



Health & Safety Works

A Guide For Small Businesses



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Introduction

Since 2016 local councils and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have been working to a common theme. The strategy – [Help Great Britain Work Well](#) introduced six priority themes to target resources to protect workers and others.

The priorities: acting together, tackling Ill Health, managing risk well, supporting small employers, keeping pace with change and sharing success. This document is aimed at supporting priorities 3 and 4

We understand the difficulties facing small and medium sized businesses in managing health and safety. There is a lot of what seems like very complicated legislation and businesses often believe that it will be time consuming and very expensive to comply. In reality good health and safety management is a lot easier than you may think, and can save a business money and make for a happier workforce.

Health and safety at work is about preventing people from being injured, killed or becoming ill from the work that they do. Health and safety rules are important for many reasons:

- Employers have a legal duty to protect their workers from harm.
- Accidents and ill-health cost companies money.
- Bad working environments cause low staff morale and affect productivity.
- Employers can be prosecuted for breaches of health and safety.
- Your workforce is your most important asset.

This easy to use pack has been prepared to help businesses understand their obligation to manage health and safety and help them to maintain a healthy and safe workplace.

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1.1 Enforcement [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

The Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) Regulations 1989

There are two health and safety enforcement authorities (The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Local Authority. It will depend on the type of business you run to which is your enforcement authority. Generally speaking, offices, shops, catering, leisure activities and warehouses come under the responsibility of the local authority. Factories, farms, building sites, manufacturing processes and some of the more hazardous industries such as nuclear sites are inspected by the HSE.

ENFORCEMENT ACTION

HSE and local authority inspectors are entitled to enter any workplace with or without giving notice to the employer. They can inspect all aspects of work processes and associated records, take photographs and samples and talk to workers and their representatives. Inspectors can:

- Give informal advice to employers on the necessary steps to comply with the law. This can be contained in correspondence.
- Issue **Improvement Notices**. These notices instruct the employer to take action to comply with the law and should set out what needs to be done, why and by when. Employers have 21 days within which to appeal to an Industrial Tribunal.
- Issue **Prohibition Notices**. These prohibit any activity which risks causing serious injury. The activity may be prohibited immediately or after a specified period and cannot be resumed until certain conditions are met. Again, the employer has a right of appeal
- Initiate **prosecutions**. Inspectors have the power to initiate prosecutions. A failure to comply with an Improvement or Prohibition Notice can lead to prosecution in a Magistrates Court and can result in an unlimited fine or six months imprisonment or both. Prosecutions in higher courts can lead to unlimited fines or imprisonment.

To ensure that businesses can be heard when they disagree with enforcement decisions a review process has been introduced. [The Independent Regulatory Challenge Panel](#) look into complaints about advice given or actions taken by HSE or LA inspectors about health and safety, which you may think are incorrect or go beyond what is required to control the risk adequately.

If you have any specific questions you should contact the council health.safety@stockport.gov.uk

1.2 Registering a Business [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Since 6 April 2009, most new businesses no longer need to register with HSE/LA's. If you work with hazardous substances or in a hazardous industry you may still need to apply for a licence; or notify HSE or us.

1.3 Insurance [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969

Most employers are required by law to insure against liability for injury or disease to their employees arising out of their employment. Employees may try to claim compensation against you or your company. The **Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969** ensures that you have at least a minimum cover against claims. You should have a copy of the certificate of insurance in all your workplaces.

More information can be found in the leaflet

[Employers' Liability \(Compulsory Insurance\) Act 1969 – A Guide for Employers \(HSE40 rev3\)](#)

1.4 Information for Employees [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Health and Safety (Information for Employees) Regulations 1989

HEALTH AND SAFETY LAW POSTER

If you employ anyone under the regulations, you need to display an approved health and safety law poster or provide your employees with individual copies of the same information in the form of a leaflet. On the new style poster workers are advised to phone the HSE Infoline to be put in touch services such as EMAS. The approved poster has optional boxes where details of any employee health and safety representatives and other health and safety contacts can be added.

Some useful addresses

Public Protection Commercial & Trading Standards, 2nd Floor Fred Perry House, Edward Street, Stockport SK1 3UR

Employment Medical Advisory Service (EMAS)
Redgrave Court, Merton Road, Bootle, Liverpool L20 7HS Tel: 0300 003 1747

Health and Safety Law – What you Should Know leaflet and Poster are available from [HSE](#)
Tel: 0333 202 5070

Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996

These regulations require employers to consult with their employees on matters relating to health and safety. Consultation is important in order to motivate staff and make them aware of health and safety. During consultation an employer should listen to the views of staff and take these views into account before making any decisions.

An employer may choose to consult through trade union representatives or through an elected representative. They could also consult through regular meetings or staff bulletins.

Training

The law says that employers must train their employees and contractors to work safely, and clearly instruct them in their duties.

Employees should be trained in the following:

- the hazards and risks they may face;
- the control measures to deal with them;
- any emergency procedures;

Health and safety training should take place during working hours and must not be paid for by employees. Some employees may have particular training needs, for example:

- new recruits;
- people changing jobs or taking on extra responsibilities;
- young employees who are particularly vulnerable to accidents;
- health and safety representatives;

You should keep records of all training.

1.5 Health & Safety Policy Statement [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 Section 2

If you employ five or more people you are required to have a written statement of health and safety policy. It should be your own statement, specific to your business, setting out your general policy for

protecting the health and safety of your employees at work and the organisation and arrangements for putting the policy into practice. The policy should be brought to the attention of all your employees and be revised whenever appropriate. Although, a safety policy is legally only concerned with employees' safety it is good practice to include considerations on the safety of other persons (e.g. contractors, members of the public).

