



First Aid as a Life Skill

Training Requirements for Quality Provision of
Standard-based and Revalidation First Aid
Training and Assessment

Version 3.4 - December 2025



TOITŪ TE WAIORA
Community, Health, Education
and Social Services
Workforce Development Council

1. Introduction

First Aid as a Life Skill exists as a ‘living document’, designed in conjunction with the first aid sector to link various relevant documents and provide a single source of reference. It is amended in line with any requirement changes or updates.

It outlines requirements for standard-based first aid training based on assessment of four unit standards and three skill standards listed in the New Zealand Qualification Authority (‘NZQA’) Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards (‘DASS’) [First Aid domain](#). It forms part of compliance documentation for standard-based first aid training alongside first aid [Consent and Moderation Requirements \(CMR 0024\)](#). It also provides interpretation and information that providers must consider when assessing against or revalidating first aid standards and award of micro-credentials.

The concept of ‘First Aid as a Life Skill’ refers to the fact that the provision of first aid is a skill that enables individuals to manage the demands and challenges of preserving life effectively. To support the safety and resilience of New Zealanders, communities, and workplaces, this document promotes and supports consistent and high-quality delivery of first aid training.

Table 1 - First aid unit standards

Unit Standard number	Title	Level	Credits	Version
6400*	Manage first aid in an emergency situation	3	2	8
6401*	Provide first aid	2	1	7
6402*	Provide basic life support	2	2	9
33319	Instruct how to provide basic life support	2	2	1

*Expiring on 31 December 2027. Replaced by skill standards 41051-41053.

Table 2 - First aid skill standards

Skill Standard number	Title	Level	Credits	Version
41051	Manage first aid at an accident scene	3	1	1
41052	Administer first aid	2	1	1
41053	Administer basic life support	2	1	1

Table 3 – First aid micro-credentials

NZQCF number	DASS unit standards	DASS skill standards	Title
5084*	6402, 6401, 6400		Manage first aid in an emergency situation (Level 3, 5 credits)
5582		41053, 41052, 41051	Manage Life Support and First Aid in Emergency Situations (Level 3, 3 credits)
5494		41053, 41052	Foundation First Aid (Level 2, 2 credits)

*Expiring on 31 December 2027. Replaced by micro-credentials 5582 or 5494.

Toitū te Waiora Community, Health, Education, and Social Services Workforce Development Council ('TTW') is the Standard-Setting Body ('SSB') for first aid standards. It is responsible for the ongoing review and publication of this document in conjunction with the New Zealand first aid sector.

TTW is being disestablished on 31 December 2025. SSB responsibility for first aid standards will move to the Health and Community Industry Skills Board on 1 January 2026.

Part 1: Compliance requirements

Provides a summary of compliance requirements for delivering standard-based first aid training and assessment and requirements for revalidation courses, including key content and additional context to requirements listed in CMR 0024 and standard guidance information.

Part 2: Unit and skill standard interpretation

Provides guidance and clarity for training providers when interpreting the standards.

Part 3: Micro-credential interpretation

Advice for providers seeking accreditation to deliver first aid micro-credentials.

Part 4: First aid training guidelines

Contains the guidelines expected to be used by registered and accredited first aid providers.

1. Compliance requirements

Providers must hold consent to assess from NZQA against first aid unit or skill standards and must comply with CMR 0024 as well as stipulations listed in the standards.

1.1 Training and qualification requirements for a first aid instructor

The training and qualification requirements for first aid instructors are outlined in CMR 0024 Appendix 2. Requirements are:

- Instructors must have 6400-6402 or 41051-41053 and maintain a current first aid certificate through revalidation training.
- Instructors must have unit standards in the [Emergency Care - First Response](#) domain (e.g., 29321 or the expired 14470-14773) or demonstrate equivalent knowledge and skills.
- Instructors must be trained in standards-based assessment. They must have obtained credit for [unit standard 4098](#). While demonstrating equivalent knowledge and skills may be acceptable, it is strongly recommended that instructors obtain credit for unit standard 4098.
- Instructors must hold a current [New Zealand Resuscitation Council Emergency Care Instructor Certificate](#), or a current AECTP First Aid Trainer Course Certificate, or demonstrate equivalent knowledge and skills.
- Instructors must have credits for adult education unit standards or demonstrate competency in learner-centred techniques consistent with those in the [Delivery of Adult Education and Training domain](#) in the DASS.
- Instructors must maintain currency in first aid knowledge, skills, and best practice in teaching and assessment through annual professional development.

