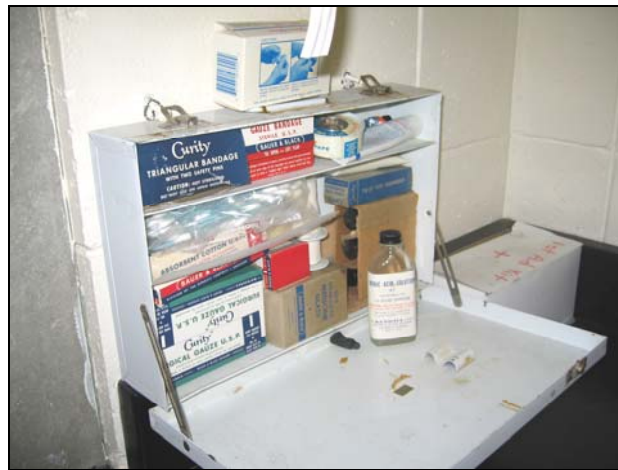


First Aid in the Workplace – Jim Lang: Gallagher, Bassett Risk and Loss Control Services

Do you have a First Aid kit nearby in your office? In the various student laboratories and shops? In the facility maintenance shop? In College vehicles? When was the last time they were opened and inspected? Are they up-to-date? Properly stocked? Expired supplies thrown out and replaced?

A recent ‘inspection’ of a First Aid cabinet in a welding shop contained, among other things, bottles of mercurochrome and boric acid, and an open, partially used box of gauze that was pre-1962! The supplies were so old they didn’t have zip codes on the packages – only cities and states! (And for those of you wondering what boric acid was doing in there – it used to be considered an ‘antiseptic eyewash,’ but can you imagine putting a 40+ year old solution of ANYTHING in your eyes???) ‘Nuff said.



There is an ANSI standard (Z308.1-2003), “Minimum Requirements for Industrial Unit-type First-Aid Kits,” which divides kits down into three types:

Type I: Small, indoor-type kits, for office or in a light manufacturing facility, and are usually wall-mounted.

Type II: These are somewhat larger kits, and have a handle so they can be carried to the incident. They can also be practical in offices, or manufacturing environments.

Type III: Intended for portable use in mobile industries as well as outdoor applications. These kits should be moisture- and corrosion-resistant and have a carrying handle.

The ANSI standard also covers the first aid items, including compresses, bandages, tape, GLOVES, antiseptic and burn treatments. Additional items can also be included, depending upon the potential hazard(s). For example packets of “Sting Kill” might be appropriate for kits that would be used by the construction trades and facility maintenance workers. (Note: The revised ANSI standard no longer requires a physician to approve supplies in a kit.)

Finally, OSHA has published “Best Practices Guide: Fundamentals of a Workplace First-Aid Program.” It can be downloaded from the www.osha.gov or the DMI website. Good, practical information!

In summary, open up your First Aid kits and look inside! Would the kit be helpful or harmful if you needed it? Would you want to use the supplies inside?!?