The policy will contain 3 sections:

- The general policy
- The organisation
- The arrangements

What is meant by a **general policy** on health and safety? - It is a statement of general aims with regard to the health and safety of your employees. It states the company's commitment to place the management of health and safety of prime importance. It also sets out the company's intent to provide adequate/appropriate resources and to consult with the employees.

What is meant by the **organisation** for carrying out the policy? - This, essentially, is a specification of the health and safety duties and responsibilities of individuals at every level.

What is meant by **arrangements** for health and safety? - This is a description of the procedures and systems that are in place in order to meet the terms of the policy statement. Rules and procedures for health and safety issues should be laid down here. Some of the issues covered would be accident reporting, first aid procedures, risk assessments and contractor safety. Arrangements for instruction, training and supervision should also be covered, as should the means of communicating and consulting on health and safety.

Preparing and Using the Policy Statement

To be effective, a policy should:

- involve management and representatives in the preparation of the policy,
- be relevant to workplace's real needs, not adopted from another workplace, and
- be accepted as equal in importance to the workplace's other policy objectives;

You can find further guidance and templates to assist you in writing your policy [Safety Policy](#)

1.6 Risk Assessments [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Accidents and ill health can ruin lives. Your business can be affected too by lost output, damaged machinery, increased insurance costs or fines if you have to go to court.

Risk assessment is an important step in protecting your employees from harm whilst at work. It helps you focus on the important risks that really matter in your business.

A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. Workers and others have a right to be protected from harm caused by a failure to take reasonable control measures. The law does not expect you to eliminate all risk, but you are required to protect people so far as 'reasonably practicable'.

Five Steps to Risk Assessments

- **Step 1** Identify the hazards
- **Step 2** Decide who might be harmed and how
- **Step 3** Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
- **Step 4** Record your findings and implement the control measures

- **Step 5** Review your assessment and update if necessary

Useful Definitions

- **Hazard:** Something with the potential to cause harm.
- **Risk:** The likelihood that the harm from a particular hazard is realised.

Step 1 – Identifying the Hazards

The first step involves a systematic look at the business. Walk around the workplace and look at what could cause harm. Ask your employees to help as they may have noticed things that you may not. Have a look at your accident book for less obvious hazards or ill-health. Check manufacturer's instructions for equipment.

Step 2 – Decide Who Might be Harmed

This step involves identifying the groups of people who might be harmed by particular work activities. This will help you identify the best way of managing the risk. In each case you should identify how they might be harmed or what type of injury or ill-health might occur.

Step 3 - Evaluate the Risks and Decide On Precautions

Once the hazards have been identified, you then have to decide what to do about them. Look at what you are already doing and compare this to good practice and see if there is more that you could do. When controlling risks you should apply the following principles:

Try to substitute for a less risky option (e.g. avoid the need to use ladders and work at height).
Prevent access to the hazard (e.g. preventing access to dangerous parts of machinery by guarding)

Reduce exposure by separating persons from the hazard (e.g. using barriers to separate pedestrians from vehicular movement). Provide personal protective equipment.

Provide welfare facilities (e.g. first aid, health surveillance and washing facilities to wash off contamination).

Step 4 – Record Your Findings and Implement Them

There is little point in carrying out a risk assessment if you do not act upon the results. You should write down the findings and share them with your staff. This will encourage your staff to take health and safety seriously. If you have fewer than five employees you do not have to write anything down but it is useful if anything happens or should your business expand.

When writing down the risk assessments keep it simple. Make a plan of action and deal with the most important or hazardous things first.

Step 5 – Review Your Risk Assessment and Update If Necessary

It is a good idea to review your risk assessments annually or sooner if anything changes in your workplace (e.g. you buy new equipment or bring in new procedures)

Formally review your assessments and ask:

- Have there been any changes?
- Can we make some more improvements?
- Have there been any accidents or near misses to learn from?
- Have workers brought anything to the attention of management?

You can find further guidance and some template risk assessments for a variety of activities at [Risk assessment advice and templates](#)

2.1 Accident Reporting [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

RIDDOR (Reporting Of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) 2013

RIDDOR sets out the responsibilities for employers, self-employed or those in control of work premises to report certain injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences.

Reporting accidents and ill health at work is a legal requirement. The information enables the enforcing authorities to identify where and how risks arise and to investigate serious accidents. We can then help and advise you on preventive action to reduce injury, ill health and accidental loss - much of which is uninsurable. You could be prosecuted if you fail to report an accident or dangerous occurrence.

You need to report:

- Deaths – immediate reporting
- Specified Major injuries – as soon as possible followed by report within 10 days
- Accidents resulting in over 7 day absence from work
- Some diseases Dangerous occurrences
- Gas incidents
- Injuries to members of the public that result in them going to hospital from site

Who do I report to?

From April 2001 you can report to the Incident Contact Centre via a number of methods:

- phone 0345 300 9923 (8.30am - 5.00pm)
- on line at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/report.htm> (any time)

Why should I Report?

Reporting accidents and ill health at work is a legal requirement. The information enables the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Stockport Council, to identify where and how risks arise, and to investigate serious accidents with a view to preventing a reoccurrence.

We can then help you and provide advice on how to reduce injury, and ill health in your workplace.

Gathering information on accidents also helps in identifying developing risk area and priorities for information/guidance.

2.2 First Aid [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981

People at work can suffer injuries or fall ill. First aid at work covers the arrangements you must make to ensure that if this happens the person receives attention. The above regulations require you to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to enable first aid to be given.

What is adequate and appropriate will depend on the circumstances in your workplace and you should assess what your first-aid needs are. Things you should consider are the number of people who are employed; the type of work activities that are carried out and whether or not the activities involve the use of any equipment.

The minimum first-aid provision on any work site is:

- A suitably stocked first-aid box
- An appointed person to take charge of first-aid arrangements and take charge if someone falls ill or is injured. This will usually involve calling an ambulance if required. Appointed persons should not attempt to administer first-aid if they have not been trained to do so.

