

# OSHA Definition of First Aid

**C**al/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]