Unite education

Updated 2021

# Health & Safety Course Stage 2 **Resources**

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## ACTIVITY 5: - Unite approach to health, safety and welfare

**Health, safety and welfare problems**

Trade union health and safety representatives need to be aware that health, safety and welfare problems cover a wide range of problems at work.

**Some are obvious:**

- Unguarded machines.
- Bad lighting.
- Obstructions.
- Fire risks.
- Poor welfare facilities.

**Others are hidden, like the long-term damage to health from:**

- Noise.
- Stress.
- Dusts, substances, bacteria.
- Passive smoking.
- Repetitive working.
- Shiftwork.
- Vibration.

**Some may not have been traditionally thought of as health and safety issues:**

- The way work is organised.
- Sexual and racial harassment.
- Bullying.
- Staffing levels.
- Lone working.
- The concentration of women workers in particular jobs and facing particular hazards.

**Part of the union**

Trade unions have been at the forefront of campaigns for better standards on health and safety. Many unions came into being as a result of concerns about the conditions that workers faced in the nineteenth century. Changes in the law have come about only because of pressure to improve standards. The trade union movement continues to call for changes needed to safeguard workers in the twenty-first century. Research shows that one of the main reasons why people join a union is to get better protection on health and safety. Given the importance of the issue it is vital that safety reps are seen as part of the union and are effectively integrated into it. Potentially, there are so many overlapping issues, for example:

- Discipline – employers normally treat a breach of safety procedures as a serious disciplinary offence;
- Equal opportunities – a whole range of concerns have a health and safety dimension to them. For example, racial harassment causing stress and ill health;
- Wages – there may be a negative influence on health and safety standards through the adoption of certain payment systems;
- Work organisation – can have a significant effect upon the health and safety of workers.

For example, the length of working time and its impact upon health and accident rates; the pace of work causing musculoskeletal problems; and stress caused by reduced staffing levels. In fact it is hard to think of an aspect of terms and conditions of employment that does not have to be looked at against health and safety criteria. That is why the relationship between the safety rep and other parts of the union must be clear. Unless there is effective coordination, the safety rep could end up agreeing a course of action which is at odds with other union representatives and not in the overall interests of the workforce, and vice versa.

**Independence from management**

**The role of management**

The law makes employers primarily responsible for preventing accidents and ill health. Part of your role involves checking that your employer is carrying out their responsibilities, not doing the job of the employer yourself.

**The law**

There are many laws which could help protect your members, but we cannot rely on the law because:

- Many laws are weak or inadequate from a trade union perspective. Fines are usually low.
- There are too many workplaces to be adequately policed by inspectors.
- Trade union health and safety representatives are closer to the problems experienced by workers.
- Local negotiations with management may prove to be quicker and more productive.

**Careless workers?**

There may be a tendency to blame ‘careless workers’. Unions have a role in raising awareness but we cannot stop accidents just by making workers more safety conscious:

- Not all hazards are obvious – especially damage to health over a period of time
- Workers may not be properly trained or informed.
- Stress, tiredness and poor conditions can all lead to more accidents.
- Workers are human – they can’t be 100 per cent alert all of the time.

As a trade union health and safety representative, you are accountable to your members and your union. Another part of your role involves encouraging members to become more interested in supporting union efforts to improve health and safety. But, trade unions say that the problem is the hazard not the worker. So employers should reduce accidents and ill- health by:

- Controlling hazards at source.
- Effective management of health and safety at work.

## Joint working

Management and union dialogue on health and safety is nothing new. We believe that unions, employers and government should work together to promote health and safety at work. Joint working means unions, employers and others working together on health and safety, developing joint approaches to identifying and solving health and safety problems. It involves:

- Agreeing objectives and action plans.
- Developing proactive ways of working to prevent accidents, injuries and ill health.
- Recognising the independent roles and legitimate interests of safety reps and respecting their rights.
- Acknowledging that both unions and management can contribute to risk management and prevention.

## An equal opportunities approach to health and safety

As we have already seen, fairness, justice, equality and unity form the guiding principles of trade unionism. The needs and experiences of members are influenced by many factors such as race, class, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, language and disability (amongst others). Members should be treated equally and their individual needs and problems responded to positively and objectively.

It is part of the safety representative's job to be sensitive to these needs and help promote equal opportunities at work, particularly in relation to health and safety. Discrimination is divisive and it can cause ill health. Women are half the workforce and face many risks at work. But health and safety often concentrates on the risks men face, because of the way the labour market used to be. Work has changed, and women's health and safety should be addressed just as much as men's has been. A TUC survey of women safety representatives (No More 'Men Only' Health and Safety) revealed that:

- Most safety representatives had never been asked about women's health and safety before.
- Only one in four employers always takes the problems raised by women workers seriously.
- Only one in five employers covers women's health and safety in their safety policy.

