

Hettle Andrews Training

Toolbox Talks

Getting Started in Health and Safety

Getting Started in Health and Safety

INTRODUCTION

Health and Safety is a way of managing and lessening risk in order to ensure that people can be safe and stay well and work. This includes looking after employees, visitors, the public and making sure that people don't become unwell in the future, because of the work they are doing now.

Health and Safety is everyone's responsibility, whether you are a manual labourer, a receptionist or a director, it is your responsibility to look after yourself and others around you.



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It is, of course, vital for your employer to make sure that processes are in place to minimise the risk that you are exposed to. This may be through performing risk assessments, looking at control methods and ensuring competence through ongoing training and development.

If your company employs five or more people they must have a written health and safety policy. You should have the policy drawn to your attention, and a health and safety law poster or leaflet should be displayed.



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Risk Assessment: Is the process of looking at a task, and the individuals involved and analysing the hazards and risks involved, and how to control them. Risk assessments should be carried out by a competent person.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), who are the main health and safety enforcing authority across England and Wales, identify the five steps to risk assessment as:

- 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 them
- Step 5 Review your assessment and update if necessary.

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Method Statements: Look at risks and hazards identified and add in suitable and sufficient control methods to lower likelihood and severity of risk.

Competence: Being a competent person (a person who is suitable and qualified for a particular job) is measured through knowledge, experience and training.

Duty of Care: Employers have a duty of care for their employees. This duty means that they should look after the safety and welfare of their staff at all times while at work and ensure that correct provisions are in place. By breaking this duty they may be found negligent, which could lead to a civil liability claim for injury or prosecution for a criminal offence in the more serious cases.



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The Law

The most important legislation under health and Safety is **The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974** and there are many Regulations made under the Act, including:

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

The employer must carry out a risk assessment to identify any hazards, decide how serious the risk is of the hazard actually occurring, and put in place reasonably practicable measures to control them.

Some examples of areas to consider, many of which are subject to specific Regulations, include slips, trips and falls, asbestos, electricity, gas, hazardous substances, work at height, manual handling or repetitive work, use of computers, noise, vibration, lone working, transport, fire, pressure systems, work equipment, and stress.

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

Certain accidents, diseases or dangerous occurrences legally must be reported to your employer and the enforcing authority.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) and Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2002

Ensuring that the risks from the use of dangerous substances are controlled and hazardous materials, such as chemicals are stored, used and disposed correctly.

There are many other important pieces of legislation which are covered in other toolbox talks including LOLER (lifting), PUWER (work equipment), manual handling and fire.

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Don't forget:

- you must always report any health and safety issues to your supervisor
- health and safety is everyone's responsibility
- health and safety covers many issues. You should take all of the toolbox talks to get a real understanding of individual topics.

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Legislation and resources:

- Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- HSE leaflet INDG 163 (rev2) – Risk Assessment
- HSE poster “Health and Safety Law – What You Need to Know”
- www.direct.gov.uk offers help and information as does www.hse.gov.uk

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Questions and Answers

Q: List 3 different types of hazard you may need to consider as part of a health and safety risk assessment?

A: Slips, trips and falls; work at height; manual handling.

Q: What are the 5 stages of risk assessment?

A: Identify hazards; decide who might be harmed/how; evaluate risks; record findings; review the assessment.

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