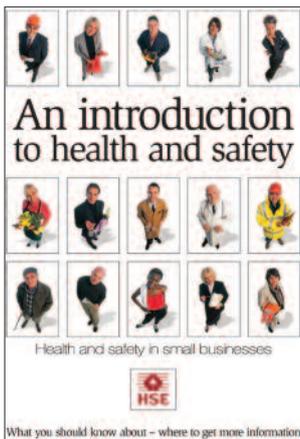


# An introduction to health and safety

Health and safety in small businesses

What you should know about - where to get more information



This is a web-friendly  
version of leaflet  
INDG259(rev1), reprinted  
08/08

## It's your business but we can help you look after it!

Getting hurt at work or becoming ill through work is not a pleasant subject to think about. The reality is that over 200 people a year lose their lives at work in Britain. In addition, around 150 000 non-fatal injuries are reported each year, and an estimated 2 million suffer from ill health caused or made worse by work.

The mistake is to believe that these things happen in highly unusual or exceptional circumstances that never occur in your workplace. This is not the case. Some basic thinking and acting beforehand could usually have prevented these things from happening.

Implementing health and safety measures doesn't have to be expensive, time consuming or complicated. In fact, safer and more efficient working practices can often save money but, more importantly, they can help to save lives.

This booklet shows you the kind of things which cause the more common accidents and harm to people's health. It lets you see what applies to your work activities, and tells you how you can get more help and information.

This is especially important if you are in charge of work activities, eg you are an employer, because you have legal responsibilities.

## Ten questions and answers for everyone

### *What is health and safety all about?*

Preventing people from being harmed by work or becoming ill by taking the right precautions - and providing a satisfactory working environment.

### *Why are there health and safety laws?*

Because health and safety at work is so important, there are rules which require all of us not to put ourselves or others in danger. The law is also there to protect the public from workplace dangers.

### *Do health and safety laws apply to me?*

Yes. To all businesses, however small; also to the self-employed and to employees.

### ***Who enforces health and safety law?***

Inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or your local authority. For example:

- HSE at factories, farms and building sites;
- local authorities in offices, shops, hotels and catering, and leisure activities.

### ***What do inspectors actually do?***

They visit workplaces to check that people are sticking to the rules. They investigate some accidents and complaints but mainly they help you to understand what you need to do. They enforce only when something is seriously wrong.

### ***Do I have to contact an inspector to get information?***

No. HSE operates a confidential telephone information service called Infoline which is open Monday-Friday between 8 am and 6 pm. You can contact Infoline by telephone 0845 345 0055 or fax 0845 408 9566, or e-mail [hse.infoline@natbrit.com](mailto:hse.infoline@natbrit.com). Alternatively you can write to HSE Information Services, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG.

### ***Do I need to register my business?***

It's likely you will if you employ anyone - contact Infoline.

### ***Do I need to have employers' liability compulsory insurance?***

It's the law if you employ anyone - and you should display the certificate. See the free leaflet, *Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance Act 1969. A guide for employers* HSE40(rev1), available from HSE Books on 01787 881165 or from [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk).

### ***Do I need to display any posters?***

Yes, the health and safety law poster (ISBN 978 0 7176 2493 5) if you employ anyone. Alternatively you can provide your employees with individual copies of the same information in a leaflet called *Health and safety law: What you should know* (available in packs of 25 ISBN 978 0 7176 1702 9). The poster and leaflets are available from HSE Books.

### ***Do I have to report injuries at work?***

Yes, and other incidents. For information on which ones and who should report them, see page 18.

## **List of topics**

Managing health and safety  
Slips, trips and falls  
Asbestos  
Hazardous substances  
Falls from a height  
Musculoskeletal disorders  
Display screen equipment  
Noise  
Vibration

Electricity  
Work equipment and machinery  
Maintenance and building work  
Workplace transport  
Pressure systems  
Fire and explosion  
Radiation  
Stress  
First aid and accident reporting

## How to use this booklet – how each section works

No matter where you work, this booklet summarises the key common areas of risk at work and tells you how you can find out more to ensure that work is made safe.

In each section the main text gives you a brief introduction to the subject.

### *Does this concern me?*

- This section gives you some pointers to whether the subject is relevant to your business.

### *What law applies?*

- This section gives you the main rules which apply in addition to the general duties in the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

### *How and where you can get more help*

This section is a selection of HSE publications which will give you more detailed information and guidance on the subject, and how to order them.\*

At the bottom of each page you will find HSE's Internet address, and also HSE's Infoline number which you can ring if you need more information.

At the end of the publication is a section on health and safety policy statements and a section on risk assessments.

**The words 'hazard' and 'risk' are used throughout this leaflet. Hazard means anything that can cause harm (eg chemicals, electricity, working from ladders, etc). Risk is the chance, high or low, that someone will be harmed by the hazard.**

\* HSE Books will accept orders for single copies of up to 25 assorted free publications. You should allow 10 working days for delivery.

HSE Infoline  
0845 345 0055

HSE Website  
[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

HSE Direct  
[www.hsedirect.com](http://www.hsedirect.com)

## Managing health and safety

### *Have you got health and safety under control?*

Managing health and safety is little different from managing any other aspect of your business. You need to do a risk assessment to find out about the risks in your workplace, put sensible measures in place to control them, and make sure they stay controlled.

A risk assessment is nothing more than a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people. Risk assessment should be a practical exercise, aimed at getting the right controls in place – keep it simple and put the results into practice. Page 31 of this leaflet gives you step-by-step guidance on how to assess health and safety risks with a minimum of fuss.