If you have identified that your workplace needs first aiders, they must have completed a first aid at work course provided by an HSE approved training organisation.

You should inform your employees of the first-aid arrangements, inform them who the first aiders or appointed persons are and where the first-aid box is kept.

2.3 Accident Investigation [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Detailed accident investigation should not be seen as a way of apportioning blame but as a positive opportunity to improve health & safety standards in the workplace.

Gathering, recording, disseminating and acting on information may be the difference between a recurrence and possibly a more serious accident. This is where an efficient, formal accident investigation plan is important.

Following an accident or near miss you should:

- Gather the evidence including witness statements.
- Put the evidence into chronological order. (It will help to determine what happened) Use the decision making process to ensure that measures are taken to prevent recurrence.
- Act upon the findings including recommendations and any possible breaches of legislation. Feedback to the employees.

You can find assistance on accident investigation here [Accident Investigation](#)

3.1 Personal Protective Equipment [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (as amended)

PPE is defined in the Regulations as 'all equipment (including clothing affording protection against the weather) which is intended to be worn or held by a person at work and which protects him against one or more risks to his health or safety', e.g. safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses.

Hearing protection and respiratory protective equipment provided for most work situations are not covered by these regulations because other regulations apply to them. However, these items need to be compatible with any other PPE provided (for example breathing apparatus should be compatible with any head protection required).

Employers must assess the risks to health and safety of their employees and ensure that suitable PPE is provided except where the risk has been adequately controlled by other equally, or more effective means.

PPE is suitable when it is:

- appropriate to the risks and workplace conditions
- capable of fitting the wearer correctly
- effective in preventing or adequately controlling the risk without increasing an overall risk

PPE should be seen as a last resort in the hierarchy of control measures; it should be made readily available (in most cases on a personal basis); no charge can be levied; ergonomic factors should be considered i.e., match the PPE to the person; quality must be ensured i.e., to be certified ('CE' marked) as meeting basic safety requirements.

PPE should be maintained (including replaced or cleaned as appropriate) in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair. Responsibilities, procedures (including frequencies)

should be established and appropriate records kept. Safe and suitable accommodation must be provided

Information, instruction and training needs to be provided to users, managers/supervisors and repair/maintenance/test personnel. Records should be kept.

There are duties on employers, self-employed persons and employees to ensure the proper use of PPE. Employees should report any loss or defect to their employer.

Further advice on [PPE](#)

3.2 Work Equipment ([Return to Contents](#))

Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER)

Every year the use of work equipment, including machinery, results in a number of accidents, many of which are serious and some fatal.

Employers therefore need to ensure that all equipment provided for their employees is safe to use and meets the requirements in these regulations.

Work equipment is broadly defined to include everything from a hand tool and ladders to machinery of any kind.

All equipment, old or new is subject to a suitability, maintenance (where necessary) inspection and training assessment. This assessment makes it possible to eliminate many risks to the health and safety of people at the workplace. This also covers equipment brought into the workplace by employees.

The above regulations require that employers:

- Ensure all work equipment is suitable for the purpose for which it is being used and adequately maintain it – inspections and testing may be necessary;
- Check that people using the equipment are given adequate instructions, information and training. Ensure operating procedures are supplied with new equipment;
- Ensure all new equipment has been assessed, bears the CE mark and complies with essential health and safety requirements;
- Ensure only trained and authorised users operate machines. Use training checklists to ensure all the relevant points are covered;
- Guard dangerous and moving parts of machines and ensure they work correctly. Ensure employees can safely operate equipment with respect to control systems, markings, stability and adequate lighting and space;
- Carry out maintenance work safely and without risk to health, i.e. machines electrically isolated, guarded and marked with warnings.

Further advice on [work equipment](#)

3.3 Lifting Equipment ([Return to Contents](#))

The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998

The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment (LOLER) Regulations came into force in 1998. They cover all operations and equipment which involve lifting people and goods at work. They cover such equipment as cranes, lifts, hoists, chains, ropes, slings, hooks, shackles, eyebolts, rope and pulley systems, and forklift trucks. They apply to all workplaces - building sites, offices, hospitals, care

homes, warehouses, farms, factories, etc. The regulations apply whether the equipment is existing, new, second hand or leased.

The Overall scope of the Legislation

- The initial integrity of equipment
- The planning of lifting operations – all operations to be assessed for risk
- Safe operation of equipment – need to be recorded in a procedure
- Continuing integrity of equipment

Organising Lifting Operations - LOLER regulation 8

- The operation must be properly planned
- This is to be done by a competent person
- The operation must be appropriately supervised
- All work must be carried out in a safe manner – *look out for:*
 - suspended loads – where are people working? - If the load fell?
 - The continuing integrity of equipment
 - The attaching and detaching of loads
 - Proximity hazards
 - Pre-use check
 - DO NOT overload
 - Be aware of causes of over-turning and ensure this does not happen
 - Visibility – ensure you can see what is happening

Thorough examination and Inspection – LOLER regulation 9

All equipment must be thoroughly examined by a competent person

- Initially
- After installation
- In use
- When exceptional circumstances occur
- Periodic examination

Lifting equipment may need to be thoroughly examined in use at periods specified in the Regulations (i.e. at least six-monthly for accessories and equipment used for lifting people and, at a minimum, annually for all other equipment) or at intervals laid down in an examination scheme drawn up by a competent person.

All examination work should be performed by a competent person; and following a thorough examination or inspection of any lifting equipment, a report is submitted by the competent person to the employer to take the appropriate action.