## Gender and occupational safety and health (G&OSH)

The TUC recently reconvened its Women's Health and Safety Working Group. The group is focusing on a gender-sensitive approach to occupational health and safety and ensuring equal rights to protection for all workers. The TUC wants to hear from trade union safety representatives about their experiences and wants them to join an electronic network. In addition, you will be invited to complete a Unite form giving your email/contact details so we can update you regularly on health and safety matters.

## Wider issues inside and outside the workplace

The environment

Health and safety can often overlap with other industrial relations issues such as the environment. Sometimes they can appear to be in conflict. For example, paper recycling may give rise to fire risks. Sometimes they appear to be closely related. For example, the exhaust ventilation of dust from the workplace into the atmosphere. Some unions encourage their safety reps to take up environmental issues, whereas others do not. You need to check your union policy on this.

## ACTIVITY 6: - Safety Rep Function and the law

Refer to The Safety Representative and Safety Committee Regulations.

### UNITE POLICY ON IMPROVEMENT TO SAFETY REPS RIGHTS

### Right to a response from employers

Giving our Reps more powers, the right to a response in writing from the employers. This would include a proposed solution i.e. action from the safety reps complaint or observations.

### Leading to UIN's having more effect

Whilst we would prefer to see Union Inspection Notices (UIN) becoming a legal document, the right to response will have a similar effect. The right to response is what is on the table for negotiation at present, once this is secured we can negotiate for UIN's from a stronger position.

### Wider powers for Safety Committees

The right for safety committees to make decisions, despite lack of senior persons who may fail to attend.

### Right to be involved in health monitoring

Safety reps to be an essential part of the process, i.e. carry out body mapping, using questionnaires for vibration white finger, MSD's etc.

### Cover other workplaces and contractors

Have the right to represent contractor' s agency workers who come on their site. Cover other sites they may work on.

### Have TU Roving Safety Reps not WSA

At present this scheme is going away from its original concept, that was put forward during the pilot. The scheme was to have trade union people as roving reps, but it is now run in conjunction with partners, and has seen more consultants taking the role of the advisors. It is possible to negotiate to have roving reps, for example Unite has a working agreement with Barclays to accomplish exactly that.

## EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION IN CASES OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

THE EEC "Framework Directive" [89/391] on "measure to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work", requires that employers must designate one or more workers to carry out activities related to the protection and prevention of occupational risks, and these workers must be protected against disadvantage because of their activities. (In cases where there is a lack of sufficiently competent personnel an employer may enlist outside services.) The Directive also requires that workers or workers' representatives with specific responsibility for health and safety must not be disadvantaged because of their activities, and any workers who leave their workplace in response to serious and imminent danger must not be disadvantaged because of their actions, and must be protected against any "harmful and unjustified consequences".

## THE RIGHT TO "STOP THE JOB"

Under new ss.22A and 57A of the EP(C)A, any employee will have the right not to be dismissed or subjected to any detriment on the following grounds:

- That the employee left, or proposed to leave, his or her workplace, in circumstances of serious and imminent danger which the employee could not reasonably be expected to have averted;

or

- That the employee took, or proposed to take, appropriate steps to protect himself or herself or other employees in circumstances of serious and imminent danger. Whether those steps were appropriate will have to be judged by reference to all the circumstances including, in particular, the employee's knowledge and the facilities and advice available at the time. An employer will have a defence under this subsection if it can be shown that it was, or would have been, so negligent for the employee to take those steps, that a reasonable employer would have treated the employee as that employer did.

## PROTECTION FOR EMPLOYEES WITH HEALTH & SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

Similarly employees who have some specific health and safety duty, either under statute or by agreement, will have the right not to be dismissed or subjected to a detriment in the following circumstances:

- If the employee has been designated by the employer to carry out activities in connection with preventing or reducing risks to health and safety of employees at work, and the ground for the detrimental treatment or dismissal was that the employee carried out, or proposed to carry out, those activities;

or

- If the employee was a health and safety representative or member of a safety committee in accordance with arrangements established under any enactment or by reason of the employer's knowledge, and the ground for the detrimental treatment or dismissal was that he or she performed, or proposed to perform, any of his or her functions in that capacity.

## NO QUALIFYING CONDITIONS

There will be no qualifying hours of work or periods of service for these rights.

## UNFAIR DISMISSAL

A dismissal under any of the above provisions will be automatically unfair (in that the “reasonableness” provisions of s.57(3) of the EP(C)A will not come into play), except where the employer succeeds in a defence of “negligence” by the employee. Similarly, s.59 of the EP(C)A will be amended so that selection of redundancy on any of the above grounds (that is, both stopping the job and carrying out health and safety activities or duties) will be for an ‘’inadmissible’’ reason, and therefore automatically unfair.

