Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)

What is an Automated External Defibrillator (AED)?

* An Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) assesses the rhythm of the heart and, if appropriate, provides audio/visual commands to the rescuer to activate the device.
* AEDs are used in the event of a cardiac arrest where the heart has a disorganised, or fibrillating, cardiac rhythm.



* The AED provides a ‘shock’ to a heart in cardiac arrest to help the heart muscles regain a normal rhythm. This is known as defibrillation.

Do we need an AED?

The need for an AED is determined through the [first aid risk assessment process](https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/first-aid-risk-assessment-template.docx) at a school or workplace level.

The [Australian Resuscitation Council](https://resus.org.au/)identifies “defibrillation” as a key component of the *Guide to Basic Life Support*.

The [First Aid in the Workplace Code of Practice 2014](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/58162/First-aid-in-the-workplace-COP-2014.pdf) states:

“Providing an automatic defibrillator can reduce the risk of fatality from cardiac arrest and is a useful addition for workplaces where there is a risk of electrocution or where there are large numbers of members of the public.

Automatic defibrillators are designed to be used by trained or untrained persons. They should be located in an area that is clearly visible, accessible and not exposed to extreme temperatures. They should be clearly signed and maintained according to the manufacturer’s specifications.”

Purchasing an AED

Within the department, the decision to purchase an AED is at the discretion of individual workplaces based on an assessment of risk. Consultation should occur with all relevant parties (e.g. Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee, First Aid Officer(s), other employees, Parents & Citizens association etc.). Each departmental workplace is responsible for determining the need for an AED to be made available at the site.

As with other plant or equipment, the workplace is responsible for the initial purchase as well as ongoing maintenance and management of the device in accordance with manufacturer’s instructions.

Training

While accredited first aid courses will include defibrillation and use of an AED in training, employees that are not first aid trained are also to have awareness training (e.g. the location of the unit and that it can be used by an untrained person in an emergency).

Record Keeping/Service and Maintenance

In addition to training records, each workplace needs to establish service and maintenance records to ensure the device is operational at all times and that any consumables (electrode pads) are replaced.

Security

Consideration is to be given to securing the AED in such a way as to minimise risk of machine theft whilst also allowing immediate access to the machine in an emergency.

## Further information:

# **Queensland Ambulance Service factsheet** - [Automated External Defibrillators](https://ambulance.qld.gov.au/docs/QAS-Auto-External-Defibrillators.pdf) – provides buying tips as well as information on where to locate your AED.