

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY/RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

### 1. Introduction

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, requires you as an employer to:-

- (i) prepare a statement of your general policy with respect to the Health and Safety at Work of your employees.

In addition, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation 1999 require employers to:-

- (i) assess the risk to the Health and Safety of your employees;
- (ii) plan and implement preventative and protective measures that have to be taken following the risk assessments.

If you employ five or more persons you must record, usually in a written form, all the above matters.

You must also bring these matters to the attention of your employees. In order to prove that employees have been informed we must recommend that they sign a statement declaring they have read and understood the documents.

The policy and assessments, where appropriate, may be linked to each other to form a single document, OR you may deal with each separately. However, the formation of a single document will prevent the need for any repetition.

A copy of your policy and records should be kept available on the premises for employees to consult, and the Environmental Health Officer to see.

### Health and Safety Policy

This can be reviewed as the initial step in dealing with health and safety within your business.

Writing down your policy will make you think about health and safety matters and enable you and other owners/directors of the business to decide if you have done all that is possible to comply with your duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, 1974.

The policy consists of three parts:-

- (a) **The statement of intent** - in other words what you expect the policy to achieve.
- (b) **The organisation** - in other words who is responsible for health and safety matters, and what their responsibilities are.
- (c) **The arrangements** - in other words the specific ways you intend to deal with all the risks to your employees' health and safety while they are at work.

Dealing with each part in turn: -

**a) Statement of Intent**

At the very least this must include the employers duties and a suggested form of wording is as follows:-

The Board of Directors of (state proper name of employer) fully accept their responsibilities to their employees to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, their health, safety and welfare and to:-

1. Provide and maintain plant and systems of work which are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health.
2. Make arrangements for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.
3. Provide information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of your employees.
4. Maintain in a condition that is safe and without risks to health, so far as is reasonably practicable, any place of work under your control.
5. Provide means of access to and egress from any place of work under your control which is, so far as reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health.
6. Provide and maintain for your employees a working environment that is, so far as is practicable, safe, without risk to health, and adequate as regards facilities and arrangement for their welfare at work.

The Board of Directors accepts that health and safety are management responsibilities but they depend on the co-operation of all employees to make the policy successful.

It is the duty of all employees to comply with the safety policy at all times and to act responsibly and do everything they can to prevent injury to themselves and other workers.

The policy will be monitored to make sure that it is effective and it will be reviewed every twelve months and revised if necessary.

**The policy must be signed by the Managing Director and dated.**

If you trade as a partnership the working of the opening statement will need to be arranged to take this into account.

**(b) The Organisation**

The organisation part of the policy clearly states managers' health and safety responsibilities.

The person with ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters within the company should be named. This must be a member of the Board of Directors.

The organisation should then describe how health and safety duties are delegated throughout the company. This must be a clear, logical and unbroken line of management. Do not delegate important health and safety matters too far down the management structure. Managers' health and safety responsibilities should be of the same order of importance as their other responsibilities in the business.

When you have decided on your arrangements (the next part of the policy) make sure that for everything you have decided to do there is a manager who is responsible in the organisation for carrying it out.

The organisation must state how the policy is to be monitored. This monitoring must be able to identify the following: -

1. The accident and ill health record of your business.
2. That you are complying with your statutory duties.
3. That you are complying with your own safety policy.

Each manager should inspect, on a planned basis, the matters he/she is responsible for. The next person in the management structure should, on a planned basis, inspect the matters being dealt with by the manager below him/her on the management structure. This should be carried on right through the management structure.

These inspections must be clearly written into the policy. Suitable records must be kept of these inspections.

**(c) The Arrangements**

The next part of the policy describes the specific arrangement you have made to deal with safety matters.

The following headings are guide only to the more important matters. It is not an exhaustive list so you think about the situations that exist at your premises and include everything that is necessary to control the hazards that affect your employees' health and safety.

The Health and Safety Executive publishes many booklets, approved codes of practice and guidance notes which will help you formulate your health and safety arrangements. These are available from;

**Dillons Bookstore,  
2-4 St. Anne's Square,  
Manchester.  
Tel: (0161) 832 0424.**

**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. or online at [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)**

If you require any advice or assistance regarding health and safety matters please contact the Environmental Health Officer.

## **1. Accidents and First Aid**

Are you complying with the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981?

Where is the First Aid Box and who is responsible for the upkeep of the First Aid Box?

Who is to administer first-aid?

