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## Bulletin 06-08

**FROM: South Dakota Division of Insurance**

**RE: Guide for Employers and the Insurance Industry on Workers' Compensation First Aid**

**DATE: November 22, 2006**

The definition of first aid is an important in the area of workers' compensation insurance but not always clearly understood by employers or the insurance industry. This guide is intended to provide assistance in determining whether treatment provided for an injury is first aid. The general rule of thumb to follow is that if the treatment requires the services of a licensed medical professional, then it is not first aid.

First aid is medical attention usually administered immediately following an injury and provided at the location where the injury occurred. First aid is one-time, short-term treatment that requires little technology or training to administer.

The following are examples of first aid:

1. Cleaning minor cuts, scrapes, or scratches;
2. Cleaning, flushing, or soaking wounds on the surface of the skin;
3. Treating a minor burn
4. Applying bandages or dressings
  - a. Using wound coverings such as bandages, Band-Aids™, gauze pads, using butterfly bandages or Steri-Strips™
5. Use of nonprescription medicine at nonprescription strength without the recommendation of a physician or other licensed health care professional
6. Draining blisters
7. Removing debris or foreign bodies from the eyes using irrigation or cotton swabs
8. Removing splinters or foreign material from areas other than the eyes by irrigation, tweezers, cotton swabs or other simple means;
9. Drinking fluids to relieve heat stress;
10. Using massages;
11. Administering tetanus immunizations;
12. Using hot or cold therapy;
13. Using any non-rigid means of support, such as elastic bandages, wraps, non-rigid back belts;
14. Using temporary immobilization devices while transporting an accident victim such as splints, slings, neck collars and back boards;
15. Drilling of a fingernail or toenail to relieve pressure; and
16. Using eye patches.



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First aid does not include the following:

1. Administering prescription medications;
2. Administering nonprescription medications at the direction of a licensed health care practitioner;
3. Administering immunizations other than tetanus;
4. Using wound closing devices such as sutures and staples;
5. Using devices with rigid stays or other systems designed to immobilize parts of the body;
6. Physical therapy or chiropractic treatment; and
7. Any treatment or advice given by a licensed health care practitioner.

Employers should urge employees to report all injuries whether those injuries require only first aid or are more serious. It is also a good practice for employers to document and keep records of all injuries including those falling within the definition of first aid.

Anyone with any questions on whether an injury is considered first aid or whether the injury is required to be reported is encouraged to contact the Department of Labor at (605) 773-3681.

*Prepared in conjunction with the Department of Labor*