

## Top Five Characteristics of a Good First Aider Candidate

In Ontario, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) contain regulations relating to first aid in the workplace.

It is a common misconception that certifying one employee in First Aid & CPR will meet the requirements. There are a few situations where this may be true, but generally only when there is a one person work area such as a taxi or a truck.

The regulations require that there always be someone on duty in the work area with current first aid certification at all times that work is in operation. It is the employer's responsibility to determine how many employees to certify.

If any of the following situations arises when there is only one first aid certified employee at a workplace, the employer will be out of compliance:

- Employee is on vacation, sick leave or is working from home or another location.
- Employee only covers one shift cycle of multiple shifts
- Employee is the injured employee needing assistance
- Employee faints at the sight of blood or injury
- Employee is not able to access all areas of the work operation due to restricted access controls



It may take three, four, or more employees per shift, and per work area, trained in first aid in order to be in compliance with Ontario first aid regulations.

In addition to deciding on how many employees to train in first aid, employers should carefully consider who they should train. For some people, the mere mention of blood makes them woozy. For others, they are not comfortable with touching people or taking charge of a situation. Here are the top five characteristics of a good first aider candidate:

1. Genuinely interested in taking a first aid course and being a designated first aider.
2. Has previously been trained in first aid and has had some experience in its application, ie former life guard.
3. Management or supervisory material – ready and willing to take charge if someone is injured.
4. Has reliable attendance and works in close proximity to the first aid station.
5. Is a people person who has demonstrated a willingness to help others.

If you don't have the right candidates in place at the moment, consider including first aid training and experience as a requirement in your next employment vacancy posting.

*Dianne Rende is the Executive Director of St. John Ambulance, Peel Dufferin Branch. As Canada's leading authority in first aid, St. John Ambulance is dedicated to improving health and safety at work, at home and at play. Dianne can be reached by email at [dianne.rende@on.sja.ca](mailto:dianne.rende@on.sja.ca) or for more information visit [www.sja.ca](http://www.sja.ca).*