1.2 Evaluating equivalent skills and knowledge

Equivalency provides an element of flexibility for training providers to employ first aid instructors who have relevant skills, knowledge, and experience that do not meet the pre-defined criteria (e.g. an applicant from overseas). An evaluation of equivalency must include the following steps:

- Reviewing the instructor candidate's qualifications and, if necessary, ascertain relevance to the first aid sector (e.g., by contacting the provider named on the person's qualification to confirm the scope of the programme of study).
- Reviewing the instructor candidate's employment and/or volunteer history and, if necessary, ascertain relevance to the first aid sector (e.g., by conducting referee checks with previous employers to confirm relevant industry experience).

The assessment of equivalency may identify gaps in the instructor candidates' skills and knowledge that can be addressed by training or qualifications other than those listed above. For example, a candidate with a teaching background in a non-adult education setting may achieve equivalency with adult education unit standards having completed a non-unit standard-based adult education course.

The provider must document how equivalency was verified, including what information was used to evaluate equivalence for each instructor requirement.

1.3 First aid course prerequisites

Learners must be informed prior to enrolment of these prerequisites:

- First aid courses are practical and involve group work.
- Learners need to be physically able to perform a range of first aid tasks in simulated emergency situations.
- Learners being assessed against 6402 or 41053 must be physically capable of administering CPR.
- Learners who are not physically capable of administering CPR may choose to be assessed against 33319.
- 33319 is not a pre-requisite for 6401 and therefore cannot be used as a straight replacement for 6402. Learners who complete 33319 cannot be assessed against 6401.

1.4 Duration of standard-based first aid training and assessment

The duration and of first aid training must take account of:

- Class size.
- Capabilities of the people being trained.
- Identified hazards and risks associated with their workplace (where practicable).

The duration of first aid training must meet the following minimum requirements and the criteria of the standard:

- For training including assessment of 6400-6402 or 41051-41053 – a minimum of 12 hours training and assessment, including three 15-minute breaks (excluding lunch breaks).
- For training including assessment of 6401 and 6402 or 41052 and 41053 – a minimum of eight hours of training and assessment, including two 15-minute breaks (excluding lunch breaks).
- For standard-based revalidation training – a minimum of six hours of training and assessment, including one 15-minute break (excluding lunch breaks).

- The duration of training and assessment must not be planned or scheduled as less than the defined minimums above. However, the assessment timeframe on the day can be shortened if the instructor-to-learner ratio is high. The rationale for this is that the total assessment time for a lower volume of learners will be shorter than for larger groups. Providers are responsible for being able to justify any reduction in assessment time and be able to demonstrate there is no impact on learning.

1.5 Requirements for First Aid Revalidation Training

People who hold standards 6400-6402 or 41051-41053 must complete revalidation training every two years (24 months) to maintain currency. Specifically:

- To maintain currency, revalidation training must occur within the two-year period following award of standards.
- There is a three-month grace period during which a person is still eligible for revalidation training. Revalidation training must be completed before the end of this grace period, i.e., within 27 months of the award of standards.
- If revalidation training is not completed by the end of the three-month grace period and the person subsequently requires first aid standards, they must enrol in a first aid course that includes assessment and reporting of standards 6400-6402 or 41051-41053.

To successfully complete revalidation training, the learner must be able to physically demonstrate, as a minimum, the correct actions for:

- Management of an unresponsive adult or child, and infant that is not breathing normally (e.g. DRSABCD actions including CPR).
- Management of an unresponsive adult or child, and infant that is breathing normally (e.g. placing a person into the recovery (side supported) position).