Your health and safety policy clearly sets out how you manage health and safety in your workplace by defining who does what; and when and how they do it. On pages 20-30 of this leaflet is an example of a health and safety policy statement that you can fill in and keep at your workplace. Remember, keep it simple and actually put it into practice.

### ***Does this concern me?***

- Did you know all employers and self-employed people have to assess risks at work?
- Did you know employers with five or more employees should have a written health and safety policy?
- Did you know employers with five or more employees have to record the significant findings of their risk assessment?
- Did you know employers have a duty to involve their employees or their employees' safety representatives on health and safety matters?
- Did you know employers have to provide free health and safety training or protective equipment for employees where it is needed?

### ***What law applies?***

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (risk assessment)
- Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996
- Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977

### ***How and where you can get more help***

*Five steps to risk assessment* INDG163(rev2) FREE (available in packs of 10 ISBN 978 0 7176 6189 3 £3.50)

*Consulting employees on health and safety: A guide to the law* INDG232 FREE (available in packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 1615 2 £3.50)

*Essentials of health and safety at work* ISBN 978 0 7176 6179 4 £10.95

*Health and safety law poster* Encapsulated ISBN 978 0 7176 2493 5 £7.50 (inc VAT)

Rigid PVC ISBN 978 0 7176 1779 1 £12.50 (inc VAT)

Risk management website: [www.hse.gov.uk/risk](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk)

## **Slips, trips and falls**

### ***What are the chances of slipping or tripping at work?***

The most common cause of injuries at work is the slip or trip. Resulting falls can be serious. They happen in all kinds of businesses, but sectors such as food and catering report higher than average numbers. It's a particularly important subject if members of the public use your premises. The estimated cost to employers of all these injuries is over £500 million a year, and insurance only covers a small part of this. Effective solutions are often simple, cheap and lead to other benefits.

### ***Does this concern me?***

- Do you have floors which are, or can become, slippery, eg when wet?
- Does spillage or contamination occur and is it dealt with quickly?
- Do people use unlit areas such as paths or yards in the dark?

To order any of these titles, call HSE Books on 01787 881165 or go to [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)

- Might temporary work such as maintenance or alterations take place? It could introduce slipping and tripping hazards such as trailing cables.
- Do you use floor cleaning materials anywhere? Are the right methods and materials being used?

### ***What law applies?***

- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

### ***How and where you can get more help***

*Preventing slips and trips at work* INDG225(rev1) FREE (available in packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 2760 8 £3.50)

*Workplace health, safety and welfare* INDG244(rev2) FREE (available in packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 6277 7 £3.50)

*Slips and trips: Guidance for the food processing industry* HSG156 ISBN 978 0 7176 0832 4 £9.75

*Slips and trips: Guidance for employers on identifying hazards and controlling risks* HSG155 ISBN 978 0 7176 1145 4 £7.50

Slips and trips website: [www.hse.gov.uk/slips](http://www.hse.gov.uk/slips)

## **Asbestos**

### ***Do you work with, or come into contact with, asbestos?***

Asbestos is the largest single cause of work-related fatal disease and ill health in Great Britain. Almost all asbestos-related deaths and ill health are from exposures several decades ago, but if you work with asbestos, or come into contact with it during repair and maintenance work, you are at risk. You should avoid working with asbestos if possible, but if not you must do it safely.

Asbestos can be found in buildings built from 1950 to 1985 in many forms. It may also be found in some vehicle brake pads and clutch linings.

### ***Does this concern me?***

- Do you know whether there is asbestos in your premises? It is often found in roofs and exterior walls, boilers, vessels and pipework, ceilings, interior walls and panels, flooring materials, air handling systems, domestic appliances, brake/clutch linings, fire blankets, etc.
- Does your work involve maintenance and repair of premises? You might disturb asbestos while doing routine work.
- Do you know what the rules are about removing asbestos? In most cases, you will need to use a contractor licensed by HSE to work with asbestos.
- Would you know how to find someone licensed to do this work?
- Do you know whether there is asbestos in any of the materials you work with?

### ***What law applies?***

- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006

To order any of these titles, call HSE Books on 01787 881165 or go to [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)

### **How and where you can get more help**

*Asbestos kills: A quick guide to protecting yourself!* Pocket card INDG418 FREE  
(available in packs of 25 ISBN 978 0 7176 6271 5 £3.50)

*Asbestos kills: Protect yourself!* INDG419 FREE (available in packs of 15  
ISBN 978 0 7176 6259 3 £3.50)

*The management of asbestos in non-domestic premises* Approved Code of  
Practice L127 ISBN 978 0 7176 2382 8 £9.50

*Work with materials containing asbestos* L143 ISBN 978 0 7176 6206 7 £13.50

*A comprehensive guide to managing asbestos in premises* HSG227  
ISBN 978 0 7176 2381 5 £12.50

*Asbestos essentials: A task manual for the building maintenance and allied trades  
on non-licensed asbestos work* HSG210 ISBN 978 0 7176 6263 0 £12.95

*Introduction to asbestos essentials: Comprehensive guidance on working with  
asbestos in the building maintenance and allied trades* HSG213  
ISBN 978 0 7176 1901 6 £12.50

Asbestos website: [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos)

## **Hazardous substances**

### **Do you work with hazardous substances?**

Thousands of people are exposed to all kinds of hazardous substances at work. These can include chemicals that people make or work with directly, and also dust, fume and bacteria which can be present in the workplace. Exposure can happen by breathing them in, contact with the skin, splashing them into the eyes or swallowing them. If exposure is not prevented or properly controlled, it can cause serious illness, including cancer, asthma and dermatitis, and sometimes even death. See also section on 'Fire and explosion' on page 15 and the 'safe handling and use of substances' section of the Health and Safety Policy Statement on page 25.

