



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Middleton

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Investigative Hearing - Department of Human Resources - Workplace First Aid Program

FOR the purpose of requesting the Director of the Department of Human Resources to report to the City Council on the efficacy of the workplace first aid training course currently available to City employees; to assess the need for expansion of the training program to meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration guidelines; and to determine which Baltimore City employees need participate in initial mandatory workplace first aid training and periodic refresher courses.

Recitals

In Best Practices Guide: Fundamentals of a Workplace First-Aid Program, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 2006, first aid is described as “emergency care provided for injury or sudden illness before emergency medical treatment is available. The first-aid provider in the workplace is someone who is trained in the delivery of initial medical emergency procedures, using a limited amount of equipment to perform a primary assessment and intervention while awaiting arrival of emergency medical service (EMS) personnel”.

First aid is generally used in the treatment of minor illnesses, in which case it may be sufficient by itself. However, first aid can also be used as the first response to a more serious injury or illness that will later require medical treatment. Common conditions that may require first aid treatment range from workplace injuries so minor that only a band-aid is required such as a paper cut, minor burn, or bruise to life threatening conditions such as choking, heart attack, anaphylactic shock, bone fracture, or epileptic seizure

An article in the November, 2000 HR Magazine holds that for employers offering first aid training provides a host of benefits - including compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulation standard that states: “In the absence of an infirmary, clinic or hospital in near proximity to the workplace ... persons shall be adequately trained to render first aid. Adequate first aid supplies shall be readily available.

OSHA’s Health Specialist for the Directorate of Compliance Programs states that “near proximity” varies. “In areas where accidents resulting in suffocation, severe bleeding or other life-threatening or permanently disabling injury or illness can be expected, a 3- or 4- minute response time - time from the time of injury to the time of

administering first aid - is required. Where a life-threatening or permanently disabling injury is an unlikely outcome of an accident, a longer response time - such as 15 minutes - is acceptable.” OSHA requires care within 3 to 4 minutes because that is the maximum amount of time the brain can survive without oxygen before serious damage occurs.

According to the American Heart Association, 400,000 to 460,000 persons die each year of cardiac arrest, and 13% of these deaths are in the workplace. The Cost of Cardiac Arrest in the Workplace, Occupational Health & Safety, September 01, 2004 reports that “cardiac arrest, the equal opportunity killer, took 1,261 American’s lives yesterday, most of them before they reached the hospital. Many of the deaths happened at work.” These deaths are part of the 250,000 sudden cardiac arrests (SCA) that the Association found occur out-of-hospital annually.

The actual number of SCAs that happen at work is unknown. If an employee collapses without warning and is not attended to promptly and effectively, the employee may die. Prompt, properly administered first aid may mean the difference between rapid or prolonged recovery, temporary or permanent disability, and even life or death. The Best Practices Guide instructs that Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), now widely available, safe, effective, portable, and easy to use, “provide the critical and necessary treatment for SCA caused by ventricular fibrillation, the uncoordinated beating of the heart leading to collapse and death. Using AEDs as soon as possible after sudden cardiac arrest, within 3- 4 minutes, can lead to a 60% survival rate.”

The Best Practices Guide: Fundamentals of a Workplace First-Aid Program summary offers several recommendations:

- Employers are required to have a person or persons adequately trained to render first aid for work sites that are not in near proximity to an infirmary, clinic or hospital.
- The program must comply with all applicable OSHA standards and regulations. OSHA requires certain employers to have a CPR-trained rescuers on site.
- Sudden cardiac arrest is a potential risk at all work sites, regardless of the type of work. Serious consideration should be given to establishing a workplace AED program.
- First-aid supplies must be available in adequate quantities and be readily accessible.
- First-aid training courses should include instruction in general and workplace hazard-specific knowledge and skills. CPR training should incorporate AED training if an AED is available at the work site. First-aid training should be repeated periodically to maintain and update knowledge and skills.
- Management commitment and worker involvement is vital in developing, implementing and assessing a workplace first-aid program.

The Baltimore City Department of Human Resources Training Course Catalog September 2010 - June 2011 offers an Adult/Child CPR First Aid course where “participants will receive training in first aid procedures so they are equipped to provide basic care in the first few minutes of an emergency until professional help arrives.” The course is not mandatory for any employee, including safety officers, and no periodic refresher course is offered.

Recent threats to employee health and safety that resulted in building evacuations and an aging workforce driven by the economic downturn are part of a myriad of reasons that Baltimore City should re-access the preparedness of employees to respond to medical emergency.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Director of the Department of Human Resources is requested to report to the City Council on the efficacy of the workplace first aid training course currently available to City employees; to assess the need for expansion of the training program to meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration guidelines; and to determine which Baltimore City employees need participate in initial mandatory workplace first aid training and periodic refresher courses.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Fire Chief and appropriate Fire Department personnel are requested to attend the hearing on this resolution and to offer expert observation and recommendation.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Director of Human Resources, the Fire Chief, Baltimore City Fire Department, the Baltimore City Health Commissioner, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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