The WorkSafe New Zealand [First Aid at Work](#) guidelines (February 2020) also provide guidance on revalidation (refresher) training.

1.6 6400 or 41051 training

To obtain 6400 or 41051 when the person has previously been awarded 6402 and 6401 or 41052 and 41053, there are two options:

- Attend the 6400 or 41051 component of a 12-hour course covering 6400-6402 or 41051-41053. The provider must ensure that the learner has completed a total of 12 hours of training and assessment at the conclusion of the 6400 component of the course.
- Complete a standalone four-hour course for 6400 or 41051.

It is important to note that the four-hour training and assessment for 6400 or 41051 does not count as revalidation for 6401/6402 or 41052/41053.

1.7 First Aid Certification

Certification provides evidence that a learner has successfully completed all necessary training requirements and fulfilled assessment criteria specified in the standards. Providers can choose to award NZQCF micro-credentials or award their own certification.

Certification includes:

- a. Award of standards and micro-credentials listed on the learner's New Zealand Record of Achievement ([NZRoA](#)). An overview of the award and issuing of NZQCF qualifications and micro-credentials is covered on the [NZQA website](#).
- b. Award of a certificate of attendance (commonly referred to otherwise as a 'local certificate') to a learner who has been awarded standards or completed revalidation training. The award of a certificate of attendance is not bound by NZQA or SSB rules. Providers are recommended to issue certificates of attendance that include:
 - Certificate title.
 - Standards the learner was assessed against or standards that were revalidated.
 - Achievement date (can be referred to as issue date or completion date).
 - Certificate validity period (i.e., two years) or expiry date.
 - NZQA provider name and number.

2. Unit and skill standard interpretation

The purpose of this section is to provide clarity to standard assessment outcomes, performance criteria and range statements. All first aid training and assessment must be consistent with good clinical practice. The principles of DRSABCD (Danger, Response, Send for help, Airway, Breathing, CPR, Defibrillation) should be applied to all first aid situations and be a fundamental component of all first aid training and assessment.

2.1 Safety

Learners must be trained to pause and identify dangers prior to assisting to protect their safety, the safety of the person in need, and bystanders, as the priority. They must understand that if they are not able to manage or appropriately mitigate a danger the appropriate thing to do is to update the emergency services and then await their arrival from a safe location.

2.2 Severity of condition

A basic assessment of an ill or injured person is essential to identify any immediate life-threatening conditions that require immediate first aid intervention and/or necessitate calling 111 for ambulance assistance. Learners must be trained to appropriately recognise and manage conditions identified within each unit standard from mild through to life-threatening.

Most first aid incidents are not life threatening. Upon determining that there are no immediate life-threatening concerns, first aiders should be knowledgeable about alternative options for seeking help (i.e., other than calling 111), including Healthline, urgent care facilities, general practices, and pharmacies.

2.3 Airway management (6402, 41053)

Learners must be trained to:

- Open and maintain the airway of an unresponsive person and how to position them in the recovery position (side supported) with an open airway. *Note: maintaining an open airway takes priority over any assumed cervical spine injury.*
- Recognise choking and the first aid actions required to clear the airway.

For performance criterion 2.1 in 6402, if providers chose to substitute the demonstration on 'self' with a manikin, they are encouraged to conduct a thorough risk assessment to ensure the safety of participants.

2.4 CPR - Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (6402, 41053)

Cardiac arrest remains a significant public health issue, with ischemic heart disease being the second most prevalent cause of death in New Zealand. Every year in New Zealand, over 2,000 people are treated for cardiac arrest in the community; however, only 11% survive. Furthermore, for every minute without CPR or defibrillation, a person's chance of survival falls by 10-15%. Therefore, trained and confident learners are critical to making a lifesaving impact.

