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First aid for your crew

BY RICK KIER, CSP // Contributor

As snow-removal professionals, we often wonder what we need to do to prepare for the upcoming snow season. We spend lots of time thinking about our routes, our trucks, the equipment and so much more. But how many of us think about emergency first aid?

If you have even one employee, Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to provide adequate first aid and medical treatment. While that is certainly a motivator, I have always had first-aid kits in my trucks because it makes good common sense. Whether you need



tweezers to remove a splinter you received from a shovel handle, a small Band-Aid to put over a blister, or a large bandage to cover a serious cut, it is good to know you have what you need in the truck.

Not all kits are created equal

Take the time to figure out what your kit should include. The type of work you do and the number of people on your crew

will impact the type and size of first-aid kit needed. Another major consideration is how far from emergency medical help your crew works. If you are hours away from help, your first-aid kit and your medical training requirements are much greater.

Common first-aid kit considerations

- ▶ Size and quantity of bandages
- ▶ Adhesive cloth tape
- ▶ Eyewash (Note: Some eyewash bottles will freeze and need to be removed for winter or stored in a heated area)
- ▶ Instant cold compress
- ▶ Blanket
- ▶ Medicines (burn cream, antiseptic wipes, antibiotic and hydrocortisone ointments, pain medications like aspirin, ibuprofen, acetaminophen)
- ▶ Medical instruments (latex gloves, scissors, tweezers, tourniquet)
- ▶ First aid instruction booklet
- ▶ Durable metal or plastic case to keep your first-aid supplies safe and easy to find

Kit maintenance

Once you have the right first-aid kit in place, you can't just call it good and forget about it. First-aid kits in a commercial environment require a good maintenance program. You have an obligation to check them regularly and replace supplies that have been used and any components that have expired.

One thing I have learned over the years is that in this industry, there is no such thing as being overprepared. Having a good, accessible first-aid kit not only meets your legal requirements, but also might help your team members when they need it most. ❄

Rick Kier is president of Pro Scapes Inc. in Jamesville, NY, and a member of the Snow Business Editorial Advisory Committee.

» Detailed OSHA requirements can be found online at www.osha.gov/SLTC/medicalfirstaid/



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