### **Does this concern me?**

- Do you use chemicals at work (including cleaning materials)?
- Do you know suppliers of hazardous substances have to provide information to users, including safety data sheets and proper labelling?
- Is there dust and fume present in your workplace?
- Do you have any water systems which could be colonised by legionella?
- Do you work with animals or their products? These may cause skin or respiratory sensitisation or be infected with bacteria or viruses.

### **What law applies?**

- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) (as amended)
- Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply) Regulations 2002 (as amended)
- Control of Lead at Work Regulations 2002

To order any of these titles, call HSE Books on 01787 881165 or go to [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)

### **How and where you can get more help**

HSE's Infoline can help identify publications relevant to you.

*COSHH essentials: Easy steps to control chemicals*. A FREE internet version is available on: [www.coshh-essentials.org.uk](http://www.coshh-essentials.org.uk)

*Preventing contact dermatitis at work* INDG233(rev1) FREE (available in packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 6183 1 £3.50)

*Respiratory sensitisers and COSHH: Breathe freely – An employers' leaflet on preventing occupational asthma* Leaflet INDG95(rev2) FREE (available in packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 0914 7 £3.50)

*Health risk management – a practical guide for managers in small and medium sized enterprises* HSG137 ISBN 978 0 7176 0905 5 £6.50

[www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/index.htm)

## **Falls from a height**

### **Do you perform work at height and if so is it done safely?**

Falls from height at work account for around 60 deaths and just under 4000 major injuries each year. One of the main causes is falls from ladders. To help prevent falls from height, make sure you consider the risks to all your workers, the work is planned, organised and carried out by competent people and you follow the hierarchy for managing risks. Make sure workers are properly trained and supervised, have the right equipment and know how to use it safely.

### **Does this concern me?**

- Do you carry out simple maintenance or cleaning tasks that require working where you could hurt yourself if you fell?
- Can you avoid the need to work at height? For example, could the work be done using long-handled tools or by bringing it down to ground level?
- Do you have the most appropriate equipment for the job? It may often be safer to use a tower scaffold or mobile elevating work platform than a ladder.
- Is the equipment you have well maintained and do your employees know how to use it safely?

### **What law applies?**

- Work at Height Regulations 2005
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

### **How and where you can get more help**

*The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended): A brief guide* INDG401(rev1) FREE (available in packs of 10 ISBN 978 0 7176 6231 9 £3.50)

*Simple guide to the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998* INDG291 FREE (available in packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 2429 4 £3.50)

*Safe use of ladders and stepladders: An employers' guide* INDG402 FREE (available in packs of 5 ISBN 978 0 7176 6105 3 £3.50)

To order any of these titles, call HSE Books on 01787 881165 or go to [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)

## Musculoskeletal disorders

### *Do you suffer from sprains, strains and pains?*

Manual handling is transporting or supporting loads by hand or using bodily force. Many people hurt their back, arms, hands or feet lifting everyday loads, not just when the load is too heavy. More than a third of all over-three-day injuries reported each year to HSE and to local authorities are the result of manual handling. These can result in those injured taking an average of 11 working days off each year.

'Upper limbs' refers to the neck, shoulders, arms, wrists, hands and fingers. Upper limb disorders (sometimes called repetitive strain injury (RSI)) can happen in almost any workplace where people do repetitive, or forceful manual activities in awkward postures, for prolonged periods of time. These can cause muscular aches and pains, which may initially be temporary, but if such work is not properly managed, and the early symptoms are not recognised and treated, can progress to a chronic and disabling disorder. Cumulative damage can build up over time causing pain and discomfort in people's backs, arms, hands and legs. Most cases can be avoided by providing suitable lifting equipment that is regularly maintained, together with relevant training on both manual handling and using the equipment safely (see page 12 'Work equipment and machinery').

### *Does this concern me?*

- Does your work include strenuous lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, reaching or repetitive handling?
- Do you have repetitive finger, hand or arm movements which are frequent, forceful or awkward?
- Does your work involve twisting, squeezing, hammering or pounding?

### *What law applies?*

- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

### *How and where you can get more help*

*Aching arms (or RSI) in small businesses* INDG171(rev1) FREE (available in packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 2600 7 £3.50)

*Manual handling assessment charts* INDG383 FREE (available in packs of 10 ISBN 978 0 7176 2741 7 £3.50)

*Upper limb disorders in the workplace* HSG60 ISBN 978 0 7176 1978 8 £9.50

*Getting to grips with manual handling: A short guide* INDG143(rev2) FREE (available in packs of 10 ISBN 978 0 7176 2828 5 £3.50)

[www.hse.gov.uk/msd](http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd)

## Display screen equipment

### *Do you use computers or other display screen equipment?*

Using a computer or other kinds of display screen equipment (visual display units) can give rise to back problems, repetitive strain injury, or other musculoskeletal disorders. These health problems may become serious if no action is taken. They

To order any of these titles, call HSE Books on 01787 881165 or go to [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)

can be caused by poor design of workstations (and associated equipment such as chairs), insufficient space, lack of training or not taking breaks from display screen work. Work with a screen does not cause eye damage, but many users experience temporary eye strain or stress. This can lead to reduced work efficiency or taking time off work.

***Does this concern me?***

- Is there regular use of display screens as a significant part of the work?
- Does anyone use a keyboard, mouse or other input device?
- Are people complaining of discomfort, aches and pains?