Learners must be able to recognise when a person is unresponsive, and whether they are breathing normally. They must be taught that:

- A person who is unresponsive and not breathing normally should be treated by a first aider as in cardiac arrest. Learners must understand the significance of an early call for help, the provision of effective CPR until emergency services take over, and the immediate application of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).
- A person who is unresponsive and breathing normally is at risk of deterioration, and therefore learners must know how to open and maintain their airway whilst in a

recovery position (side-supported). Continuous monitoring of breathing is then required to identify whether the person deteriorates and requires CPR.

Providers must ensure that learners can perform effective CPR on a firm, level surface, preferably a floor. This includes:

- Correct hand placement.
- Correct compression depth and recoil.
- Correct compression rate.
- Effective rescue breaths.
- Minimal delay between rescue breaths and compressions.

The maximum ratio of a single CPR manikin to learners is 1:4, to ensure each learner has sufficient practice time.

Familiarisation with AEDs is essential to CPR instruction. Therefore, explanation and demonstration of AED use should be undertaken in all teaching and assessment leading to 6402 or 41053.

2.5 CPR - Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (33319)

This unit standard was listed on the DASS in January 2024.

Providers can assess against 33319 when a learner is not physically able to administer CPR to a person themselves. Learners assessed against this standard will be able to instruct others how to provide basic life support and manage an airway obstruction, bleeding, and shock.

Providers must clearly communicate to the learner that award of 33319 does not act as a prerequisite for 6401 or 41052.

2.6 Bleeding control and shock (6402, 41053)

First aiders must be able to:

- Understand the difference between minor bleeding and severe life-threatening bleeding.
- Determine where control of life-threatening bleeding takes priority over CPR.
- Apply direct pressure to stop severe external bleeding.

Using a tourniquet to control bleeding should only be considered where life-threatening bleeding is present and bleeding cannot be controlled by direct pressure.

The provider's assessment checklist must show specific information on how each person's bleeding and shock is expected to be managed. This information may cover aspects such as

the environment, number of people injured or unwell, number and description of bystanders.

2.7 Medical emergencies and injuries (6401, 41052)

Common medical emergencies

First aiders must understand the most common and potentially significant medical emergencies, emphasising the recognition of symptoms rather than diagnosis. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Chest pain (emphasis on acute coronary syndromes).
- Stroke.
- Seizures (including how to keep someone safe whilst having a seizure).
- Asthma exacerbation.
- Diabetic emergencies
- Severe allergic reaction.

Common injuries

First aiders must know how to manage the following common injuries:

- Burns (including chemical and electrical).
- Wounds (including gunshot, stabbing, embedded object, amputation).
- Fractures, dislocations, and soft tissue injury.
- Head and spinal injuries.
- Poisoning.

The provider's assessment or incident checklist must make reference to specific information on how each first aid situation and each person's injuries and medical conditions are expected to be managed.

The assessment or incident checklist must cover aspects such as management of injuries and/or medical conditions (i.e. what the learner is expected to do in each situation).

2.7 Managing first aid in an emergency situation (6400, 41051)

Learners must know the basics of managing an emergency situation where more than one person may be involved. When assessing and managing major injuries and medical conditions, the learner must be able to:

- Assess and manage dangers at the emergency scene, which are often unique and dynamic (likely to change), and where there has been an incident that has caused injuries to more than one person.

- Manage multiple persons by assessing DRSABCD to identify life-threatening issues, and continually reassessing each person until help arrives.
- Manage each person's condition(s) as appropriate, including the utilisation of bystanders to assist.
- Prepare to hand over to emergency services.

Provider assessment schedules or scenario checklists must contain scenario-specific information on how each emergency situation and each person's major injuries and medical conditions are expected to be managed.

This information may cover aspects such as the environment, number of people injured or unwell, number and description of bystanders, management of injuries and what the learner is expected to do in each situation.

3. Micro-credential interpretation

Table 4 – First aid micro-credentials

NZQCF number	DASS unit standards	DASS skill standards	Title
5084*	6402, 6401, 6400		Manage first aid in an emergency situation (Level 3, 5 credits)
5582		41053, 41052, 41051	Manage Life Support and First Aid in Emergency Situations (Level 3, 3 credits)
5494		41053, 41052	Foundation First Aid (Level 2, 2 credits)

*Expiring on 31 December 2027. Replaced by micro-credentials 5582 or 5494.

