



Course Review
"Apply First Aid"
**St John Ambulance
Australia (WA) Inc.**
By Geoff Birkbeck

In our community, Ranger Services are often presented with emergency situations that may require immediate assistance on a daily basis. Whether in a

metropolitan, beachside, a bush fire, remote or regional environment, time and again Rangers are first on scene before emergency services arrive and are called to assist.

First Aid is a skill often called for as an essential or desirable selection criterion in many job descriptions.

Having up to date and effective training gives the confidence to assist in an emergency and possibly save lives



What's the story?

In January 2012 whilst updating my resume, I noticed that my first aid certificate had expired, so I needed to renew it. Having an extensive first aid background that expands nearly 40 years and included the army as a medic, first aid instructor, student nurse, a volunteer ambo and in my teenage years as a St John Cadet, with various certification from preliminary first aid, senior, workplace, occupational and basic ambulance care, I thought there wasn't much for me to learn, but I was wrong.

A few things have changed and added since I did my last certificate 3 years ago.

What's in?

The course content has new subjects added.

- ✓ Firstly the change of name from "Senior First Aid" to "Apply First Aid". This is now a National Training Requirement unit and recognised Australia wide in all industries.
- ✓ The pass rate on the written assessment requirement is now 80% from the previous 65%. However, under the National Competency Based standards, if you are assessed as not competent, you only have to be reassessed on that competency not achieved. The need to redo the whole course and exam is no longer required.
- ✓ The new and improved casualty management plan now known as DRSABCD. This has been fine turned further with the addition for "S" Send for an Ambulance and "D" for Defibrillation from an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) which increases the rate of survival in a cardiac arrest.
- ✓ Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and Oxygen Therapy familiarisation.
- ✓ The use of Epi-pen and asthma medications
- ✓ The checking and clearing of the airway while the unconscious casualty is on their back. Then into the lateral recovery position.

The most notable for me was such as use of an Epi-Pen and asthma medication.

In WA, there is no requirement for a permit and additional training to purchase, carry, and administer these medications, unlike the eastern states.

Both are available without prescription and over the counter. A "must have" in any first aid kit, especially if you travel to regional areas.

What's out?

- ✗ Expired Air Resuscitation (EAR) which was removed from the course 3 years ago, but the requirement of 5 rescue breaths before checking for a pulse on non-detection of breathing is out too.

- ✘ *The need to check for a pulse when performing the primary survey of an unconscious person*
- ✘ *Two days of classroom time The older version was 3 to 4 days in duration.*

What's it all about?

The course material covers various topics such as:

- ❖ *Placing an unconscious casualty in the recovery position*
- ❖ *Respiratory system and chest injuries*
- ❖ *Choking*
- ❖ *Near drowning*
- ❖ *Circulatory system and heart conditions*
- ❖ *Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation*
- ❖ *Conditions affecting consciousness*
- ❖ *Anaphylaxis and Epi-Pen use*
- ❖ *Bleeding*
- ❖ *Sprains and strains management*
- ❖ *Fractures*
- ❖ *Spinal injuries*
- ❖ *Burns*
- ❖ *Infant resuscitation demonstration*
- ❖ *Poisons*
- ❖ *Bites and stings*
- ❖ *Eye and ear injuries*
- ❖ *Oxygen therapy awareness*
- ❖ *Defibrillation awareness*
- ❖ *Legal issues*
- ❖ *Infection control*
- ❖ *Shock*
- ❖ *Stroke*
- ❖ *Abdominal injuries*
- ❖ *Crush injuries*
- ❖ *Substance misuse*
- ❖ *Risk assessment and evaluation of first aid performance.*

The course is delivered in various flexible delivery modes.

You can book in a two day course or do the theory either on line, cd rom or workbook in your own time and pace then attend a one day practical session.

There are various metropolitan and regional training venues to choose from. I opted for the 2 day attendance at a venue close to home.

Day, night and weekend courses are available.