GOLDEN RULES

- All lifting operations should be 'risk assessed'
- Safe Working Load - SWL's – must NOT be exceeded
- All checks are to be done by a *competent person
- Only trained people allowed in areas where lifting equipment is used
- The equipment in use is only to be made of material suitable for the conditions under which it is to be used.
- All fixing points and mountings are to be of adequate strength and capability.
- Special care needs to be taken in the supervision of Young People (i.e. anyone under the age of 18)
- Environmental aspects needs to be taken into consideration e.g. when out of doors, high winds
- Equipment that has been stored needs checking prior to use

3.4 Electrical Safety [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

Each year around 1000 incidents at work involving electric shock are reported to the HSE. About 30 of them are fatal.

All electrical installations and portable appliances should be maintained to prevent danger. It is recommended that fixed installations are inspected periodically by a competent person.

Portable Electrical Appliances

Portable appliances are usually those that can be transported easily and that have a cable and a plug such as video equipment (TV's, projectors etc.), desktop computers, printers, fax machines, photocopiers, desk lamps, heaters, fans, desk lamps and kettles.

Maintenance

Preventative maintenance should include a system of visual inspection and where necessary testing. By concentrating on a simple inexpensive system of visual examination, most damage or faults can be identified and controlled.

For example trailing cables can create some quite serious risks of slips and trips but the main risks relate to damaged leads and plugs (or less likely the equipment itself). These can lead to potentially fatal electric shocks or fires.

Appliances should be tested periodically. The frequency of testing will depend upon how often the appliance is used, what it is used for and the environment in which it is used.

RCD's

A residual current device should be used when equipment of 230 volts or higher is operating. An RCD is a valuable safety device and should never be bypassed.
Health and Safety that Works!

Practical Guidance on how you can comply with the above regulation can be found here [Electricity Guidance](#)

3.5 Working at Height [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

The Work at Height Regulations 2005

Every year around 40 people are killed at work and over 3000 are injured falling from height. The work at height regulations apply to any work at height where there is a risk of a fall liable to cause personal injury. There is no specific limit as to when the regulation apply. They place duties on employers, the self-employed and any person who controls the work of others (e.g. facilities managers or building owners).

The regulations set out a simple hierarchy for managing and selecting equipment for work at height. Duty holders must:

- Avoid work at height where possible.
- Use work equipment or other measures to prevent falls where they cannot avoid working at height; and
- Where they cannot eliminate the risk of a fall, use work equipment or other measures to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall should one occur.

Duty holder responsibilities

All work at height must be properly planned and organised. You must take into account the weather conditions and ensure that those involved in the work are trained and competent to work at height. You must also ensure that any work equipment used is safe and maintained in good condition. When selecting equipment you must use the most suitable equipment for the task to be carried out.

Safe Use of Ladders

- You should only use ladders for light-duty or short duration tasks.
- You should not use a ladder if you have a medical condition that may affect your safety.
- You should wear suitable footwear.
- When working from a ladder you should try to maintain three points of contact.
- You should not try to carry heavy or awkward shaped objects on a ladder. If you have to carry objects you must keep one hand free to grip the ladder.

Every time you use a ladder you should do a pre-use check beforehand to make sure that it is safe for use.

- **Check the locking bars** - Do not use the ladder if they are bent or the fixings are worn or damaged - the ladder could collapse.
- **Check the feet** - Do not use the ladder if they are missing or worn or damaged -the ladder could slip.
- **Check the stepladder platform** - Do not use the ladder if it is split or buckled -the ladder could become unstable or collapse.
- **Check the steps or treads** -Do not use the ladder if they are contaminated -they could be slippery.
- **Check the steps** - Do not use the ladder if the fixings are loose - they could collapse.
- **Check the stiles** - Do not use the ladder if they are bent or damaged - the ladder could buckle or collapse.

Further guidance for [working at height](#)

3.6 Gas Safety [Return to Contents](#)

The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998

Every employer or self-employed person must ensure that any gas appliance, installation pipe work or flue installed at any place of work under their control is maintained in a safe condition so as to prevent risk of injury to any person.

Any business providing accommodation for example residential homes or hotels are required to have the appliances, flues and pipe work checked for safety at least once a year. Servicing at the same time is advisable to make sure they are maintained in a safe efficient condition.

Any work on gas appliances and pipe work must be undertaken by companies or individuals who are members of the Gas Safe register.

Use of Liquid Petroleum Gas

Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) is the generic term used to describe propane, butane or a mixture of the two gases. It is heavier than air and will therefore collect at the lowest possible levels such as cellars, pits, drains or basements. LPG is extremely flammable and readily forms air-vapour mixtures. LPG cylinders are liable to explode if they are involved in a fire.

People using LPG must understand the hazardous characteristics of the product and should consider it when carrying out a fire risk assessment. Further guidance on [Gas](#)

3.7 Fire Safety [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) came into effect in October 2006 and replaced over 70 pieces of fire safety law.

The FSO applies to all non-domestic premises in England and Wales, including the common parts of blocks of flats and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). The law applies to you if you are:

- responsible for business premises
- an employer or self-employed with business premises
- responsible for a part of a dwelling where that part is *solely* used for business purposes a charity or voluntary organisation
- a contractor with a degree of control over any premises
- providing accommodation for paying guests

Under the FSO, the responsible person must carry out a fire safety risk assessment and implement and maintain a fire management plan. A fire risk assessment must be carried out by a competent person who has sufficient training or knowledge to carry out.

For fire risk assessments there are five steps that you need to take:

- **Step 1** Identify potential fire hazards in the workplace.
- **Step 2** Decide who (e.g. employees, visitors) might be in danger, in the event of a fire, in the workplace or while trying to escape from it, and note their location.
- **Step 3** Evaluate the risks arising from the hazards and decide whether your existing fire precautions are adequate or whether more should be done to get rid of the hazard or to control the risks (e.g. by improving the fire precautions).
- **Step 4** Record your findings and details of the action you took as a result. Tell your employees about your findings.
- **Step 5** Keep the assessment under review and revise it when necessary.