***What law applies?***

- Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended)

***How and where you can get more help***

*The law on VDUs. An easy guide: Making sure your office complies with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended in 2002)*  
HSG90 ISBN 978 0 7176 2602 1 £8.50

*Working with VDUs* INDG36(rev3) FREE (available in packs of 10)  
ISBN 978 0 7176 6222 7 £3.50

[www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse](http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse)

## **Noise**

***Is your workplace noisy?***

High levels of noise at work can cause hearing damage. A little damage happens every time it is noisy, gradually adding up to serious harm. Young people can be damaged as easily as the old. Sufferers often first start to notice hearing loss when they cannot keep up with conversations in a group, or when the rest of their family complains they have the television on too loud. Deafness can make people feel isolated from their family, friends and colleagues.

***Does this concern me?***

- Are there times when the workplace is so noisy that people have to shout to each other at normal speaking distance to make themselves heard? If so, there is likely to be a danger to hearing.
- Are noisy powered tools or machinery in use for at least part of the day?
- Are there noisy bangs from hammering, explosive or impact tools, or guns?
- Are there areas where noise could interfere with warning and danger signals?

***What law applies?***

- Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005

***How and where you can get more help***

To order any of these titles, call HSE Books on 01787 881165 or go to [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)

*Controlling noise at work. The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005* L108  
ISBN 978 0 7176 6164 0 £13.95

*Noise at work: Guidance for employers on the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005* INDG362(rev1) FREE (available in packs of 10 ISBN 978 0 7176 6165 7 £3.50)

*Sound advice. Control of noise at work in music and entertainment* HSG260 ISBN 978 0 7176 6307 1 £14.50

*Protect your hearing or lose it!* Pocket card INDG363(rev1) FREE (available in packs of 25 ISBN 978 0 7176 6166 4 £3.50)

*Noise toolbox talk pack* ISBN 978 0 7176 2998 5 £10.00)

Noise website: [www.hse.gov.uk/noise](http://www.hse.gov.uk/noise)

## Vibration

### *Are you exposed to vibration?*

Vibration from work with powered hand-held tools, equipment or processes can damage the hands and arms of users causing 'hand-arm vibration syndrome'. This is a painful, irreversible condition which includes 'vibration white finger' and the effects can be impaired blood circulation, damage to the nerves and muscles, and loss of ability to grip properly.

Back pain can be caused by or aggravated by vibration from a vehicle or machine passing through the seat into the driver's body through the buttocks – known as whole-body vibration. Whole-body vibration can also be caused by standing on the platform of a vehicle or machine, so vibration passes into the operator through their feet.

### *Does this concern me?*

- Does anyone work with hand-held and hand-guided tools and machines such as concrete breakers and vibrating compactor plates and workpieces such as castings which are held against powered machinery such as pedestal grinders?
- Does anyone doing this work get tingling or numbness in the fingers or hands?
- Does anyone often drive off-road machinery such as tractors, dumper trucks or excavators or unsuspended vehicles such as fork-lift trucks?

### *What law applies?*

- Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005

### *How and where you can get more help*

*Hand-arm vibration. The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005. Guidance on Regulations* L140 ISBN 978 0 7176 6125 1 £13.95

*Control the risks from hand-arm vibration: Advice for employers on the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005* INDG175(rev2) FREE (available in packs of 10 ISBN 978 0 7176 6117 6 £3.50)

*Hand-arm vibration: Advice for employees* Pocket card INDG296(rev1) FREE (available in packs of 25 ISBN 978 0 7176 6118 3 £3.50)

*Whole-body vibration. The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005. Guidance on Regulations* L141 ISBN 978 0 7176 6126 8 £10.95

To order any of these titles, call HSE Books on 01787 881165 or go to [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)

*Control back-pain risks from whole-body vibration: Advice for employers on the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005* INDG242(rev1) FREE (available in packs of 10 ISBN 978 0 7176 6119 0 £3.50)

*Drive away bad backs: Advice for mobile machine operators and drivers* Pocket card INDG404 FREE (available in packs of 25 ISBN 978 0 7176 6120 6 £3.50)

Vibration website: [www.hse.gov.uk/vibration](http://www.hse.gov.uk/vibration)

## **Electricity**

### ***How safe is electricity in your workplace?***

Electricity can kill. Most deaths are caused by contact with overhead or underground power cables. Even non-fatal shocks can cause severe and permanent injury. Shocks from faulty equipment may lead to falls from ladders, scaffolds or other work platforms. Those using electricity may not be the only ones at risk. Poor electrical installations and faulty electrical appliances can lead to fires which can also result in death or injury to others.

### ***Does this concern me?***

- Does anyone do electrical work in your business? Only those with appropriate technical knowledge and experience should be allowed to do this.
- Is your electrical equipment in good working order?
- Do you choose equipment that is suitable for its working environment, eg waterproof or dustproof?
- Do you dig in the street, pavement or near buildings? Knowing the proper precautions for avoiding underground cables is essential.
- Do you work near or under overhead powerlines? There are essential safety precautions to follow.

