

G3.17(1)-1 Implementing an early defibrillation program in the workplace

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Section 3.17(1) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* states:

The employer must keep up-to-date written procedures for providing first aid at the worksite including

- (a) the equipment, supplies, facilities, first aid attendants and services available,
- (b) the location of, and how to call for, first aid,
- (c) how the first aid attendant is to respond to a call for first aid,
- (d) the authority of the first aid attendant over the treatment of injured workers and the responsibility of the employer to report injuries to the Board,
- (e) who is to call for transportation for the injured worker, and the method of transportation and calling, and
- (f) prearranged routes in and out of the workplace and to medical treatment.

An early defibrillation program in the workplace has three main elements: an automated external defibrillator (AED) that meets acceptable technical standards, oversight by a medical director, and training of first aid attendants and other authorized persons in the use of the AED. These will be supplemented by written procedures.

This guideline sets out technical standards for AEDs, the role of the medical director, training standards for the designated first aid attendant and other authorized persons, and the requirements for written procedures.

An early defibrillation program is not specifically required by the *OHS Regulation*, but if one is established, then the AED is considered to be first aid equipment, and its use is governed by relevant provisions in the *OHS Regulation*, particularly section 3.17(1). AED training is not included in WCB occupational first aid course curriculum; therefore, additional training will be required in order for this equipment to be used at the worksite.

Section 3.17(1)(a) requires employers to keep up-to-date written procedures for providing first aid at the worksite including the equipment, supplies, facilities, first aid attendants and services available. If the employer chooses to implement an early defibrillation program the written procedures must outline the program according to this guideline and describe how the equipment will be integrated into the first aid response for that worksite.

The early defibrillation program should be integrated with the employer's emergency first aid response plan.

Because the introduction of an early defibrillation program has potential consequences for the health and safety of workers, it is expected that the employer will consult with the joint occupational health and safety committee, or worker health and safety representative, as applicable, on proposals to introduce the use of AED equipment.

Early Defibrillation Devices - technical standards

These devices (termed *automated external defibrillators* or *AEDs*) should meet three minimum criteria to be acceptable for use in the workplace in BC. They should be:

1. Currently licensed for use as an external defibrillator in Canada by Health Canada (see Health Canada, Medical Devices Bureau of the Therapeutic Products Directorate (<http://webprod.hc-sc.gc.ca/mdll-limh/prepareSearch-preparerRecherche.do?type=active□=eng>),
2. Automated (semi-automatic) in operation (the only type licensed for use at this time in Canada), and
3. Capable of storing both electrocardiographic and AED event data.

AED Medical Director

Where an early defibrillation program exists in the workplace, the program should be under the direction of an AED Medical Director. The Medical Director will:

1. Be a physician licensed to practice medicine in British Columbia by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia,
2. Be familiar with early defibrillation clinical and technical issues,
3. Be responsible for the security and management of patient clinical information including any electronic data from an AED unit, and
4. Provide a letter of confirmation to the employer, confirming he or she is the AED Medical Director for that site's early defibrillation program.

The employer at a workplace with an early defibrillation program will make the letter of confirmation from the AED Medical Director available on request of a Board officer, as required under section [179\(3\)](#) of the *Workers Compensation Act*.

Training standards for early defibrillation responders

1. The AED Medical Director will set out in writing, for the employer, the expected criteria to which the early defibrillation responders must be trained.
2. It is expected that these criteria will meet or exceed the early defibrillation standards of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada and that recertification in early defibrillation will occur yearly.
3. Among other things, section [115\(2\)\(e\)](#) of the *Workers Compensation Act* requires that the employer provide the information, instruction and training to workers necessary to ensuring the health and safety of other workers at the workplace. For those workers who will use AEDs this includes information and instruction

necessary for the safe use of the equipment. Also, section 3.17(3) of the *OHS Regulation* requires first aid attendants and other persons authorized to call for transportation of injured workers to be trained in these procedures.

4. The employer is responsible for maintaining records of early defibrillation training and certification for each early defibrillation responder at the worksite. The employer will make these records available on request of a Board officer.

Designated first aid attendant & other authorized persons

Where an early defibrillation program exists in the workplace, the designated first aid attendant is in charge of the emergency first aid care of the patient, including the delivery of early defibrillation until the patient is transferred to a higher medical authority.

This does not preclude other trained individuals in the workplace from administering first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation or early defibrillation in the absence of or while awaiting the arrival of the designated attendant.

Written procedures

1. Written procedures are required by section 3.17(1) of the *OHS Regulation* and must include any procedures or protocols associated with the employer's early defibrillation program, including the means of designating workers who are authorized to use AEDs, a list of persons so authorized, and the means of use of equipment.
2. The procedures and protocols should be sanctioned by the AED Medical Director.
3. The procedure and protocols should also address:
 - (a) The assurance of ongoing clinical support for early defibrillation responders.
 - (b) Integration of the use of AEDs within the organization's written procedures for providing first aid.
 - (c) Clinical documentation (written and/or electronic) of an event where early defibrillation was deployed, including security of and maintenance of this documentation, which is required by section 3.19 of the *OHS Regulation*
 - (d) The storage, inspection, and maintenance of AED equipment (See section [3.17\(1\)\(a\)](#)).