

COVID-19

Guidance for First Aiders

1. Purpose

This document provides guidance on reducing the risk of Covid-19 cross infection during the provision of first aid at the University of Strathclyde.

2. Scope

This document applies to anyone with responsibility for providing first aid assistance within the University either as part of their job role, or as an Appointed Departmental First Aider. It may also be useful for persons using University of Strathclyde defibrillators. First aiders who are at [higher risk from COVID-19](#) should not continue their role as an Appointed Departmental First Aider.

3. Assisting with minor first aid incidents

Try to assist at a safe distance from the casualty and minimise time in a shared breathing zone. If the person requiring assistance is able to treat themselves, they should be provided with instructions to do so.

Ask the individual if they have any of the following symptoms:

- Continuous cough
- Fever
- Loss of, or change in, taste or smell

If the individual confirms that they have any of the above symptoms, arrangements should be made to return home and follow the [NHS Inform guidance](#).

When providing first aid assistance:

- Assess the situation whilst maintaining social distancing, instruct others to do so.
- If required, call Security Services on X2222.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand gel.
- Wear disposable nitrile gloves. If the individual confirms that they have any of the symptoms listed above, wear a disposable fluid repellent surgical face mask, plastic apron and eye protection (glasses or face shield).
- Avoid touching your face.
- If the injury can be dealt with by the individual themselves, e.g. minor cuts, then provide instructions and any first aid materials for them to self-administer, such as plasters, eye wash, etc.
- If the injury cannot be dealt with by the individual themselves provide first aid assistance in accordance with your training and competency. If social distancing cannot be maintained, wear a disposable surgical face mask.

- After assisting the individual, remove gloves and at the earliest opportunity wash hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand gel.

4. Assisting with major first aid incidents

- Assess the situation whilst maintaining social distancing, instruct others to do so.
- Call Security Services on X2222 telling them if the person requiring assistance has any COVID-19 symptoms
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand gel.
- Wear disposable nitrile gloves, a disposable fluid repellent surgical face mask, and a disposable plastic apron. Eye protection (glasses or face shield) should be used if there is a risk of contamination with splashes, droplets of blood or body fluid.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Provide first aid assistance in accordance with your training and competency until the Security Warden and/or emergency services arrive.

5. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

The risk of cross infection, associated with CPR is normally low and is set against the inevitability that a person in cardiac arrest will die if no assistance is given. Whenever CPR is carried out, particularly to someone unknown, there is however some risk of cross infection, especially associated with giving rescue breaths. The University recognises the potential infection risk to first aiders, because of the possibility that a person may be suspected or confirmed as having COVID-19.

In order to reduce the risk of cross infection whilst administering CPR, the first aider should take the following measures:

- Immediately assess the situation. The first aider should ask those not involved to stay at least 2 metres away from the individual. If screens are available, these should be used.
- The first aider must look for visual signs of the absence of life and/or normal breathing without placing their ear and cheek close to the patient's mouth. If the individual is in cardiac arrest Security Services should be called in order to contact the Scottish Ambulance Service. If COVID-19 is suspected, the first aider must inform Security Services who will then inform ambulance service.
- [Defibrillators are located around campus](#), if possible, one should be brought to the incident by a second person. Security Services will however attend with a defibrillator.

Please note: Early use of a defibrillator significantly increases the person's chances of survival and does not increase risk of infection.

- Before commencing compression only CPR, to minimise COVID-19 transmission risk, a lightweight cloth should be placed over the individual's mouth and nose.
- If easily available, the first aider should put on personal protective equipment; disposable apron, disposable fluid resistant surgical face mask, disposable

gloves and eye protection. The face mask must be put on first, followed by eye protection and then gloves.

- Perform compression only CPR and use a defibrillator until the ambulance arrives.

Please note: [The correct procedure should be used for putting on, and removing, PPE.](#)

- It is not recommended that the first aider performs rescue breaths or mouth-to-mouth ventilation; perform chest compressions only. If using a defibrillator, follow the voice commands, however only perform chest compressions, not rescue breaths.

6. Used PPE and contaminated waste items

After performing first aid, the first aider should firstly remove gloves and then wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand gel; disposable apron, safety glasses or face shield and the face mask can then be removed and bagged for disposal. The first aider should then wash their hands thoroughly again.

Used PPE and any first aid waste should be double bagged in clinical waste bags if available or normal clear domestic waste bags, with the first bag being tied before placing it into a second bag which should be tied and transferred to the secure clinical waste store for onward disposal. Access to the clinical waste stream is controlled by the University's Estates Services Team.

7. Cleaning the area where first aid assistance was provided

If an area is contaminated with bodily fluids following a first aid incident, or a symptomatic individual came into contact with surfaces in the area, call Estates Services on X2164 and submit a specialist cleaning request.

8. Monitoring of health following the provision of first aid

All persons responding to the incident should closely monitor themselves for symptoms of possible COVID-19 over the following 14 days. Should any symptoms develop they should follow the advice provided on the NHS website.

If assistance has been provided to a known positive case (tested positive in the last 10 days) and social distancing was not maintained [advice on self-isolation](#) should be followed.

9. Review of departmental provision of First Aid

9.1 First Aid Needs Assessment

Departmental First Aid Needs Assessments should be reviewed and updated to take into account reduced number of available First Aiders and the change in work activities being undertaken. Security Services continue to provide First Aid assistance at all times and should be contacted on X2222 if assistance is required. If Security Services is the default first aid provider for the area being assessed this should be clearly communicated to personnel working or studying in the area.

9.2 First Aid Certificate - First Aid at Work (FAW) and Emergency First aid at Work (EFAW) certificates requalification

The University is aware that some First Aid certificates may have expired during the COVID-19 pandemic. All requalification training for these certificates should have been completed by **31 March 2021**. You must re-book onto the relevant course as soon as possible if your certificate has expired or is due to expire.

9.3 First Aid equipment and facilities

When reviewing the First Aid Needs Assessment consideration should be given to restocking of first aid supplies to ensure adequate and appropriate equipment and facilities are available to give first aid to anyone who is injured or becomes ill whilst on campus.

10. References

This guidance is based on information from:

- Resuscitation Council UK:
<https://www.resus.org.uk/media/statements/resuscitation-council-uk-statements-on-covid-19-coronavirus-cpr-and-resuscitation/covid-community/>
- Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-interim-guidance-for-first-responders/interim-guidance-for-first-responders-and-others-in-close-contact-with-symptomatic-people-with-potential-2019-ncov>
- [First aid during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic - HSE news](#)