

## Provision of first aid during COVID-19

### Information Sheet: Provision of first aid during COVID 19 Pandemic

#### Purpose

The purpose of this information sheet is to provide information and guidance to first aiders during the COVID-19 pandemic in accordance with the [First Aid](#) chapter of the HSW Handbook.

#### Q1 Do first aiders require any additional training to provide first aid during the COVID-19 pandemic?

No. In the case of assisting a person who may be suffering from a **contagious infectious disease** we simply need to continue treating every situation as if every person is infected with everything by implementing the infection control safeguards we have always been trained to use when rendering first aid and especially CPR (i.e. Standard Precautions).

#### Q2 What are the infection control safeguards used when providing first aid during the COVID-19 pandemic?

As a First aider you are reminded to apply the usual cross infection precautionary measures as you would for any first aid treatment.

This would include:

- [washing your hands thoroughly](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, then drying them thoroughly, or applying alcohol-based hand rub, before and after administering first aid;
- not touching your face with your hands when administering first aid;
- staying 1.5 metres apart whenever you can. If you are required to be inside the 1.5 metre social distancing rule to provide treatment, check that the measures you are taking are sufficient to prevent the exchange of body fluids and cross infection from the patient to yourself, or conversely from yourself to the patient;
- wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):
  - disposable gloves – to prevent contact with blood and body substances;
  - eye protection, a mask and protective clothing if splashes of blood or body substances are likely to occur;
- disposing of any used PPE correctly to avoid possible transmission of disease;
- washing surfaces with a detergent or soap and water and then disinfecting with diluted bleach or 70% alcohol;
- laundering clothing that may have come into contact with bodily fluids in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. (If clothing cannot be washed immediately store the clothing in a sealed disposable bag.)
- washing any part of your body that comes in contact with blood or body substances immediately with soap and water and obtaining prompt medical advice;
- cleaning any spill involving blood or body substances. First aiders should wear disposable gloves and if splashes of blood or body substances could occur, extra protective equipment like eye protection, plastic aprons and masks should be worn. Surfaces contaminated with blood or body substances should be wiped with paper towelling and cleaned with warm soapy water. For a difficult to clean surface or area, contact Infrastructure Branch 8313 4008 for assistance.

For any serious or life-threatening emergency gain assistance/send for help.

Ensure you (or the person who is assisting you) have contacted the Emergency Services (0) 000.

The Emergency Services will also provide you with professional advice in regard to infection control measures.

#### Q3 How should a First Aider assess unconscious patients during the COVID-19 Pandemic?

In accordance with the [Australian Resuscitation Council](#) -

*“Resuscitation guidelines around the world use the combination of unresponsiveness and not breathing normally to indicate cardiac arrest. Responsiveness is usually assessed by verbal and tactile stimuli (“talk and touch”). Breathing is usually assessed by opening the airway and looking, listening and feeling for breathing. In the setting of COVID-19, we continue to suggest checking for responsiveness. When assessing breathing, look for breathing. Do not open the airway or place your face next to the victim’s mouth/nose. Call emergency services if the patient is unresponsive and not breathing normally.”*

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**Q4 Are there any impacts on the provision of CPR during the COVID-19 Pandemic?**

In accordance with the [Australian Resuscitation Council](#) –

It is suggested that first aiders consider compressions and defibrillation. When considering the requirements for personal protective equipment for resuscitation, Standard precautions are considered adequate for the performance of resuscitation on patients who are neither confirmed nor suspected cases of COVID-19.

**Q5 Where do I obtain further information if I have concerns for myself after providing first aid during COVID-19 Pandemic?**

If you have any concerns in regard to your own health after administering first aid, contact your GP/medical provider.

**Q6 Where do I obtain more information on providing first aid during COVID-19?**

- [Australian Resuscitation Council - Frequently asked questions about resuscitation during COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- National Coronavirus Helpline (available 24hrs a day x 7 days a week) – 1800 020 080
- [Australia Government Department of Health](#)
- [First aid, Coronavirus \(Covid-19\) and Social Distancing](#) (AustraliaWide First Aid)
- [Don't Spread It – Infection Control When Providing First Aid](#) (St. John Ambulance Australia)
- [Code of Practice: First Aid in the Workplace](#) (which includes Standard Precautions for Infection control) (SafeWork SA)
- Health Victoria – [Infection control – standard and transmission based precautions](#)

If you require further information on the University's procedures for the provision of First Aid, please contact your local [HSW Team](#).

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