

An Introduction to Health and Safety at Work

Includes
Health and Safety at Work etc Act
1974
and many Regulations

Who does it apply to?

- **Employers must safeguard, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees and others who may be affected by the work activity.**
- **Applies to all people at work including the self employed, to designers, manufacturers and suppliers**

Duties of employers

(What must they do for me)

- Most duties are subject to “so far as is reasonably practicable” i.e. the protection must be worth the cost
- To protect the health, safety and welfare of staff
- To provide and maintain safe equipment and safe systems of work
- Safe use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances
- Provide a safe workplace with a safe entrance and exit

Duties of employers cont....

- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision
- Provide a written safety policy (if there are 5 or more staff)
- Carry out risk assessments (in writing if 5 or more staff)
- provide a health and safety law poster entitled "Health and Safety law: What you should know" displayed in a prominent position and containing details of the enforcing authority.

Duties of employees (your responsibilities)

- N.b. “employee” includes voluntary workers and persons on work experience
- Duties:
 - To take care of themselves and others
 - To follow safety advice and instructions
 - Not interfere with any safety device
 - To report accidents
 - To report hazards and risks

Who can I ask about health and safety?

- Your supervisor will usually be your first contact if you have a health and safety issue
- Your safety representative – may come from the union if the workplace is unionised
- If you have a serious complaint that cannot be settled in the workplace, your Inspector (see next slide)

Enforcement

- Inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
 - Manufacturers; schools and colleges; repairers; specialist places like hospitals and power stations
- Environmental Health Officers
 - Places where the public go like shops, offices, leisure facilities
- Fire Officers
 - just enforce the bits relating to fire safety

Penalties

- Magistrate's court
 - £20,000 per offence
 - Up to 6 months in prison
- Employers, managers or employees can be prosecuted
- Crown court (for more serious offences and where there is a Judge and jury)
 - Unlimited fines
 - Imprisonment for up to 2 years

Accidents at work

- All accidents, however minor, should be reported to your supervisor
- Similarly, all incidents of ill-health (caused from work) should also be reported
- Accidents include those that resulted in injury or damage and “near misses” – those which COULD have resulted in injury or damage
- Your supervisor will decide if the incidents needs to be recorded in the accident records
- Violent incidents are included (this includes verbal threats)

Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences

- Some accidents, incidents and illnesses have to be reported to the government
- These include accidents that cause an employee to be off sick for three days or more, if (following a work accident) he is admitted to hospital for 24 hours or more; serious injuries; certain work related illnesses (such as repetitive strain injuries;) accidents to non-employees if they are taken to hospital from the scene of the accident (even if they are discharged straight away.
- If you are unfortunate enough to suffer a reportable accident, a special form will be filled in and there may be a formal investigation

Summary

- Employers
 - must protect you whilst at work and provide suitable supervision and training
 - Provide written risk assessments and safety policy
- Employees (i.e. you) must work safely without risking yourself or others
- The law applies to everyone at work and anyone can be prosecuted if they do not act safely
- Your manager or your safety representative are there to answer your safety queries
- You must report accidents

Prevention of Falls

- Employers must ensure that any working areas above the ground or below (e.g. inspection pits) are guarded or protected
- If you have to work above ground level you must be kept safe e.g. by wearing a safety harness if it is an area such as a flat roof which is not guarded
- Stepladders should only be used for jobs that do not take long and they must be safe and stable when in use

Preventing falls

- DO
 - Use kick stools safely – they must be on an even, level surface
 - Follow training when using a stepladder
 - Carry out a visual check on any steps before use
- Do not –
 - Stand on the very top of a step ladder
 - Stand on chairs or tables
 - Climb on racking or shelving
 - Stand on the forks of a fork lift truck

Welfare at Work

Facilities

- Employers must provide: -
 - Toilets (can be shared by men and women in small workplaces)
 - Sanitary disposal facilities for women
 - Washbasins for hands near the toilet with hot and cold (or warm) water, soap and drying facilities
 - Cold drinking water (preferably not in the toilet area)
 - Seating (if the job can be done sitting down)
 - Somewhere clean to eat lunch (if it is a “dirty” job)
 - Facilities for disabled people and pregnant women

Environment

- There must be sufficient space to work safely and enough lighting and ventilation
- Workplaces must be kept generally clean and tidy
- Chairs must be safe and comfortable
- Temperature – must be “reasonable”
 - Reasonable means at least 16°C for office work and 13°C where there is physical work
 - In very hot weather, employers only need to provide local cooling e.g. fans

Summary

- At work you are entitled to: -
- A safe workplace – this includes areas above or below the ground level
- Toilets
- Drinking water
- A place to eat lunch
- Safe seating

First Aid

- Employers have to provide first aid facilities at work
- As a minimum, there should be a fully stocked green first aid box and a person appointed to take charge in an emergency
- Some workplaces have qualified first aiders and first aid rooms
- Green and white notices should inform you where the first aid box is kept and who the first aider(s) or appointed person(s) is/are

