

|  | UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN | | |
|---|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| | First Aider Appointment Letter | Reference Number | HS07 |
| | | Implementation Date | |
| | | Rev / Amendment No | 02 |
| | | Rev / Amendment Date | 07 October 2025 |

LETTER OF APPOINTMENT: FIRST AIDER

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. LEGAL REFERENCE – General Safety Regulations 3(1) and (4)

3. First Aid, Emergency Equipment and Procedures.

- (1) An employer shall take all reasonable steps that are necessary under the circumstances, to ensure that persons at work receive prompt first aid treatment in case of injury or emergency.
- (4) Where more than 10 employees are employed at a workplace, the employer of such employees shall take steps to ensure that for every group of up to 50 employees at that workplace, or in the case of a shop or an office as contemplated in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1983 (Act No. 3 of 1983), for every group of up to 100 employees, at least one person is readily available during normal working hours, who is in possession of a valid certificate of competency in first aid, issued by –
 - (a) the SA Red Cross Society;
 - (b) the St. John's Ambulance;
 - (c) the SA First Aid League; or
 - (d) a person or organisation approved by the chief inspector for this purpose.

1.2 EXPLANATION:

It is recommended that employers appoint a first aider where more than ten employees are employed.

This aspect of the legislation must be clearly understood and the intention, or rather the *purpose of the legislation*, must be carefully established. Sub-regulation (4) requires the first aider to be readily available during working hours. This automatically means that more than one first aider would be required should the organization be working on a shift basis, in order for a first aider to be available at all times. Should the normal first aider becomes sick or be on leave, another qualified first aider must be available to the employees of the organization.

Another issue that often arises is the actual purpose of first aiders and what was intended by their appointment or, rather, availability. The *purpose of the legislation* is to ensure that a first aider is readily available at all times to render immediate assistance in the case of an emergency. It was therefore never intended that, for example, a doctor having rooms near the workplace could substitute for a first aider, nor was it intended that first aiders could be shared by organizations.

Note that in terms of sub-regulation (4) there need be only one first aider available for every group of 100 persons in the case of offices and shops and for labs or workshops the minimum ratio is 1:50.. Note also that the same principle of 100 employees or part thereof must be applicable, for example, should one employ 105 persons one will be required to employ two first aiders, in the case of offices or shops.

The number of first aiders is also based on the level of risk within an area and thus the risk factor for the activity being carried out may be much higher than the minimum legislative requirements.

