatic injuries.

# I am part of a sporting organisation that has its own specific first aid/medical requirements, does the first aid service legislation in Victoria impact this?

It is common for sporting organisations to have a first aid/medical framework (framework) specific to their sport, for example horse and motorsport. These frameworks often prescribe the minimum number of first aid trained individuals and/or registered health professionals as well as list equipment needs for different event types.

Whilst these frameworks can be useful, in Victoria, it is the responsibility of a licensed first aid service to determine the service delivery needs (and not that of the sporting organisation). The first aid service will assess the event type to ensure it can meet the needs of the event and provide safe and quality patient care.

Where a sporting organisation has a specific framework, it is recommended that they consider the specific capabilities needed (for example, pain management, advanced airway management). The first aid service will use this information to assess the needs of the event and determine if they can meet both the sporting organisation’s needs and the event’s.

# How can I apply for a First Aid Service licence?

Information about the process and requirements to apply for a first aid service licence is available on the department's website at: https://www.health.vic.gov.au/patient-care/applying-for-a-first-aid-licence

# Information for Event organisers

As an event organiser, or local council planning or approving an event, you should ensure that the first aid service contracted to the event is licenced. Having a licenced first aid service is important to ensure the provision of quality and safe patient care.

# Is an event organiser mandated to have first aid at their event?

No. The Act and the Regulations do not prescribe **when** a first aid service is needed, rather prescribe minimum standards **if** a licenced first aid service is engaged. Other factors may mandate an event organiser to have first aid at their event, for example insurance, council requirements, or where a sporting organisation has a first aid/medical framework.

**Remember: if you are providing payment or financial reward (including payment of ‘in kind’) in exchange for a first aid service they must be licensed.**

# Where can I locate a list of licenced first aid services?

The register of licenced first aid services is available on the [Department of Health (the department’s) website](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/patient-care/first-aid-services) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/patient-care/first-aid-services>. The licenced first aid services register is updated regularly to ensure information is current. Please check the register prior to any event you have planned or approved.

If you are made aware of an un-licenced first aid service tendering for, or servicing an event, please notify the Health Regulator via Neptfirstaidregulation@health.vic.gov.au.

# How do I know if the first aid service is appropriate for the event?

A first aid service is required to undertake a risk assessment of each event to assess potential health risks. This will inform the first aid service of their ability to provide safe and quality care as per 46(2)(b) of the regulations, noting that a first aid service providing first aid beyond their licenced service level is in breach of section 42K of the Act. Event organisers and local council should work collaboratively with first aid services to enable them to undertake a thorough risk assessment.

The first aid service is responsible for their risk assessment to ensure that it matches the event profile. It is not expected an event organiser will prescribe or specify the clinical care required, instead event organisers should provide appropriate, *updated* information about the event to enable the first aid service to determine the clinical care requirements.

Within an event, there may be different levels of risk. Spectators, for example may only need the provision of basic first aid, while participants may need a higher level. It is important that event organisers and local councils properly assess and communicate their needs based on their understanding of the event and any learnings from previous events.

# I have a licenced first aid service. Do I also need Ambulance Victoria?

It is not compulsory to engage Ambulance Victoria (AV) for an event. However, AV encourages all event organisers to consider notifying them of a planned event. Ambulance Victoria will perform a risk assessment of the event taking into account, the nature of the event, distance to and capacity of nearest health service, as well as the planned event’s impact on local and broader communities access to timely, emergency care. Importantly, as the statutory ambulance service, **AV are the only service provider authorised to transport patients from an event to a hospital**. A first aid service cannot transport patients from an event to a hospital.

# An Authorised Officer has contacted me, asking to attend an event. What do I do?

Authorised Officers (AO’s) from the department are appointed under section 45 of the Act. Authorised Officers often contact event organisers directly to gain access into and around events. At times, AOs may ask the event organiser to not inform the first aid service of the inspection, as pre-notification of an inspection limits the ability of the AO to conduct an accurate assessment of the first aid service’s compliance with the Act and Regulations.

Event organisers are requested to support AOs with their inspection activities by providing the relevant authorisation and or accreditation to attend an event. AOs will carry photo identification and identify themselves prior to conducting inspection activity.

Authorised Officers are only permitted to assess the first aid service provider’s activity, and do not conduct inspection of any other part of an event.

# Who do I speak with regarding concerns of quality and safety of patient care at an event?

If you are concerned with the level of patient care provided, a complaint can be made to the first aid service in the first instance. Alternatively, you can discuss your concerns with the Health Regulator via Neptfirstaidregulation@health.vic.gov.au

For further information visit the [Department of Health](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/patient-care/applying-for-a-first-aid-licence) website <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/patient-care/first-aid-services>

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