Fire safety

- Employers must have arrangements in place
 - to prevent fires
 - To raise the alarm
 - To fight fires (fire extinguishers)
 - Emergency evacuation (including a pre-arranged meeting place for staff to assemble following evacuation)
- Notices showing the safe evacuation routes from buildings should be green and white

Moving and Handling

- You may be asked to lift, carry push or pull a load at work
- You should always follow safe practice when doing any moving and handling
- You should never attempt to move anything that is too heavy or difficult – ask for help
- Employers should provide equipment to help you to move heavy or difficult loads

Lifting Advice

■ Think

- Plan the lift.
- Consider mechanical aids - even a sack truck can make a big improvement
- Where is the load going to be placed?
- Will help be needed with the load?
- Remove obstructions such as discarded wrapping materials.
- Walk the route – ensure someone will be there to open any fire doors

Lifting advice

- Adopt a stable position
- Get a good hold
- Start in a good posture – bend the knees and do not bend the back more than a little
- Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways
- For a long lift, consider resting the load midway on a table or bench to change grip.

Correct lifting procedure

Planning and preparation

- Plan the lift and route
- Assess weight and size of load
- Obtain correct PPE/check clothing

Lift

- correct, balanced posture, feet apart
- use legs, back straight, avoid twisting
- hold object close to body

Move load

- hold close
- proceed carefully
- clear visibility

Lower load

- reverse lift close
- check positioning

Workplace transport

- Any vehicle or piece of mobile equipment used at work (does not include vehicles travelling on a public road)
- Employers protect pedestrians by
 - marking traffic routes
 - Signposts at junctions
 - One way systems
 - Speed limits
 - Warning horns when vehicles reverse
 - Training of drivers

Stress at work

■ Causes:

- Poor communications – e.g. between management and staff
- Too much work (overload)
- Too little work (boredom)
- Poor relationships with colleagues
- Workplace bullying
- Noisy workplace
- Work life and home life out of balance

Signs of stress

- Lack of concentration
- Changes in a person's normal behaviour
- Poor relations with other staff
- Being irritable
- Being indecisive
- Raised blood pressure
- Headaches
- Loss of appetite/ weight loss
- Weight gain
- Backache
- Drinking or smoking more than normal

Stress – what you should do

- First – tell your manager that you think you are suffering from stress
- Inform your manager of any work related stressors (such as impossible deadlines) that may be contributing to your stress levels
- If you do not wish to do this for any reason, you could talk to your union representative
- Some workplaces provide a counselling service
- You may find help through your occupational health service
- If your health is being seriously affected, you could consult your doctor (GP)

Equipment

- The term covers everything from a hand tool to a large machine like a crane.
- Before you use equipment at work you should be shown how to use it safely
- You should never use equipment that you are not trained or authorised to use
- Electrical equipment should have a sticker on it indicating that it has been P.A.T. tested and giving a date when the next test is due

Dangers from work equipment

- Traps – of fingers or other parts
- Entanglement – of clothing or hair
- Ejection – things being thrown out of the machine
- Contact – with hot or abrasive
- Impact – being hit by moving parts of the machine
- Electrical dangers

Safety of equipment

- Only use equipment for which you have been authorised and/or trained
- Always wear any personal protective equipment such as goggles or gloves if you have been instructed to do so
- Carry out a visual check of equipment before you use it and look for any obvious defects
- If you notice something wrong or unusual, report it to your manager and put the equipment out of use

Control measures

- Control measures are put in place by employers to protect staff from hazards and risks that have been identified
- The hierarchy of controls
- Employers are allowed to take costs into account and work their way down the list until a suitable solution at reasonable cost has been identified
 - Elimination
 - Substitution
 - Controlling risks at source
 - Training, instruction and supervision
 - Personal protective equipment

Personal Protective equipment (p.p.e.)

- Includes clothing and other items worn by staff to protect themselves from work hazards
- Must only be used as a last resort i.e. when no other protection can be provided at reasonable cost
- Examples ;
 - Gloves, goggles, hard hats, hearing protectors, warm clothing (in cold conditions), safety shoes or boots, respirators etc

What must your employer do

- Provide the p.p.e. (free) if a risk assessment has shown it to be necessary
- It must be exclusively for you and fit you comfortably
- Provide somewhere to store it
- Provide facilities for it to be cleaned and maintained
- Replace it when necessary
- Provide training (if necessary) in how to wear/use it properly

What you must do

- You **must** wear the p.p.e. if it has been provided for you. You could be held personally liable if you had an accident which could have been prevented by you wearing your p.p.e.;
- You must care for it, store it and clean it as necessary;
- You must report any defects.

Working with substances

- You may be exposed to hazardous substances whilst at work
- Could be –
 - Fumes
 - Dusts
 - Chemicals
 - Solids
 - Bodily fluids or solids
 - Micro organisms

Substances hazardous to health

COSHH assessments

The use of hazardous substances must be assessed

- Prevention of exposure
- Protection of employees

- Special risk assessments should be available that describe how to use and store the chemical safely
- You may be provided with p.p.e. e.g. gloves, goggles, apron – this **MUST** be worn