



Automatic External Defibrillators (AED) Policy

Automatic external defibrillators are portable battery powered pieces of equipment which are designed to restore the normal electrical heart rhythm in an emergency situation when a person has suffered a sudden cardiac arrest. When used in conjunction with the delivery of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) from a trained person, they substantially increase the chance of survival following such an event. The quicker life saving first aid and a defibrillator are used on a casualty, the better the outlook for survival and recovery. Survival rates when effective CPR is given are between 2 and 5%. If a defibrillator is used within ten minutes this figure increases to around 45%.

The decision on whether to provide defibrillators in University areas should be taken on the basis of a risk assessment. This should take in to account the number of people who routinely work in or use the work area, the age profile of those people, and any physical activity (including, for example, activities like use of stairs) which take place in the area. The increase in any one or more of these factors would increase the requirement for a defibrillator to be provided.

Purchase policy

The Health and Safety Department should be contacted if you are considering buying an AED for your work area. This will allow you to find out about any discounts which may be available, and also the models which are recommended. Consistency in the models purchased makes subsequent training and guidance arrangements easier.

Siting of AEDs

AEDs should be kept in an easily accessible place such as a reception area, common room, or first aid room. Staff and students using the work area should all be aware of its whereabouts, and signage should be used to indicate where it is kept. It should be easily accessible at all times, and not kept in an area which might be kept locked at certain times of the day. Advice and guidance on the siting of AEDs is available from the Health and Safety Department.

Training

As mentioned above, defibrillators are most effective when used in conjunction with CPR from a trained individual. Defibrillators are designed to be easy to use by lay persons, but it makes sense for individuals in work areas where they are provided to be trained in their use. This training should be kept up to date, and it is recommended that individuals undergo this training on an annual basis. There should be five or six individuals trained in each area where defibrillators are available, to help ensure that a trained operator is available should an emergency situation arise. Training is available from the Health and Safety Department and is bookable via MyEd.

Maintenance

Defibrillators need little in the way of routine maintenance, and all currently available defibrillators perform regular self-checks, and indicate if a problem has been detected. Defibrillator batteries and electrode pads have a limited shelf life. Batteries should be replaced approximately every five years (when indicated), and electrode pads every two. The system for checking equipment, and changing electrode pads and batteries should be managed by the area to which the AED belongs.

Further information and guidance

- A guide to Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)
(<https://www.resus.org.uk/publications/a-guide-to-aeds/>)
- Adult basic life support and automated external defibrillators
(<https://www.resus.org.uk/resuscitation-guidelines/adult-basic-life-support-and-automated-external-defibrillation/>)
- How to do CPR
(<https://www.bhf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/how-to-save-a-life/how-to-do-cpr>)