Where is the Accident Book kept?

Who is responsible for the notification of accidents and dangerous occurrences?

Do you have the appropriate F2508 forms and know what accidents to notify and where to notify them to?

## **2. Electricity at Work Regulations**

Does your policy include arrangements to comply with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989?

When did a competent electrician last examine the electric wiring?

How often will the electric wiring be examined? Who will organise this?

What arrangements have you made to examine all items of portable electrical equipment?

Are any items of portable electrical equipment used in harsh conditions? e.g. where they are subject to mechanical damage, heat or water and dampness.

Have you arranged an inspection programme by a qualified electrician?

Who examines the flex, plug and fuse of portable electrical equipment?

### 3. **Dangerous Substances**

What dangerous substances do you store or use?

Do you know why the substances are dangerous? (Check with the manufacturer).

Are they stored safely?

Are there any precautions or is special safety protective equipment required for the use of any substances?

Do you have set emergency procedures for spillage's of dangerous substances?

Have you suitable arrangements to deal with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1994?

Do you require an assessment under these regulations?

### 4. **Boiler Plant**

Are the boilers subject to inspections by your insurance company? Who organises this?

Are the boilers regularly maintained? Who organises this?

### 5. **Pressure Vessels**

Who will identify if you have any pressure vessels?

Who will organise the inspections by a competent person?

### 6. **Fire**

Do you have a proper routine in case of FIRE? - state it in the policy.

Fire Drill - who will organise it? How often?

Who will check that the "Means of Escape" are free from obstruction and marked? - How often?

Will the fire doors open? - Who checks the alarm? - How often?

Do employees know where the fire fighting equipment is?

Do they know what type of equipment to use on different types of fire?

Is there a proper system to account for staff and visitors in the event of evacuation of the building?

Are flammable and explosive materials stored and used in compliance with statutory requirements, e.g. petrol, liquefied petroleum gas (also known as calor gas). Do you know what the safety requirements are? Do you know what to do in the case of an emergency?

## **7. Training**

List all the activities or items of equipment and machinery which require special training.

Are persons who have not been trained prohibited from doing these things?

Who is to decide what training is required? Name them!

Who will carry out the training? Name them!

Who will arrange for outside specialist training?

Will any of your employees require specialist qualifications?

If employees have been trained by previous employers, who will check that the training will be suitable? Are certificates available?

Think through all the activities carried out by your employees - Which of them require training? Take into account your employees capabilities as regards to health and safety.

Is training repeated periodically where appropriate?

## **8. Work Equipment**

This includes machinery, ladders, knives, hoists, fork-lift trucks etc.

Is equipment being maintained in an efficient state? By whom and how often?  
- is it recorded?

Is the use of any work equipment restricted?

Are persons carrying out maintenance competently? - Who are they?

What instructions are available to employees using work equipment?

Is the work equipment suitable for the purpose for which it is used?

Are there any particular statutory requirements for the use of any work equipment?

Is there any particular training for the use of the equipment?

**9. Racking**

Is the racking erected properly?

Who inspects it for faults? How often? Is it recorded?

**10. General Workplace Safety and Welfare**

Is there safe access and egress to and from the workplace?

Are ventilation, heating and lighting adequate? Who will check this?

Is there adequate space for tasks undertaken in the workplace?

Are floors and staircases in good order? Who will check this?

**11. Noise**

Are any of your employees exposed to excessive noise levels?

What are your arrangements to deal with the Noise at Work Regulations 1989?

Do you require an assessment under these regulations?

**12. Working at Heights**

Do any employees ever have to work at height? (this includes changing light fittings etc.)

What steps have been taken to prevent anyone falling from height?

What steps have been taken to prevent anyone being struck by a falling object?

**13. Manual Handling**

Are there unavoidable manual handling operations which increase a risk of injury? - Has this risk been assessed?

What measures have been taken to minimise the risk?

**14. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Is PPE provided where it is required?

Is it suitable?

Is PPE maintained efficiently? By whom? Is it recorded?

Where is equipment stored?

## 15. **Display Screen Equipment**

Do you have any persons that are DSE 'users' as described in the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992?

Have the workstations been assessed for their risks to health?

How have the risks been minimised?

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## **SAFE SYSTEMS OF WORK**

A quarter of all fatal accidents at work involve failures in systems of work.

What is a safe system of work?

A safe system of work is a formal procedure, which results from systematic examination of a task in order to identify hazards. It defines safe methods to ensure that hazards are eliminated or risks minimised.

