



## Recommendations for Updating Your First Aid Kits

If your first aid kit is like mine, it's been rifled through for band-aids, Tylenol, scissors, gauze, and many other items for minor wounds, or that could serve dual purposes. At this point, the kit cannot serve its original purpose. Since it was placed in my truck in 2019, there have been several updates and upgrades that would make it a more useful first aid kit. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) revised its standards for first aid kits in 2022 and producers of first aid kits have upgraded their kits to comply. The availability and effectiveness of new supplies for the kit can make it as much a life saver as a cut and bruise response.

Two major and unfortunate health trends now bring life threatening events into the workplace in addition to the common workplace injuries Fund members have always faced. The trends are the all too common active shooter event and the threat of fentanyl overdose that can kill almost as fast as a bullet.

Active shooters can attack anywhere. Schools are common targets, but the workplace is also vulnerable. The Fund's recommendation is that all of your first aid kits comply with ANSI standards and include supplies that address the severe bleeding caused by high powered rounds impacting the body. This calls for tourniquets and compression bandages designed to stop severe bleeding. Supplies listed in the kits and supplemental severe bleed packages include:

- Tourniquets designed for heavy arterial bleeding that include some kind of tightening device like a windlass or ratchet. They must be at least 1.5 inches wide and capable of working on limbs from 7 to 33 inches circumference.
- Compression bandages containing additives to help stop bleeding (trauma pad).
- Foil blankets for use with people who have experienced severe blood loss to help prevent shock and hypothermia.

[\(Grainger, Know How, "Are your First Aid Kits up to Date with ANSI Standards?" 10/18/22\)](#)

Additional items may include powder that helps stop bleeding (BleedStop).

- Duct tape to help hold bandages and tourniquets in place.
- Hand sanitizer.
- Adhesive bandages.

Before purchasing any new kits and supplemental severe bleed supplies, ANSI and OSHA both recommend a hazard analysis of the workplace to determine the types of injuries any first aid kit should be able to address. Fund Risk Control Consultants can help you with this process with a Job Hazard Analysis.

Another significant lifesaver that can reverse the deadly effects of a fentanyl overdose is Narcan (naloxone). Its use soon after an overdose takes effect and suppresses breathing can counter the effects of the drug and restore breathing while emergency responders are on their way. Narcan comes in a two dose package that is administered as a nasal spray.

This allows a second dose if the first one is ineffective. It is an FDA approved, over the counter drug that is widely available in pharmacies. Include it in your first aid kit and consult with a nurse, pharmacist, or your doctor about how to administer the drug. Clear, simple instructions are also included on the packaging. The first step is to call 911 and provide breathing support using CPR before the drug is administered and afterwards if it is not effective. ([Cleveland Clinic, "Health Essentials," 4/26/23](#))

First Aid kits should be checked on a regular basis to re-stock supplies that may have been used. Some members use a service for this. If not using a service, designate someone in your workforce to keep track of the kits, checking them on a regular basis and ordering new supplies when necessary. Consult with your Risk Control Consultant for any assistance with your first aid kits or hazards in your workplace that can pose life threatening injuries.