### ***What law applies?***

- Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

### ***How and where you can get more help***

*Avoidance of danger from overhead electric power lines* GS6  
ISBN 978 0 7176 1348 9 £5.00

*Memorandum of guidance on the Electricity at work Regulations 1989* HSR25  
ISBN 978 0 7176 6228 9 £11.95

*Electricity at work. Safe working practices* HSG85 ISBN 978 0 7176 2164 4  
£7.95

*Avoiding danger from underground services* HSG47 ISBN 978 0 7176 1744 9  
£7.50

*Electrical safety and you* INDG231 FREE (available in packs of 15  
ISBN 978 0 7176 1207 9 £3.50)

Electrical safety website: [www.hse.gov.uk/electricity](http://www.hse.gov.uk/electricity)

To order any of these titles, call HSE Books on 01787 881165 or go to [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)

## Work equipment and machinery

### *Do you know how to select and use your work equipment?*

Work equipment covers an enormous range spanning process machinery, machine tools, office machines, lifting equipment, hand tools, ladders and pressure washers. Important points include: selecting the right equipment for the job, making sure equipment is safe to use and keeping it safe through regular maintenance, inspection and, if appropriate, thorough examination, training employees to use equipment safely and following manufacturers' or suppliers' instructions. Accidents involving work equipment happen all the time – many serious, some fatal. See 'safe plant and equipment' section of the Health and Safety Policy Statement on page 24 of this leaflet.

### *Does this concern me?*

- Do you use ladders or other equipment for working at heights? For example, it may often be safer to use an access tower or mobile elevating work platform than a ladder.
- Do you have machinery of any kind? You need to guard the parts that could cause injury; have the right controls, especially for starting and stopping; clean, or clear blockages in a safe way; and carry out preventive checks, maintenance and inspection.
- Are hand tools used in your workplace, eg screwdrivers, knives, hand saws, meat cleavers, hammers?
- Do you have lifting equipment such as pulley blocks, cranes, and lift trucks? Most lifting equipment will require regular thorough examination by a competent person.

### *What law applies?*

- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998
- Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 1992, as amended 1994

### *How and where you can get more help*

*Simple guide to the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations* INDG291  
FREE (available in packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 2429 4 £3.50)

*Safe use of work equipment. Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998* L22 ISBN 978 0 7176 6295 1 £11.95

*Thorough examination of lifting equipment* INDG422 FREE (available in packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 6305 7 £3.50)

*Buying new machinery* INDG271 FREE (available in packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 1559 9 £3.50)

*Using work equipment safely* INDG229(rev1) FREE (available in packs of 10 ISBN 978 0 7176 2389 1 £3.50)

*Safe use of ladders and stepladders: An employers' guide* INDG402  
FREE (available in packs of 5 ISBN 978 0 7176 6105 3 £3.50)

To order any of these titles, call HSE Books on 01787 881165 or go to [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)

[www.hse.gov.uk/equipment](http://www.hse.gov.uk/equipment)

## Maintenance and building work

### *What maintenance and building work takes place?*

It's easy to overlook these activities because they happen now and again, and it's often a contractor or service agency doing the work. Sometimes people are in places where no one normally goes, eg the roof or electrical switchboard. They may be fault finding, trying to repair something quickly – often outside the routine. Not surprisingly there are many accidents. Falls from heights, eg ladders, are the most common cause of serious injury.

### *Does this concern me?*

- Did you know that if you are the person responsible for your business, you are also responsible for contractors, service engineers, etc who do work for you?
- Does anyone ever have to work on the roof, at a height or on fragile materials?
- Does anyone have to fault find and repair machinery or equipment when it breaks down?
- Is there a tank, pit, silo or similar confined space into which someone might go – and would you know if they did?
- Have you found out whether there is any asbestos\* in your buildings or plant which could be disturbed during maintenance or alterations?

### *What law applies?*

- Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996 (building work)
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Confined Spaces Regulations 1997
- Work at Height Regulations 2005

### *How and where you can get more help*

*Managing health and safety in construction* L144 ISBN 978 0 7176 6223 4  
£15.00)

*The absolutely essential health and safety toolkit for the smaller construction contractor* INDG344(rev2) FREE (available in packs of 5 ISBN 978 0 7176 6232 6  
£3.50)

*Health and safety in roof work* HSG33 ISBN 978 0 7176 6250 0 £12.95

*Managing contractors: A guide for employers* HSG159 ISBN 978 0 7176 1196 6  
£8.50

*Health and safety in construction* HSG150 ISBN 978 0 7176 6182 4 £10.95

*The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended): A brief guide* INDG401(rev1)  
FREE (available in packs of 10 ISBN 978 0 7176 6231 9 £3.50)

Working Well Together (WWT) Website: [wwt.uk.com](http://wwt.uk.com)  
WWT Campaign Helpline Tel: 0845 2727 500.

[www.hse.gov.uk/construction](http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction)

To order any of these titles, call HSE Books on 01787 881165 or go to [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)

\*Also see page 5 on 'Asbestos'

## Workplace transport

### *What are the risks from transport in your workplace?*

Every year about 70 people are killed and about 2500 seriously injured in accidents involving vehicles at the workplace. Being struck or run over by moving vehicles, falling from vehicles, or vehicles over-turning are the most common causes. Vehicles operating in the workplace include cars and vans, lift trucks, heavy goods vehicles, dumpers, specialised vehicles or plant. Often there is significantly more danger from vehicles in the workplace than on the public highway since the operating conditions are different.

### *Does this concern me?*

- Do you have vehicles in operation at your workplace? If so what kinds of vehicles are they?
- Are pedestrians separated from vehicle movements as much as possible?
- Are traffic routes suitable for the vehicles which have to use them? Are they clearly marked?
- Do you know who is allowed to drive or operate the vehicles? They should be trained and competent.
- Are loading and unloading operations carried out safely?
- Do you actively control driving behaviour?
- Are all vehicles properly maintained?