Further guidance of [Fire risk assessments](#)

3.8 Use of Contractors [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

When employing contractors to undertake works on your behalf you should consider the following:

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- Both parties have joint health and safety responsibilities to protect each other, their workforce and anyone else (e.g. customers, visitors, people living nearby, members of the public and others).
- Select a contractor who is suitable to do the job. The degree of competence required will depend on the work to be done. You may wish to employ a contractor who is a member of a professional body or trade association.
- Ask contractors to provide information on their health and safety policies, practices, training and safety method statement.
- Ask contractors to provide details of their Public Liability Insurance.
- Make sure the contractors know and understand what you expect from them and the works to be undertaken.
- Explain your health and safety arrangements to them. Show them your procedures, permit system, health and safety policy statement and make sure they understand and will act in accordance with it.

- Both parties need to consider what information must be passed between them, the workforce and anyone else (e.g. customers, visitors, people living nearby, members of the public and others).
- You should make periodic checks on the contractor's performance to see if the work is being done as agreed and safely on your premises.
- Where health and safety requirements are not being met, the first step is to approach the contractor to find out why and put matters right. If health and safety performance is not brought up to requirements, you will need to stop the contractor working on the job until requirements have been met.

Guidance on [use of contractors](#)

3.9 Young Persons [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Young people over school leaving age and under 18 are known as young workers. Young people can leave school on the last Friday of June of the school year in which they are 16.

There are special laws to protect the employment rights of young workers. These concern their health and safety, what jobs they can do, when they can work, and how many hours they can work. These laws are very strict and an employer can be prosecuted for breaking them.

If a person is under 18, an employer must do an assessment of possible risks to health and safety, before they employ them. They must pay particular attention to the age, lack of experience, and other things that could be a risk to their health and safety.

If the person is under school leaving age, you must tell one of the person's parents or carers of the assessment. This must include any risks identified, and any measures put in place to protect their health and safety at work.

There are strict limits to the hours children and young people under school leaving age are allowed to work. They must not work:-

- during school hours on any school day
- for more than two hours on any school day or for more than 12 hours in any week in which you are required to go to school
- for more than two hours on a Sunday
- for more than eight hours (five hours if you are under 15) on any day which is not a school day or a Sunday
- before 7am or after 7pm
- for more than 35 hours (25 if you are under the age of 15) in any week in which you are not required to go to school
- for more than four hours in any day without a break of one hour
- at any time, if during the 12 months beginning 1 January, working means that you have not had two uninterrupted weeks of holiday from school

Specific requirements exist when employing young people they can be found here [young people](#)

4.1 Musculoskeletal Disorders [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended)

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are the most common occupational illness in Great Britain, affecting 1.1 million people a year (HSE 2005). MSDs are associated with problems affecting muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves and other soft tissues. They include symptoms such as lower back pain, joint injuries and various repetitive strain injuries, including upper limb disorder(s) affecting the arms, neck and shoulders.

(MSDs) can be associated with the following factors:

- Work postures and movements,
- Repetitiveness and pace of work,
- Force of movements,
- Vibration

Anybody position can cause discomfort and fatigue if it is maintained for long periods of time. Standing, for example, is a natural body posture, and by itself poses no particular health hazards.

However, working for long periods in a standing position can cause sore feet, general muscular fatigue, and low back pain. In addition, improper layout of work areas, and certain tasks can make workers use unnatural standing positions.

4.2 Slip and Trips [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Over a third of all major injuries reported each year are caused as a result of a slip or trip (**the single most common cause of injuries at work**). These cost employers over £512 million a year in lost production and other costs. Slips and trips also account for over half of all reported injuries to members of the public.

MANAGING THE PROBLEM OF SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

The 5-step approach to risk assessment provides a useful framework when tackling slips and trips, as follows:

- Identify hazards.
- Decide who might be harmed and how.
- Evaluate the risks.
- Record your findings.
- Review the assessments from time to time.

Examples of Slip Hazards

- spills and splashes of liquids and solids
- wet floors
- unsuitable footwear
- loose mats on polished floors
- inclement weather
- change from a wet to a dry surface
- unsuitable floor surface/covering
- dusty floors
- sloping surfaces

Examples of Trip Hazards

- loose flooring/floor covering
- worn floor covering
- holes, cracks

- uneven outdoor surfaces
- changes in surface level
- trailing cables • obstructions

Increased risk may arise from hazards due to the following factors:

- poorly organised walkways
- inadequate/unsuitable lighting
- incorrect cleaning procedures
- moving/handling a load
- rushing around
- fatigue

Further advice on [Slips, Trips and Fall's](#)

4.3 Control of Substances Hazardous to Health [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health 2002

Using chemicals or other hazardous substances at work can put people's health at risk so the law requires employers to control exposure to hazardous substances to prevent ill health.

In order to comply with COSHH you need to follow these 8 steps:

- **Step 1:** Assess the risks to health arising from hazardous substances used in or created by your workplace activities.
- **Step 2:** Decide what precautions are needed. You must not carry out work which could expose your employees to hazardous substances without first considering the risks and the necessary precautions, and what else you need to do to comply with COSHH.
- **Step 3:** Prevent or adequately control exposure. You must prevent your employees from being exposed to hazardous substances. Where preventing exposure is not reasonably practicable, then you must adequately control it.
- **Step 4:** Ensure the control measures are used and maintained properly, and that safety procedures are followed.
- **Step 5:** Monitor the exposure of employees to hazardous substances, if necessary.
- **Step 6:** Carry out appropriate health surveillance, and where your assessment has shown this is necessary or where COSHH sets specific requirements.
- **Step 7:** Prepare plans and procedures to deal with accidents, incidents and emergencies involving hazardous substances, where necessary.
- **Step 8:** Ensure employees are properly informed, trained and supervised.

