

Automated External Defibrillators in the Workplace

On November 1st, 2010 Guideline G3.17(1)-1 *Implementing an early defibrillation program in the workplace* was removed.

Some concern was expressed by stakeholders that the AED guideline could be perceived as implying that occupational health and safety requirements for Automated External Defibrillators (AED) applied to the devices that are made available for public use only. This could be an impediment for employers to make AEDs available to the general public. That was not the intent of the AED guideline.

If AEDs *are* provided for use in a workplace, then they will constitute pieces of first aid equipment to which Occupational Health and Safety requirements apply. Some of the applicable provisions of the Occupational Health & Safety Regulation (OHSR) include Sections 3.16, 3.17, 4.3, 4.5, 4.10 and *Section 115 of the Workers Compensation Act*.

To assist employers and Occupational First Aid Attendants, Certification Services offers the following information:

- a. An AED is not required by the OHSR; however, AED training *is* included in all of the OFA and OFA equivalent courses. No separate certificate is issued for the CPR/AED training received in an OFA course - the training is simply part of the course. Workers who possess a valid OFA certificate were able to demonstrate competency deploying an AED as part of their training or examination and were duly certified by their OFA instructor or evaluator. The AED training a worker receives in an OFA course may not be as comprehensive as what a worker might receive if *brand specific* AED training were taken.
- b. An AED that is in the workplace is considered to be part of the workplace first aid equipment (sections 3.16 and 3.17 of the OHSR). Workers are trained in the use of an AED when taking an OFA course but only the emergency application protocol. There is very little information about the care, maintenance and inspections recommended by the manufacturer included in an OFA course (*that information would be found in the workplace AED user manual and spec sheet*).
- c. The brand of AED training simulator used in an OFA or OFA equivalent course may be different from the brand of AED found in a workplace. Just as for *any* piece of equipment, the worker must be trained in the use of the equipment and authorized to use it (4.10 of the OHSR). Inspection and maintenance records may be required for the AED as per the manufacturer's instructions; some inspections may be daily, weekly, monthly etc (4.3 and 4.9 of the OHSR).

- d. Although medical oversight is not required by the OHSR, it is recommended. Physicians, with an expertise in pre-hospital defibrillation, can offer expert advice on training issues, special situation protocols, AED policies & procedures, post-arrest data management and the handling of confidential patient clinical information. This will assist the workplace gaining compliance with the applicable sections of the OHSR and other generally accepted medical practices in Canada.
- e. Written procedures need to include who is to, and how to access the AED and must include the location of the AED (3.17 of the OHSR). The OFAAs in a workplace should be able to answer questions specific to the AED unit that is available at the workplace. The AED user manual and spec sheet will allow for the development of a checklist that the OFAAs should use to conduct inspections of the workplace unit(s). During WorkSafeBC inspections of a jobsite, Board Officers may question the OFAA to establish knowledge of the onsite AED and any routine inspections and/or pre-use checks that should be performed.

In summary, if the brand of AED training unit (AED simulator) used to instruct an OFA course is different from the brand of AED unit found in a workplace, the OFAAs will require further orientation and training specific to the AED brand found in the workplace. A separate certificate is not required for an AED but records of the training are required.

If the employer determines that medical oversight is appropriate (possibly following a first aid assessment), the medical director may establish additional training and orientation including the frequency of any CPR/AED retraining. Currently all OFA and equivalent certificates are valid for 3 years.

Certification Services supports The Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation recommendations for periodic assessment of rescuer knowledge and skills, with reinforcement or refresher information provided as needed during the certification period. Ideally, retraining should not be limited to 3 year recertification intervals.

Questions about OFA certification and/or AED training should be directed to an Approved Occupational First Aid Training Agency [First Aid Training Agencies](#) (PDF 617 KB) or to WorkSafeBC Certification Services at 604.276.3090 or Certification@WorkSafeBC.com