## REMEDIES

An employee who is subjected to a detriment or is dismissed in breach of these provisions will be able to complain to an employment tribunal, where it will be for the employer to show the reasons for its actions. If the tribunal upholds the complaint, it will have to make a declaration and may award compensation to the employee. This compensation will mirror that available in cases of action short of dismissal or dismissal on trade union grounds and, in the case of dismissal, will therefore be subject to a minimum, and may include a “special award”. Employees will also be able to apply for “interim relief’ pending the full hearing or an employment tribunal complaint.

## ACTIVITY 7: - Using the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Common Law Duties / Civil Law

Refer to Unite Health and Safety Hand Book and below

### Background information on the law

#### Introduction

If the laws that we have just looked at cover all people, plant and processes, you may wonder why so many people are injured, become ill, or die as a result of their work. There are many reasons for this. One of them is that not all obligations on employers are absolute.

#### Absolute and qualified duties

Health and safety law imposes two kinds of duty on employers:

- absolute duties: which are clear and specific and have to be obeyed to the letter
- qualified duties: which are less clear-cut and can be open to argument.

There are two types of qualified duty, one more stringent than the other:

- practicable duties – employers have to comply if the technical means exist
- reasonably practicable duties – a judgement has to be made about the risks and the time, money and effort needed to control them.

So far as is reasonably practicable' means the cost of controlling the risk must not be grossly disproportionate to the expected benefits. It does not depend on whether or not the employer can afford it. The onus is on the employer to demonstrate that to go any further would incur cost disproportionate to the amount of benefit provided.

# Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

**2 General duties of employers to their employees**

(1) It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of an employer's duty under the preceding subsection, the matters to which that duty extends include in particular:

(a) the provision and maintenance of plant and systems of work that are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health;

(b) 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;

(c) the provision of such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of his employees;

(d) so far as is reasonably practicable as regards any place of work under the employer's control, the maintenance of it in a condition that is safe and without risks to health and the provision and maintenance of means of access to and egress from it that are safe and without such risks;

(e) the provision and maintenance of a working environment for his employees that is, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe, without risks to health, and adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for their welfare at work.

(3) Except in such cases as may be prescribed, it shall be the duty of every employer to prepare and as often as may be appropriate revise a written statement of his general policy with respect to the health and safety at work of his employees and the organisation and arrangements for the time being in force for carrying out that policy, and to bring the statement and any revision of it to the notice of all his employees.

(4) Regulations made by the Secretary of State may provide for the appointment in prescribed cases by recognised trade unions (within the meaning of the regulations) of safety representatives from amongst the employees, and those representatives shall represent the employees in consultations with the employers under subsection (6) below and shall have such other functions as may be prescribed.

(5) . . .

(6) It shall be the duty of every employer to consult any such representatives with a view to the making and maintenance of arrangements which will enable him and his employees to co-operate effectively in promoting and developing measures to ensure the health and safety at work of the employees, and in checking the effectiveness of such measures.

(7) In such cases as may be prescribed it shall be the duty of every employer, if requested to do so by the safety representatives mentioned in [subPage 4 section (4)] above, to establish, in accordance with regulations made by the Secretary of State, a safety committee having the function of keeping under review the measures taken to ensure the health and safety at work of his employees and such other functions as may be prescribed.

**3 General duties of employers and self-employed to persons other than their employees**

(1) It shall be the duty of every employer to conduct his undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons not in his employment who may be affected thereby are not thereby exposed to risks to their health or safety.

(2) It shall be the duty of every self-employed person to conduct his undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that he and other persons (not being his employees) who may be affected thereby are not thereby exposed to risks to their health or safety.

(3) In such cases as may be prescribed, it shall be the duty of every employer and every self-employed person, in the prescribed circumstances and in the prescribed manner, to give to persons (not being his employees) who may be affected by the way in which he conducts his undertaking the prescribed information about such aspects of the way in which he conducts his undertaking as might affect their health or safety.

**4 General duties of persons concerned with premises to persons other than their employees**

(1) This section has effect for imposing on persons duties in relation to those who—

(a) are not their employees; but

(b) use non-domestic premises made available to them as a place of work or as a place where they may use plant or substances provided for their use there, and applies to premises so made available and other non-domestic premises used in connection with them.

(2) It shall be the duty of each person who has, to any extent, control of premises to which this section applies or of the means of access thereto or egress therefrom or of any plant or substance in such premises to take such measures as it is reasonable for a person in his position to take to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the premises, all means of access thereto or egress therefrom available for use by persons using the premises, and any plant or substance in the premises or, as the case may be, provided for use there, is or are safe and without risks to health.

(3) Where a person has, by virtue of any contract or tenancy, an obligation of any extent in relation to:

(a) the maintenance or repair of any premises to which this section applies or any means of access thereto or egress therefrom; or

(b) the safety of or the absence of risks to health arising from plant or substances in any such premises; that person shall be treated, for the purposes of subsection (2) above, as being a person who has control of the matters to which his obligation extends.