### *What law applies?*

- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998

### *How and where you can get more help*

*Workplace transport safety: An employers' guide* HSG136  
ISBN 978 0 7176 6154 1 £11.50

*Safety in working with lift trucks* HSG6 ISBN 978 0 7176 1781 4 £6.50

*Workplace transport safety: An overview* INDG199(rev1) FREE (available in packs of 5 ISBN 978 0 7176 2821 6 £3.50)

[www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport](http://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport)

## Pressure systems

### *Do you know the risks associated with pressure systems?*

Pressure cookers, boilers, steam heating systems, gas cylinders and air compressors are common examples of equipment and systems containing a fluid under pressure. They can cause death or injury to people, and serious damage to property, if the contents are released unintentionally. There are about 150 incidents of this kind every year. They mainly happen when equipment fails through poor design, incorrect filling or maintenance or when the method of work is unsafe, or someone makes an operating mistake.

To order any of these titles, call HSE Books on 01787 881165 or go to [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)

### *Does this concern me?*

- Do you have any pressure systems or equipment in your business that contain a fluid under pressure?
- Do you know that most pressure systems have to be designed, installed, maintained and periodically examined so as to prevent danger?
- Are you aware that as an employer or self-employed person, it's your job to choose a competent person to carry out examinations of the pressure systems?

### *What law applies?*

- Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000
- Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations 2007

### *How and where you can get more help*

*Written schemes of examination* INDG178(rev1) FREE (available in packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 2269 6 £3.50)

*Pressure systems safety and you* INDG261(rev1) FREE (available in packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 1562 9 £3.50)

*Safety of pressure systems. Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000 Approved Code of Practice* L122 ISBN 978 0 7176 1767 8 £7.50

## **Fire and explosion**

### *Do you know how to prevent fire or explosion?*

Each year many people suffer burns caused by the flammable materials they work with. The wide variety of flammable substances found in the workplace ranges from the obvious, eg heating fuel, petrol, paint thinners and welding gases to the less obvious, eg packaging materials, dusts from wood, flour and sugar. For a fire to start, fuel, air and a source of ignition are needed. Controlling these can prevent fires.

If you would like information on fire exits, alarms, or extinguishers, contact your local fire authority.

### *Does this concern me?*

- Do you keep or use flammable substances?
- Do you use or store gas in cylinders (eg propane)? A small amount of released gas can fill a large area with a potentially explosive mixture.
- Do you work with flammable dusts? They can explode.
- Do you work with plastic foams or polyester wadding? Some types will ignite easily, burn fiercely and give off dense black smoke.
- Do you spray flammable paints? Vapours are heavier than air and collect at low level.
- Do you know the dangers of putting flammable liquids on fires to make them burn more intensely?
- Do you use oxygen, eg in cylinders, for welding?

To order any of these titles, call HSE Books on 01787 881165 or go to [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)

### **What law applies?**

- Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2002
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (came into force 1 October 2006 - visit [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk) for information)

### **How and where you can get more help**

*Safe use of petrol in garages* INDG331 FREE (available in packs of 10)  
ISBN 978 0 7176 1836 1 £3.50)

*Safe use and handling of flammable liquids* HSG140 ISBN 978 0 7176 0967 3  
£8.50

*Fire and explosion. How safe is your workplace? A short guide to the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations* INDG370 FREE (available in packs of 5 ISBN 978 0 7176 2589 5 £3.50)

*Safe working with flammable substances* INDG227 FREE (available in packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 1154 6 £3.50)

*Dispensing petrol: Assessing and controlling the risk of fire and explosion at sites where petrol is stored and dispensed as a fuel* HSG146 ISBN 978 0 7176 1048 8  
£7.50

## **Radiation**

### **Do you know where harmful radiation occurs?**

Various kinds of radiation, both ionising and non-ionising, may affect us.

Non-ionising radiation:

- UV radiation (eg from the sun) can damage the skin and lead to skin cancer;
- lasers can cause burns and damage the eye.

Ionising radiation:

- naturally occurring radon gas from the ground;
- radiography or thickness measuring gauges;
- medical equipment, eg X-ray sets.

Excess doses of ionising radiation can cause burns, sickness and can have other adverse health effects.

### **Does this concern me?**

- Do people in your business spend a lot of time working outdoors?
- Do you have equipment which gives off ultra-violet radiation, eg for curing plastics or inks?
- Do you work with lasers?
- Is your business in an area where levels of radon are higher than average?
- Are any radioactive sources used in your business brought in by a specialist contractor, or do you transport them?
- Is X-ray equipment used?

To order any of these titles, call HSE Books on 01787 881165 or go to [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)

### **What law applies?**

- Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

### **How and where you can get more help**

*Controlling the radiation safety of display laser installations* INDG224 FREE

*Keep your top on: Health risks from working in the sun* INDG147(rev1) FREE  
(available in packs of 20 ISBN 978 0 7176 1578 0 £3.50)

*Sun protection: Advice for employers of outdoor workers* INDG337 FREE  
(available in packs of 20 ISBN 978 0 7176 1982 5 £3.50)

*The regulatory requirements for medical exposure to ionising radiation: An employers overview* HSG223 ISBN 978 0 7176 2134 7 £6.50

*Working safely with ionising radiation: Guidance for expectant and breastfeeding mothers* INDG334 FREE

*Work with ionising radiation: Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999. Approved Code of Practice and Guidance* L121 ISBN 978 0 7176 1746 3 £20.00

Radiation website: [www.hse.gov.uk/radiation](http://www.hse.gov.uk/radiation)

## **Stress**

### **Are you feeling stressed by your work?**

Many people argue about the definition and sometimes even the existence of 'stress'. However, research has shown that whatever you choose to call it, there is a clear link between poor work organisation and subsequent ill health. HSE has chosen to use the word stress and define it as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them.'