Further advice on [COSHH](#)

4.4. Dermatitis [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Dermatitis is inflammation of the skin. It affects about one in five people at some time in their lives. It can be acute (short-term) or chronic (long-term and persistent). Dermatitis is not a minor complaint: chronic dermatitis can make work impossible. It is one of the most widespread causes of ill-health at work, affecting people in many industry sectors. In Great Britain 0.65 million days are lost per year for men and 0.2 million days per year for women due to occupational dermatitis.

Symptoms

Itching, pain, redness, soreness, cracked skin, swelling, bleeding from skin, formation of small blisters or weal's (itchy red circles with a white centre) on the skin.

How dermatitis starts

Occupational contact dermatitis starts as a local inflammation of the skin but can lead to chronic skin disease. The inflammation is caused by an irritation or an allergy as a result of substances found in the workplace; that come into direct contact with the skin.

Irritant contact dermatitis is caused by substances that physically damage the skin or its protective oils. Damage may be immediate or gradual.

Causes

- Chemical irritants - alkalis like caustic soda, fresh mixed cement, acids, metals such as nickel, solvents and hydrocarbons etc.
- Chemical sensitises -dyes, photographic developers, rubber accelerators and antioxidants, insecticides, oils, resins, coal tar derivatives, explosives and plasticisers etc.
- Plants and their products -cinnamon, henna, primrose
- Mechanical - cuts, abrasions followed by secondary infection to wound, repeated trauma between tool and skin pressure point
- Physical factors - heat causes perspiration - softening of outer layer of skin, causing rash or reddening of skin, cold -chilblain/frostbite, burns - usually by fire, electricity, sun, ionising radiation

Prevention

- assess all hazardous substances under COSHH using both manufacturers safety data sheets and information on the specific workplace
- Stop using substances concerned, by either substituting a less hazardous substance, or redesigning the job to eliminate chemicals altogether
- If the substance cannot be substituted, redesign the process to prevent hazardous exposures, for example by enclosing the system
- Provide adequate welfare facilities (washing and drying close to work area) and ensure aggressive cleaning materials are not themselves a factor
- Carry out health surveillance, via occupational health nurses or doctors or competent personnel
- Provide adequate information, instruction, training and supervision to employees
- Ensure substances requiring dilution are handled correctly and diluted before being distributed
- Store and label substances correctly with the appropriate hazards warning and instructions on neutralising
- Barrier creams and personal protective equipment, such as gloves, aprons, face shields and overalls, are a last resort. If used, the employer should provide and maintain them and they must be suitable for both the job and the workers.

What employees should do

- Report any problems to safety reps and employer.
- record occurrences in the workplace accident book and keep your own diary of symptoms
- Consult your doctor immediately if a skin problem develops.

Occupations at risk

The list of occupations which can cause or aggravate this disease is infinite, but below are a few examples:

- Bakers and confectioners
- Butchers, cooks and caterers
- Cleaners
- Florists and gardeners
- Hairdressers
- Mechanics

4.5 Noise at Work [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005

Over 2 million UK workers are at risk from excessive noise (HSE estimate). The dangers are clear in industries such as mining, tunnelling, quarrying, heavy engineering, iron and steel production, textiles, and driving heavy vehicles. But noise is also a hazard for white-collar workers such as office workers and teachers, and in the service and entertainment industry such as pubs and clubs.

Noise can be a stressor causing loss of concentration, fatigue, tension, and irritability. There is suspicion that it can cause raised blood pressure and hormonal and immune system problems. There is some evidence that noise exposure during pregnancy may lead to low birth weight or damage a baby's hearing.

Legal Requirements

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 revoke and place stringent duties on employers to protect their employees from harm caused by noise.

- Your employees exposure to noise are averaged of a day or week and
- Provide a maximum peak level for daily exposure

Lower exposure values: 80 dBA or peak sound of 135dB(C-weighted)

Employers must:

- assess noise exposure from processes and maintain records
- provide information, instruction and training for workers
- use noise reduction equipment supplied by manufacturers
- advise workers that they are entitled to ear protectors
- provide these to workers who ask for them and ensure they are maintained and repaired

Workers are not obliged to use ear protectors at this level but must use other protective equipment supplied and report defects in equipment. Manufacturers and suppliers of equipment must supply information on the noise likely to be generated.

Upper Action Level: 85 dBA or peak sound of 137dB (C-weighted)

Employers must:

- reduce exposure to noise by means other than ear protectors
- mark ear protection zones
- provide ear protectors to all exposed persons and ensure they are used in ear protection zones
- Employees must use ear protectors which have been provided.

Exposure Limits

The daily or weekly exposure limit is 87dBA or 140dB(C-weighted) you should not exposure your employees to noise above these levels. Further advice of [Noise exposure](#)

4.6 Vibration [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

If you are an employer whose business involves regular and frequent use of:

- hand-held power tools;
- hand-guided powered equipment;
- powered machines which process hand-held materials

You or your employees may be at risk from their use.

Hand-arm vibration is vibration transmitted from work processes into workers' hands and arms. It can be caused by operating hand-held power tools, such as road breakers, and hand-guided equipment, such as powered lawnmowers, or by holding materials being processed by machines, such as pedestal grinders.

When is it hazardous?

Regular and frequent exposure to hand-arm vibration can lead to permanent health effects. This is most likely when contact with a vibrating tool or work process is a regular part of a person's job. Occasional exposure is unlikely to cause ill health. Hand-arm vibration can cause a range of conditions collectively known as hand arm vibration syndrome (HAVS), as well as specific diseases such as carpal tunnel syndrome.

