

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) In The Workplace Policy



Sudden cardiac arrest is the second leading cause of death in Canada. Implementing a workplace automated external defibrillator (AED) program can save lives. Such programs are also fairly simple and inexpensive. That's why many companies install AEDs at their sites even though they're not legally required to do so.

But laws are changing. AEDs are now mandatory at certain government buildings. Manitoba requires AEDs at not just government but also fitness centres, bus stations, airports, and many other publicly accessible buildings or sites.

In 2025, Ontario became the first province to make installation of workplace AEDs an OHS requirement. While limited to certain types of sites, namely, construction projects with 20 or more workers that are expected to last for at least 3 months, the mandatory AEDs OHS rule is likely to expand in Ontario and catch on in other provinces.

Bottom Line: Whether you do it voluntarily or because you have to, implementing a workplace AEDs program may save lives. But you also need the right policy and protocols. Here's a template policy that you can adapt for your own workplace.

AEDs in the Workplace Policy

1. POLICY

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is the second leading cause of death in Canada that can happen to any person at any time in any location without warning. It occurs when the heart's electrical system malfunctions and the heart stops beating. The only effective treatment for SCA is early defibrillation, or delivery of an electrical shock that re-starts the heart. Such a shock can be delivered by a machine that a non-medically trained person can use called an automated external defibrillator (AED).

As part of its commitment to ensuring the safety and health of not only Company staff and personnel but all persons at its facilities, and in recognition that immediate use of AEDs can significantly increase victims' chances of survival, ABC Company will ensure that readily accessible AEDs are kept at all of its facilities in accordance

with this Policy.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that AEDs at ABC Company's facilities are properly equipped, located, maintained, and used.

3. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Medical Advisor

[Name/Title] will serve as medical advisor to the AEDs program with responsibility for:

- Providing general medical advice and technical assistance.
- Offering counsel on the types and quantities of AEDs to purchase and where to place those devices.
- Reviewing incidents in which AEDs are used on actual victims ("AED events") based on information downloaded from AEDs after AED events and records of those events.
- Reviewing and making recommendations to enhance AED program effectiveness.

3.2 AEDs Coordinator

ABC Company will appoint a qualified and properly trained individual to serve as AEDs Coordinator for the workplace with responsibility for:

- Selecting and ensuring proper placement of AEDs in accordance with the 3-minute rule, which dictates that AEDs should be located so that they are no more than 3 minutes' reach of anyone at the facility.
- Ensuring that AEDs are properly mounted, fully equipped and in proper operating order.
- Ensuring that AEDs signs are in place.
- Ensuring that all required inspections, battery, and maintenance checks of each device are performed.
- Contacting AED distributors for replacement parts.
- Monitoring recall notices and ensuring they're followed.
- Maintaining required AED records and logs.

3.3 OHS Coordinator

The ABC Company Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator (OHS Coordinator) is responsible for:

- Developing and making readily available procedures and guidelines for the use of AEDs.
- Ensuring departments comply with AED standards set by the Canadian Red Cross and applicable regulations.
- Ensuring signage is appropriately placed to notify the public of the presence of the AED.
- Arranging annual AED training.
- Organizing AED incident review.

3.4 Department Heads

ABC Company department heads are responsible for:

- Arranging for appropriate personnel to receive basic AED training and required updates.
- Reporting any use or tampering of an AED to the OHS Coordinator.
- Doing daily AED inspections to ensure the department's device is charged and functioning.
- Signing the daily check sheet indicating the inspection window of the AED reads 'OK'.
- Monitor monthly and annual maintenance of AEDs.
- Directing emergency services to the site of an emergency.

3.5 AED Responders

AED responders are responsible for:

- Being ready, willing, and able to provide immediate care in a cardiac emergency.
- Following ABC Company's AED response protocol and guidelines.
- Remaining current on their training and certifications.