Stress at work can be tackled in the same way as any other risk to health – by identifying the hazards, assessing who is at risk and the level of risk, deciding how to manage the risk and putting the plans into action. Hazards can include: lack of control over the way you do your work, work over-load (or underload), lack of support from your managers, conflicting or ambiguous roles, poor relationships with colleagues (including bullying), or poor management of organisational change.

Benefits to tackling stress in your organisation can include increased productivity and efficiency, lower staff turnover and sickness absence, and increased morale.

### **Does this concern me?**

- Do you have a high staff turnover, low productivity or low morale? Have you noticed bullying, changes in behaviour, staff working late or increased sickness absence?
- Do your employees seem happy to come into work?
- Are you aware that there are individual differences in vulnerability to stress and that situations outside work can also affect the ability to cope with excessive pressure at work?

To order any of these titles, call HSE Books on 01787 881165 or go to [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)

### **What law applies?**

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

### **How and where you can get more help**

*Managing the causes of work-related stress* HSG218 ISBN 978 0 7176 6273 9  
£10.95

*Tackling stress: The Management Standards approach* INDG406 FREE (available  
in packs of 10 ISBN 978 0 7176 6140 4 £3.50)

*Working together to reduce stress at work: A guide for employees* MISC686  
FREE (available in packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 6122 0 £3.50)

*Making the Stress Management Standards work: How to apply the Standards in  
your workplace* MISC714 FREE (available in packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 6157 2  
£3.50)

Stress website: [www.hse.gov.uk/stress](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress)

## **First aid and accident reporting**

### **What do you do if there's an accident at work?**

This booklet has been all about prevention. But sometimes things do go wrong. If someone has been hurt or fallen ill at work it's important to take care of them straight away, and make any dangerous conditions safe.

First aid means treating minor injuries at work and giving immediate attention to more serious casualties until medical help is available. Through this initial management of injury or illness suffered at work, lives can be saved and minor injuries prevented from becoming major ones.

Reporting accidents and ill health at work is a legal requirement. The enforcing authorities use the information to see the big picture of where injuries, ill health and accidental losses are occurring, and to advise on preventive action.

**Report incidents to:**  
**Incident Contact Centre (ICC), Caerphilly Business Park,**  
**Caerphilly CF83 3GG**  
**Tel: 0845 300 9923 Fax: 0845 300 9924 [www.riddor.gov.uk](http://www.riddor.gov.uk)**  
**e-mail: [riddor@natbrit.com](mailto:riddor@natbrit.com).**

### **Does this concern me?**

- Do you have at least the minimum first-aid provision at your workplace? As an employer you must provide first-aid equipment, facilities and personnel appropriate for the circumstances in your workplace. The minimum would be a suitably stocked first-aid box and a person appointed to take charge of first-aid arrangements.
- Do you know whether you might need to provide more than the minimum?
- Do you know which accidents and ill health cases to report, including who should do it, when and how? Employers, the self-employed and people in control of work premises all have duties.
- Do you know what accidents cost – and that insurance policies do not cover all the costs?

To order any of these titles, call HSE Books on 01787 881165 or go to [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)

***What law applies?***

- The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)

***How and where you can get more help***

*Electric shock: First-aid procedures* Poster ISBN 978 0 7176 6203 6 £8.50

*First aid at work. Approved Code of Practice and guidance L74*  
ISBN 978 0 7176 1050 1 £6.75

*Reduce risks – cut costs: The real costs of accidents and ill health at work*  
INDG355 FREE (available in packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 2337 2 £3.50)

*Basic advice on first aid at work* Poster ISBN 978 0 7176 6195 4 £8.50

*Incident at work?* MISC769

First aid website: [www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid](http://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid)  
[www.hse.gov.uk/riddor](http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor)

To order any of these titles, call HSE Books on 01787 881165 or go to [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)

# Health and safety policy statement

## Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

### This is the Health and Safety Policy Statement of

*(name of company)*

### Our statement of general policy is:

- to provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our work activities;
- to consult with our employees on matters affecting their health and safety;
- to provide and maintain safe plant and equipment;
- to ensure safe handling and use of substances;
- to provide information, instruction and supervision for employees;
- to ensure all employees are competent to do their tasks, and to give them adequate training;
- to prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health;
- to maintain safe and healthy working conditions; and
- to review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals.

*Signed*

*(Employer)*

*Date*

*Review date*



## Health and safety risks arising from our work activities

Write down your arrangements for doing your risk assessment here. You can download a form to record the findings of your risk assessment from [www.hse.gov.uk/risk/template.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/template.pdf).

- Risk assessments will be undertaken by

- The findings of the risk assessments will be reported to

- Action required to remove/control risks will be approved by

- 

will be responsible for ensuring the action required is implemented.

- 

will check that the implemented actions have removed/reduced the risks.

- Assessments will be reviewed every

or when the work activity changes, whichever is soonest.

## Consultation with employees

**You must consult your employees. If you recognise a union and there is a union-appointed safety representative, you must consult them on matters affecting the employees they represent. If you do not have trade unions, you must consult employees either directly or through an elected representative.**

- Employee representative(s) are

- Consultation with employees is provided by

## Safe plant and equipment

**You will need to ensure that all plant and equipment that requires maintenance is identified, that the maintenance is done and that new or secondhand plant and equipment meets health and safety standards before you buy it.**

- 

will be responsible for identifying all equipment/plant needing maintenance.