The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 require; you to:

- make sure that risks from vibration are controlled
- provide information, instruction and training to employees on the risk and the actions being taken to control risk
- provide suitable health surveillance

The Vibration Regulations include an exposure action value (EAV) and an exposure limit value (ELV) based on a combination of the vibration at the grip point(s) on the equipment or work-piece and the time spent gripping it. The exposure action and limit values are:

- a daily EAV of 2.5 m/s that represents a clear risk requiring management; and
- a daily ELV of 5 m/s that represents a high risk above which employees should not be exposed.

If your employees are at high risk:

- introduce a programme of controls to eliminate risk, or reduce exposure to as low a level as is reasonably practicable;
- provide health surveillance (regular health checks) to those employees who continue to be regularly exposed above the action value or otherwise continue to be at risk;
- decide if they are likely to be exposed above the daily exposure limit value (ELV) and if they are:
 - take immediate action to reduce their exposure below the limit value;
 - provide information and training to employees on health risks and the actions you are taking to control those risks;
 - consult your trade union safety representative or employee representative (if you have one) on your proposals to control risk and to provide health surveillance;

- keep a record of your risk assessment and control actions;
- keep health records for employees under health surveillance;
- Review and update your risk assessment regularly.

Further guidance on [Vibration at Work](#)

4.7 Stress at Work [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Occupational stress

Occupational stress arises when workers perceive they cannot adequately cope with the demands made on them or with threats to their jobs and the circumstances in which they are carried out. Stress is on the increase as employment conditions become tougher and new systems of staff supervision are introduced.

Causes and symptoms

The main factors which cause stress at work are lack of job security (threat of redundancy, short-term contracts, etc.), excessive workload (arising from inadequate staffing, long hours, unsatisfactory shift patterns), harsh supervision and discipline, lack of control over work organisation, and inadequate training and career prospects.

Stress can result in both health and behavioural problems. It can lead to stomach and heart disease and a variety of psychological illnesses including reduced immune system efficiency. It is related to absenteeism, increased accident rates, relationship problems and drug and alcohol abuse. The most extreme form of stress is sudden death, i.e. people work themselves to death.

However, many symptoms are transient and disappear when the source of stress is removed. But if stress is prolonged, permanent illness, either physical and/or mental may result.

Legal requirements

Employers have a duty to safeguard the health and safety of their employees under Section 2 of the 1974 Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (HASWA).

Under Regulation 3 of the 1992 Management of Health and Safety at Work (MHSW) Regulations, employers are obliged to carry out an assessment of the risks in jobs and reduce these as far as possible. These legal duties apply to occupational stress and employers are legally required to consult with safety representatives on all aspects of health and safety, including stress risk assessments.

4.8 Violence and Lone Working [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Violence is rapidly becoming an everyday reality for many workers. While no occupation is immune, violence at work tends to be more of a risk in certain occupations than in others. In particular, workers who perform certain types of task appear to be at special risk. These tasks include:

- *handling money or valuables* (cashiers, transport workers, bank and post office staff, shop assistants);
- *providing care, advice, education and training* (nurses, ambulance staff, social workers, teachers);
- *carrying out inspection or enforcement duties* (police and traffic wardens, ticket inspectors);
- *working with mentally disturbed, drunk or potentially violent people* (prison officers, bar staff, mental health workers);
- *working alone* (home visitors, taxi drivers, domestic repair workers)

The HSE definition of workplace violence is:

‘Any incident in which a PERSON is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work’.

Violence can lead to poor staff morale, higher absenteeism, stress, higher insurance costs and possible compensation claims. If you do not address these problems effectively your business will suffer.

Employers have a responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff whilst at work. They are also required to consider all risks within their business and where identified, control or eliminate them.

What Employees can do

- Ensure that risks of violence are identified, assessed, reported and controlled as necessary.
- Establish a comprehensive recording system for acts of violence.
- Provide support for employees who are the victims of violence.
- Provide training for employees to enable them to avoid and/or deal with actual and potential violence.
- Work in partnership with other agencies to develop strategies to reduce the incidence of violence at work.
- Ensure sufficient resources are available for the provision of appropriate control measures
- Ensure that the arrangements for dealing with violence at work are reviewed at suitable intervals.

4.9 Smoking ([Return to Contents](#))

The Health Act 2006

The Act introduced in to law the prohibition of smoking in virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces in England.

Employers, managers and those in charge of smoke free premises and vehicles need to:

- take reasonable steps to ensure that staff, customers/members and visitors are aware that premises and vehicles are legally required to be smoke free
- remove any existing indoor smoking rooms
- ensure that no one smokes in smoke free premises or vehicles

Smoke free premises

The smoke free law applies to virtually all 'enclosed' and 'substantially enclosed' public places and workplaces. This includes both permanent structures and temporary ones such as tents and marquees. This also means that indoor smoking rooms in public places and workplaces are no longer allowed.

Premises are considered 'enclosed' if they have a ceiling or roof and (except for doors, windows or passageways) are wholly enclosed either on a permanent or temporary basis.

Premises are considered 'substantially enclosed' if they have a ceiling or roof, but have an opening in the walls, which is less than half the total area of the walls. The area of the opening does not include doors, windows or any other fittings that can be opened or shut.

4.10 Asthma ([Return to Contents](#))

Occupational asthma is caused when workers breathe in substances at work that leads to them developing a sensitivity to it. Common causes of asthma are flour dust, latex (in particular latex gloves), wood dust, some glues and resins, solder fumes, laboratory animals, some reactive dyes, cobalt, enzymes (in detergents), and even certain insects such as mites.

Among the groups of workers most at risk of inhaling these substances are bakery workers, spray painters, cleaners, nursing and care staff, catering workers, lab technicians and woodworkers.

Work related asthma is where a person is exposed to a substance that can cause asthma where they already have a pre-existing history of asthma (such as childhood asthma). This means that some substances that are found in the workplace can provoke attacks in people who have either already got occupational asthma or even a pre-existing asthma that they have had from childhood.