St John offers on-site training in your workplace. Minimum participant numbers apply, so give them a call for further details if this is a more suitable option.

What's the best way to book a place on a course?

Booking a course is easy. It can be done on line and the availability checked against the timetable informing how many places are vacant, or you can call St John direct.

I opted for the on line booking at my local ambulance hall as it was close to home. Being the first course in the New Year, there was only one place left.

Payment was made on line by credit card. Course confirmation was sent by email and in the post.

😊 What's good?

- 😊 *The ease of booking and payment options.*
- 😊 *Flexibility of learning modules.*
Theory sessions are on line, workbook, CD Rom or by attendance
- 😊 *Practical assessment is ongoing.*
No separate assessment for CPR and Case Studies as per the old Senior First Aid course format.
- 😊 *Reference material to use at home or work.* A copy of *Australian First Aid* manual, a smaller reference book for your first aid kit and a CPR training aid to take home, plus a comprehensive course workbook that include copies of all the overheads used.
- 😊 *A 10% discount on first aid kits and products from the St John Shop valid for 30 days from the completion of your course.* Just give them your course booking id number at point of purchase.
- 😊 *Certificate presented to participants at the end of the course (in most cases)*
- 😊 *Pathway to do further specialised courses.*

St John offers training in industry and special interest specific courses. This includes:

- ❖ *Workplace First Aid*
- ❖ *Industrial Medic*
- ❖ *Advanced Oxygen Therapy and AED*
- ❖ *Emergency Response*
- ❖ *Remote Area First Aid*
- ❖ *First Aid for Families and Child Care*
- ❖ *A free "Clicktosave" on line course*

Just to name a few. Tailored courses for specific industries upon request.

The path I decided on was to progress to the *Remote Area First Aid* course and *Advanced Oxygen Therapy with AED* rather than the Occupational or Industrial courses. I feel this avenue is better suited for my work and lifestyle.

⊗ *What's not so good?*

- ⊗ *The Australian First Aid manual is not up to date does not reflect the latest Australian Resuscitation Council policy changes. St John has a flyer reflecting the changes to go with the book, but the instructor had failed to include it in the course I attended.*
- ⊗ *Large amount of subject matter in the course content to cover in 14 hours of instruction. Can be a bit overwhelming for a beginner.*
- ⊗ *Content and case studies targeted more towards the mining and recourses industry rather than the general community.*

What's the verdict?

This course meets the *National Training requirement Unit HLTF301B Apply First Aid* superseding the *Senior First Aid* certificate. The course has Australia wide recognition and a prerequisite for further courses and some occupations.

First Aid training is GST free and only payable on the materials component of the course. Tax deductible as a self-education expense for some occupations

Validation is for 3 years with an additional recommendation for a CPR update annually.

Cost is \$198.00 for all delivery modes.

In summary, an effective and practical course for beginners, those that need to requalify or require this course as a prerequisite for employment and/or other studies

The course provider, St John Ambulance is one of the leading First Aid training organisations Australia and the world with many years of public education, provision of volunteer event first aid services and volunteer and career staffed ambulance services. St John is a *Registered Training Organisation (RTO)*.

There are several other RTO providers that deliver this course available also.

First Aid is an essential skill that is transferable between workplace and home that hopefully, you will never have the opportunity to put into practice. It's cheap insurance and could one day save a life.

Further information and booking can found on line by visiting the St John Ambulance WA website www.ambulance.net.au

Or by contacting First Aid Course Enquiries on (08) 9334 1233 or email fast@ambulance.net.au

The score?

☑☑☑☑☐ 4 out of 5 - Good value. Worth doing. Nationally recognised training.

About the reviewer

Geoff Birkbeck is a ranger with local government service for 4 years. Worked in the Pilbara and Gascoyne regions for 2 years. Geoff has a police and emergency service background and has a strong interest in animal control and welfare issues. He hopes to contribute more product and services review of items of interest applicable to ranger services on a regular basis.

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