- 

will be responsible for ensuring effective maintenance procedures are drawn up.

- 

will be responsible for ensuring that all identified maintenance is implemented.

- Any problems found with plant/equipment should be reported to

- 

will check that new plant and equipment meets health and safety standards before it is purchased.

## Safe handling and use of substances

**You must assess the risks from all substances hazardous to health under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended) (COSHH). These are your COSHH assessments. Write down your arrangements for doing your COSHH assessments here.**

■

will be responsible for identifying all substances which need a COSHH assessment.

■

will be responsible for undertaking COSHH assessments.

■

will be responsible for ensuring that all actions identified in the assessments are implemented.

■

will be responsible for ensuring that all relevant employees are informed about the COSHH assessments.

■

will check that new substances can be used safely before they are purchased.

■ Assessments will be reviewed every

or when the work activity changes, whichever is soonest.

## Information, instruction and supervision

Write down where you display the Health and Safety Law poster, or where the leaflets are available from, where people can go for health and safety advice and what provision you make for training young workers or trainees.

- The Health and Safety Law poster is displayed at/leaflets are issued by

- Health and safety advice is available from

- Supervision of young workers/trainees will be arranged/undertaken/monitored by

- 

is responsible for ensuring that our employees working at locations under the control of other employers, are given relevant health and safety information.

## Competency for tasks and training

All employees must be given health and safety induction training when they start work, which should cover basics such as first aid and fire safety. There should also be job specific health and safety training. You also have to provide training if risks change, and refresher training when skills are not frequently used. Write down your arrangements for training here, including arrangements for record keeping.

- Induction training will be provided for all employees by

- Job specific training will be provided by

- Specific jobs requiring special training are

- Training records are kept at/by

- Training will be identified, arranged and monitored by

## Accidents, first aid and work-related ill health

Employees must receive specialist health surveillance for certain work. Your COSHH assessments will identify where this specialist health surveillance is needed. You should note down your first aid arrangements here.

- Health surveillance is required for employees doing the following jobs

- Health surveillance will be arranged by

- Health surveillance records will be kept by/at

- The first aid box(es) is/are kept at

- The appointed person(s)/first aider(s) is/are

- All accidents and cases of work-related ill health are to be recorded in the accident book. The book is kept by/at

- 

is responsible for reporting accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the enforcing authority (HSE or your local authority depending upon where you work).

## Monitoring

**You must be able to show that you are monitoring health and safety. You can monitor health and safety actively, eg doing spot check visits, or reactively, eg investigating any accidents or ill health. Record your procedures here.**

- To check our working conditions, and ensure our safe working practices are being followed, we will

- is responsible for investigating accidents.

- is responsible for investigating work-related causes of sickness absences.

- is responsible for acting on investigation findings to prevent a recurrence.

## Emergency procedures – fire and evacuation

Record your emergency procedures, how often they are checked and who by.

- 

is responsible for ensuring the fire risk assessment is undertaken and implemented.

- Escape routes are checked by/every

- Fire extinguishers are maintained and checked by/every

- Alarms are tested by/every

- Emergency evacuation will be tested every

## Your risk assessment

Risk assessment helps you protect your workers and your business, as well as comply with the law. It helps you focus on the risks that really matter – the ones with the potential to cause real harm.

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. The law does not expect you to eliminate all risk, but you are required to protect people 'so far as is reasonably practicable'.

When thinking about your risk assessment, remember:

- a hazard is anything that may cause harm, such as chemicals, electricity, working from ladders, an open drawer;
- the risk is the chance, high or low, that somebody could be harmed by these and other hazards, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be.

### *Step 1 Identify the hazards*

First you need to work out how people could be harmed. The risk assessment form in this booklet includes tips on how to spot the hazards that matter.

### *Step 2 Decide who might be harmed and how*

Identify groups of people who might be harmed and how they might be harmed, eg 'shelf stackers may suffer back injury from repeated lifting of boxes'.

### *Step 3 Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions*

Having spotted the hazards, you then need to decide what to do about them. Compare what you currently do with what's accepted as good practice. If there is a difference, list what needs to be done.

When controlling risks, apply these principles, if possible in this order:

- Try a less risky option.
- Prevent access to the hazard.
- Organise work to reduce exposure to the hazard.
- Issue personal protective equipment.
- Provide welfare facilities.

### *Step 4 Record your findings and implement them*

If you employ five or more people, the law requires you to record your findings. You can download a form from [www.hse.gov.uk/risk/template.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/template.pdf). When writing down your results, keep it simple.

If, like many businesses, you find that there are quite a lot of improvements that you could make, don't try to do everything at once. Make a plan of action to deal with the most important things first.

### **Step 5 Review your risk assessment and update if necessary**

Few workplaces stay the same, so it makes sense to review what you are doing on an ongoing basis. Every year or so, formally review where you are to make sure you are still improving, or at least not sliding back. Set a date for the review and put it in your diary so you don't forget it.

### **Further information**

HSE priced and free publications are available by mail order from HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA Tel: 01787 881165 Fax: 01787 313995 Website: [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk) (HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops and free leaflets can be downloaded from HSE's website: [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns).)

For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 0845 345 0055 Fax: 0845 408 9566 Textphone: 0845 408 9577 e-mail: [hse.infoline@natbrit.com](mailto:hse.infoline@natbrit.com) or write to HSE Information Services, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG.

**This leaflet contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.**

This leaflet is available in priced packs of 5 from HSE Books, ISBN 978 0 7176 2685 4. Single free copies are also available from HSE Books.

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