Micro-credentials recognise learners' skills, experience or knowledge, while meeting demand from employers, industry and communities. 5582 and 5494 were designed in 2025 by Toitū te Waiora to replace expiring training schemes offered by first aid providers.

NZQA-approved micro-credentials:

- certify the achievement of a coherent set of skills and knowledge
- meet a specified need
- include an assessment
- are no more than 40 credits
- can be at any level on the NZQCF
- are quality assured by NZQA or Universities New Zealand
- are delivered by NZQA-recognised education providers.

Like qualifications, micro-credentials are listed on the NZQCF. When a learner has achieved a micro-credential, education organisations report their achievement to NZQA. It is then displayed on the learner's New Zealand Record of Achievement.

Providers wishing to award first aid micro-credentials must seek accreditation from NZQA. Instructions for making applications are listed on this page - <https://toitutewaiora.nz/micro-credential-submissions/>

Providers are expected to develop component-based delivery that includes mode/method, a breakdown of teaching and learning hours, and potentially offering learners self-directed options that include:

- background reading and resources relating to managing basic first aid
- a range of training scenarios, and
- online tests for self-testing competencies.

4. First aid training guidelines

Providers must cover the relevant core elements of the [ANZCOR guidelines](#) that align with standard outcomes and performance criteria. In addition, training providers may incorporate other clinically approved and publicly available guidelines relevant to the New Zealand context, as long as they remain consistent with ANZCOR principles. Other resources include:

- [Epilepsy New Zealand](#)
- [Heart Foundation](#)
- [Stroke Foundation](#)
- [Asthma New Zealand](#)
- [Hato Hone St John first aid guides](#)

Note it is the responsibility of the individual training providers to review, monitor, and select content to ensure it meets the intent and requirements of the standards.

5. Version History

Version	Summary of changes
Version 3 July 2023	Toitū te Waiora inherited this document, along with the Unit Standards associated with First Aid from the previous SSB, The Skills Organisation. This version supersedes all previous versions of this document.
Version 3.1 August 2023	<p>Page 9.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a current New Zealand Resuscitation Council Emergency Care Instructor Certificate at Level 2 (ECI 2) as specified in the New Zealand Resuscitation Council guidelines; or are able to demonstrate equivalent knowledge and skills. <p>Above bullet point added.</p> <p>Consistent wording of 'or are able to demonstrate equivalent knowledge and skills' updated throughout document.</p>
Version 3.2 August 2023	<p>Page 9.</p> <p>First Aid Revalidation Training</p> <p>Further clarification added. Learners have a three-month grace period following expiry of the First Aid certificate to complete Revalidation Training.</p>
Version 3.3 September 2023	<p>Page 9.</p> <p>Rewording of bullet pointed text and addition of: Lunch breaks excluded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For Unit Standards 6400, 6401, and 6402 – a minimum of 12 hours training and assessment, including three 15-minute breaks. Lunch breaks excluded.• For Unit Standards 6401 and 6402 – a minimum of eight hours training, including two 15-minute breaks. Lunch breaks excluded.
Version 3.4 December 2025	Full review of the document and updates to simplify and clarify structure and content. Specific changes are:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarified focus on standard based first aid training.• Added new skill standards and micro-credentials.• Clarified that document is to be read in conjunction with CMR 0024 and guidance information in standards.• Clarified instructor training and qualifications and added guidance for evaluating equivalent skills and knowledge.• Clarified teaching time requirements.• Added a section on unit standard 33319.• Added requirement for content of revalidation training.• Added requirements for Unit Standard 6400 training.• Added information on physical ability to apply CPR in standards 6402 and 41051.
--	--

Date of next scheduled review: September 2026

Unscheduled reviews may occur if compliance requirements change and/or standards or micro-credentials are updated or listed.