

# OSHA Definition of First Aid

**Cal/OSHA defines “first aid” as any one-time treatment**, and any followup visit for the purpose of observation of minor scratches, cuts, burns, splinters, or other minor industrial injuries, which do not ordinarily require medical care. This one-time treatment, and followup visit for the purpose of observation, is considered first aid even though provided by a physician or registered professional personnel. *Labor Code 5401 (a)*.

**Fed/OSHA’s** recordkeeping rule that went into effect January 1, 2002, included a definition of first aid, and clarifies that only medical treatment needs to be recorded on the new OSHA 300 logs. First aid cases do not need to be recorded.

## **Defining FIRST AID treatment:**

These are procedures that Fed/OSHA considers to be first aid:

- First aid is usually administered after the injury or illness occurs and at the location where it occurred.
- First aid generally consists of one-time or short-term treatment.
- First aid treatments are usually simple and require little or no technology.
- First aid can be administered by people with little training (beyond first aid training) and even by the injured or ill person.
- First aid is usually administered to keep the condition from worsening while the injured or ill persons are awaiting medical treatment.

Fed/OSHA’s new definition of first aid includes:

- Using a nonprescription medication at nonprescription strength;
- Cleaning, flushing, or soaking wounds on the surface of the skin;
- Using hot or cold therapy;
- Using any temporary immobilization devices while transporting a victim;
- Draining fluid from a blister;
- Removing foreign bodies from the eye using only irrigation or a cotton swab;
- Using finger guards;
- Use of a massage (though physical and chiropractic therapy are defined as medical treatment); and
- Drinking fluids for relief of heat stress.

Multiple applications of first aid do not represent medical treatment, according to Fed/OSHA. It is the nature of the treatment, not how many times it is applied, that defines whether it is first aid or medical treatment, according to the agency. [PE]