Risk assessments made under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the preventative and protective measures that have to be taken following the risk assessment will provide a safe system of work.

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## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

As an employer you must make a suitable and sufficient assessment of:-

- ✓ the risks to the health and safety of your employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work; and
- ✓ the risks to the health and safety of persons not in your employment that arise out of or in connection with your undertaking.

For the purpose of identifying measures to be taken to comply with current legislation. It is a three stage process:-

- 1. Identification of all hazards.**
- 2. Identification of the risks.**
- 3. Measures to control the risks.**

**Note:**

**Hazard** - Something with the potential to cause harm e.g. substances, methods of work etc.

**Risk** - The likelihood that the harm from a particular hazard is realised.

Also consider the extent of the risk - the number of people who might be exposed to a risk and the consequences.

**1. Hazard Identification e.g.**

- (a) Read HSE guidance, trade press etc.
- (b) Find out what legislation applies to your workplace.
- (c) Consult your staff, they know the way work is actually done.
- (d) Think about non-routine operations e.g. maintenance, loading and unloading operations etc.
- (e) Consider everyone including visitors, cleaners etc.

**Hazards include:**

- Falls from height
- Fall on the same level
- Falling objects
- Manual handling
- Mechanical handling
- Electricity
- Noise
- Use of machines
- Stacking
- Housekeeping etc.

Is training required?

Is equipment being used properly? - How should it be used?

**2. Risk Assessment**

This may be done in stages:

- (i) Look at every hazard identified for every activity - ask what is the worst likely outcome? Is it;
  - a fatality?
  - major injury/permanent disability?

- minor injury?
- environmental/plant damage?

**Never rely on common sense, always assume if it can be done, sooner or later someone will do it!**

(ii) Judge the likelihood of harm occurring i.e.

| Probability/Likelihood | Description                            |
|------------------------|--|
| Likely/frequently      | Occurs repeatedly/only to be expected  |
| Probable               | Will occur several times/not surprised |
| Possible               | Could occur sometime                   |
| Remote                 | Unlikely, but possible                 |
| Improbable             | Very unlikely, probability - near zero |

**Note:** 'Improbable' is very rare.

(iii) Now consider (i) and (ii) together, and prioritise action.

|  | LIKELY             | PROBABLE           | POSSIBLE           | REMOTE             | IMPROBABLE      |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Fatal                                    | 1st                | 2nd                | 2nd                | 3rd                | Acceptable risk |
| Minor injury/<br>permanent<br>disability | 2nd                | 2nd                | 3rd                | Acceptable<br>risk | Acceptable risk |
| minor injury                             | 3rd                | 3rd                | Acceptable<br>risk | Acceptable<br>risk | Acceptable risk |
| no injury                                | Acceptable<br>risk | Acceptable<br>risk | Acceptable<br>risk | Acceptable<br>risk | Acceptable risk |

- For 1<sup>st</sup> actions consider if there is serious and imminent danger - if so the procedure should be withdrawn or written procedures in place.

### 3. Risk /Hazard Control

This is the most crucial stage and will determine the success or failure of the effort to reduce risk or injury. A crucial consideration is ordering risk/hazard control. The following list shows the most effective way (item 1) and the least effective way (item 10).

1. Eliminate e.g. buying ready sawn timber rather than using circular saw.
2. Substitution by something less hazardous and risky.
3. Enclosure (enclose it in a way that eliminates or controls the hazard/ risk).
4. Guarding/segregation of people.
5. Safe systems of work that reduces the risk to an acceptable level.
6. Written procedures that are known and understood by those affected.
7. Adequate supervision.
8. Identification of training needs.
9. Information (instruction signs, handouts).
10. Personal protective equipment.

A combination of controls may be necessary. The most risk and cost effective method(s) should be chosen.

An essential part of the assessment is to look at the existing controls (if any) and judge whether or not they are adequate and record this. You do not need to detail all controls that exist already, you may refer to them e.g. "see safety manual pages 10-12".

In order to produce a suitable and sufficient assessment the following points must be recorded.

- The activity/situation
- Number of persons at risk
- Any group of persons especially at risk e.g. disabled
- Probability of harm occurring and the realistic worst case outcome
- Relevant health and safety information needed by employees
- Any additional training needs
- Reference to existing controls and whether or not these are satisfactory
- Action in order of priority with proposed time scale and who is responsible for action.