3.6 Workers & Staff

Workers and staff are responsible for:

- Reporting any use or tampering of an AED to the OHS Coordinator.
- Refraining from tampering with or using the AED except if they are AED responders responding to a cardiac emergency.
- Immediately calling 911 in case of a cardiac emergency.
- In the absence of trained personnel, and after 911 has been notified, staying with the victim until trained responders arrive.

4. TRAINING

AEDs should be used only by designated employees, known as AED responders, who successfully complete initial or recertification training in adult CPR and use of the AED within the past year. AED responders will receive annual training and recertification in adult CPR/AEDs from a qualified instructor. They will also be offered refresher training in AED use as needed/requested. A master file of initial, annual, and periodic refresher AED training records will be maintained by the AEDs Coordinator.

5. LOCATION & STORAGE OF AEDs

AEDs and supplies will be stored in a suitable place that:

- Allows for the AED and required supplies to be kept together.
- Protects the AED and required supplies from dust, moisture, and other substances present at the site that could damage or affect its functionality.
- Is clearly labelled with a sign that meets the requirements of Section 6 below.
- Is unobstructed and allows for easy and immediate access to the AED and required supplies.
- If it is outdoors, protects the AED and required supplies from extreme temperatures, moisture and direct sunlight.

AEDs will be stored in [*indicate type, e.g., in wall mounted cases*] linked to the building security system so that Security is notified whenever an AED is removed from

its case. Suspected abuse or vandalism of AEDs must be reported to the OHS Coordinator immediately so that the device can be evaluated for proper operation.

6. AEDs SIGNAGE

Signs will be posted near each AED and at other locations throughout the site with information indicating its location. A sign must include a graphic symbol that:

- Depicts a heart containing a lightning bolt.
- Contains the words “Automated External Defibrillator” or the acronym “AED” in English, or the words “Défibrillateur externe automatisé” or the acronym “DEA” in French.

7. AEDs SUPPLIES

Each AED kit must contain:

- 2 pairs of nitrile gloves.
- 1 disposable razor.
- 1 pocket mask.
- 1 resuscitation face shield.
- Trauma scissors.
- Defibrillator pads.

8. INSPECTION OF AEDs

AEDs will be maintained and tested in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. A competent worker will also inspect the defibrillator every 3 months in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. Records of AED inspections will be kept with the AED. Such records will list:

- The date of each inspection.
- The name of the competent worker who performed the inspection.
- The signature of that worker.

9. USE OF AEDs

AED responders must follow the procedures and protocols established by the OHS Coordinator, as well as the device manufacturer’s instructions, when using an AED. Each use of an AED by an AED responder must be accompanied by a call to ABC Company Security and 911 to ensure timely provision of advanced life support and transport to an emergency medical facility. When a call for emergency aid is received, the nearest available Safety Officer equipped with an AED must respond to assist other responding personnel. CPR and AED must be provided as appropriate until the local EMS staff arrives to assume responsibility.

10. POST-AED EVENT REQUIREMENTS

10.1 AED Event Documentation

The following documents must be provided to the OHS Coordinator within 24 hours

after any AED event:

- The AED Event Report form, to be completed by the AED responder.
- A record of first aid rendered and AED use to be completed by the first responder.

10.2 Restoration of AED Used

After an AED event:

- The device used must be cleaned in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- The pads must be replaced and a new set of replacement pads must be provided.
- The AED must be checked for damage and recertified as being fully functional.
- The date on the new electrode and battery, if any, must be checked.
- The device must be put back in its original location.

10.3 Post-Incident Review

After each AED event, all of the key participants in the AED event must participate in post-incident review to identify what went well and what can be improved and, if necessary, to receive critical incident stress debriefing. A summary of post-incident review must be sent to the OHS Coordinator.

11. AED PROGRAM MONITORING

The Medical Advisor must review AED event records, both individually to monitor the effectiveness of the particular response, and collectively to monitor the overall effectiveness of this Policy to identify flaws and changes and improvements necessary to correct them.