Asthma can ruin lives. Some sufferers become so disabled they cannot work again.

What An Employer Can do

There are many things you can do as an employer to reduce the risk:

- You must assess the risk of exposure to substances.
- You can install extraction or isolate the employee from the process that produces the risk.
- Replace any respiratory sensitisers in your workplace with a safe alternative.
- Carry out suitable health surveillance for employees exposed or likely to be exposed to an asthmagen.

Ensure employees are properly informed of the relevant risks, trained and supervised.

4.11 Asbestos ([Return to Contents](#))

Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012

The duty to manage is directed at those who manage non-domestic premises, the people with responsibility for protecting others who work in such premises, or use them in other ways, from the risks to ill-health that exposure to asbestos can cause.

In many cases, the duty holder is the person or organisation that has clear responsibility for the maintenance or repair of non-domestic premises through an explicit agreement such as a tenancy agreement or contract.

The duty holder must:

- Take reasonable steps to find out if there are materials containing asbestos in non-domestic premises, and if so, its amount, where it is and what condition it is in;
- Presume materials contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence that they do not;
- Make, and keep up-to-date, a record of the location and condition of the asbestos containing materials – or materials which are presumed to contain asbestos;
- Assess the risk of anyone being exposed to fibres from the materials identified;
- Prepare a plan that sets out in detail how the risks from these materials will be managed;
- Take the necessary steps to put the plan into action;
- Periodically review and monitor the plan and the arrangements to act on it so that the plan remains relevant and up-to-date; and
- Provide information on the location and condition of the materials to anyone who is liable to work on or disturb them. (i.e. contractors)

Here are some basic principles to remember:

- Asbestos is only dangerous when disturbed. If it is safely managed and contained, it doesn't present a health hazard;
- Don't remove asbestos unnecessarily – removing it can be more dangerous than leaving it in place and managing it;
- Not all asbestos materials present the same risk. The measures that need to be taken for controlling the risks from materials such as pipe insulation are different from those needed in relation to asbestos cement;

- If you are unsure about whether certain materials contain asbestos you can presume they do and treat them as such;
- Remember that the duty to manage is all about putting in place the practical steps necessary to protect maintenance workers and others from the risk of exposure to asbestos fibres. It is **not** about removing all asbestos.

Work with certain types of asbestos can only be done by licensed contractors all such work is notifiable. Other type's e.g. asbestos cement work can be under taken by non-licensed contractors taking adequate precautions. You should be aware that some type of non-licensable work are still notifiable.

The web based guide below may be a useful to assist you in your [Duty to Manage Asbestos](#)

4.12 Legionella [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Legionnaires' disease is a pneumonia that mainly affects susceptible people such as the elderly, the young, the immuno-compromised, heavy smokers and those that are already ill, and in certain cases Legionnaires' disease can be fatal.

The risk of legionellosis can be reduced by the proper implementation of a COSHH assessment that will identify potential hazardous plant and equipment and appropriate control measures. The risk can also be reduced by:

- Designing cisterns and pipework so that water is not allowed to stand undisturbed for long periods.
- Cisterns should be well covered to prevent entry of dirt, debris and vermin, and periodically inspected, cleaned and disinfected.
- Water temperatures between 20°C - 45°C should be avoided by insulation of cold water tanks in warm spaces and by storing hot water at 60°C and circulating at 50°C.
- Only water system fittings and materials which comply with water authority byelaws should be used, as certain materials such as leather and some rubbers support the growth of bacteria.
- Cooling towers and their associated water systems need to be well designed, maintained and operated. It is especially important that drift eliminators are fitted to prevent the escape of fine water droplets.
- Systems should be cleaned and disinfected at least every six months.
- Water should be treated to prevent scale, corrosion and microbial growth.
- Consideration should be given, when practicable, to replacing cooling towers with dry cooling systems.

Further advice on managing [Legionella](#)

4.13 Display Screen Equipment [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992

Working with visual display units (VDUs) or display screen equipment (DSE) is not generally high risk, but the expansion of information technology usage in the workplace can lead to health problems associated with intensive DSE work. These problems can include musculoskeletal disorders, eye fatigue and mental stress.

Definition of DSE 'user'

The regulations apply to most display screens where there is a 'user', that is, "employees who habitually use DSE equipment as a significant part of their normal work" - including self-employed persons in an employer's undertaking (Health and Safety [DSE] Regulations 1992).

There are some specified exclusions, such as systems on board a means of transport, systems mainly for public use, portable systems not in prolonged use, cash registers and window typewriters.

Employers' key duties

Under the Regulations employers are not required to conform to detailed technical specifications but are obliged to follow more general objectives. According to the HSE publication "Working with VDUs" employers have to:

Analyse workstations, assess and reduce risks

Employers need to examine:

- The complete workstation including equipment, furniture and the work environment
- The job and tasks being performed; and
- Any special needs of individual staff (whose views may be sought as part of the assessment)

Ensure workstations meet minimum requirements

These basic requirements are good features that should be found in a workstation, such as adjustable chairs and suitable lighting.

Plan work so there are breaks or changes of activity

As the need for breaks depends on the type and intensity of the work, the Regulations require breaks and changes of activity but do not stipulate frequency or duration. The guidance on the regulation expresses general principles, such as frequent breaks are superior to longer but less frequent ones and should be taken before the occurrence of fatigue. Best practice would be for individuals to have some autonomy over the timing of breaks.

On request arrange eye tests, and provide spectacles if special ones are needed

Employees covered by the Regulations can request their employer to provide and pay for an eye and eyesight test, conducted by an optometrist or doctor. This includes additional tests periodically, the optometrist performing the initial test can advise on frequency. Employers only have to pay for spectacles if they are required for the distance at which the screen is viewed i.e. they are prerequisite for the user to operate the VDU.

Further information on [DSE](#)

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