(4) Any reference in this section to a person having control of any premises or matter is a reference to a person having control of the premises or matter in connection with the carrying on by him of a trade, business or other undertaking (whether for profit or not).32

**5 General duty of persons in control of certain premises in relation to harmful emissions into atmosphere.**

1. Subject to subsection (5) below, it shall be the duty of the person having control of any premises of a class prescribed for the purposes of section 1(1)d) to use the best practicable mans for preventing the emission into the atmosphere from the premises of noxious or offensive substances and for rendering harmless and inoffensive such substances as may be so emitted

2. the reference in subsection (1) above to the means to be used for the purposes there mentioned includes a reference to the manner in which the plant provided for those purposes is used and to the supervision of any operation involving the emission of the substances to which that subsection applies

3. any substance or a substance of any description prescribed for the purposes of subsection (1) above a noxious or offensive shall be a noxious or, as the case may be, an offensive substance for those purposes whether or not it would be s apart from this subsection.

4. any reference in this section to a person having control of any premises which is a person having control of the premises in connection with the carrying on by him of a trade, business or other undertaking (whether for profit or not) and any duty imposed on any such person by this section shall extend only to matters within his control.

5. The foregoing provision s of this section shall not apply in relation to any process which is a prescribed process as from the date whish is the determination date for that process.

6. For the purposes of subsection (5) above, the 'determination date' for a prescribed process is:
   (a) in the case of a process for which an authorisation is granted, the date on which the enforcing authority grants it, whether in pursuance of the application or, on an appeal, of a direction to grant it'

   (a) in the case of a process for which an authorisation is refused, the date of the refusal or, on an appeal, of the affirmation of the refusal.

7. in subsections (5) and (6) above "authorisation", " enforcing authority" and " prescribed process" have the meaning given in 1 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the reference to an appeal is a reference to an appeal under section 15 of that Act.

**6 General duties of manufacturers etc as regards articles and substances for use at work**

(1) It shall be the duty of any person who designs, manufactures, imports or supplies any article for use at work or any article of fairground equipment:

   (a) to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the article is so designed and constructed that it will be safe and without risks to health at all times when it is being set, used, cleaned or maintained by a person at work;

   (b) to carry out or arrange for the carrying out of such testing and examination as may be necessary for the performance of the duty imposed on him by the preceding paragraph;

   (c) to take such steps as are necessary to secure that persons supplied by that person with the article are provided with adequate information about the use for which the article is designed or has been tested and about any conditions necessary to ensure that it will be safe and without risks to health at all such times as are mentioned in paragraph (a) above and when it is being dismantled or disposed of; and

(d) to take such steps as are necessary to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons so supplied are provided with all such revisions of information provided to them by virtue of the preceding paragraph as are necessary by reason of its becoming known that anything gives rise to a serious risk to health or safety.

(1A) It shall be the duty of any person who designs, manufactures, imports or supplies any article of fairground equipment-

(a) to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the article is so designed and constructed that it will be safe and without risks to health at all times when it is being used for or in connection with the entertainment of members of the public;

(b) to carry out or arrange for the carrying out of such testing and examination as may be necessary for the performance of the duty imposed on him by the preceding paragraph;

(c) to take such steps as are necessary to secure that persons supplied by that person with the article are provided with adequate information about the use for which the article is designed or has been tested and about any conditions necessary to ensure that it will be safe and without risks to health at all times when it is being used for or in connection with the entertainment of members of the public; and

(d) to take such steps as are necessary to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons so supplied are provided with all such revisions of information provided to them by virtue of the preceding paragraph as are necessary by reason of its becoming known that anything gives rise to a serious risk to health or safety.

2) It shall be the duty of any person who undertakes the design or manufacture of any article for use at work [or of any article of fairground equipment]to carry out or arrange for the carrying out of any necessary research with a view to the discovery and, so far as is reasonably practicable, the elimination or minimisation of any risks to health or safety to which the design or article may give rise.

(3) It shall be the duty of any person who erects or installs any article for use at work in any premises where that article is to be used by persons at work [or who erects or installs any article of fairground equipment] to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that nothing about the way in which [the article is erected or installed makes it unsafe or a risk to health at any such time as is mentioned in paragraph (a) of subsection (1) or, as the case may be, in paragraph (a) of subsection (1) or (1A) above].

(4) It shall be the duty of any person who manufactures, imports or supplies 33 NEYH Education Department Safety Representatives Briefing

any substance—

(a) to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the substance will be safe and without risks to health at all times when it is being used, handled, processed, stored or transported by a person at work or in premises to which section 4 above applies;

(b) to carry out or arrange for the carrying out of such testing and examination as may be necessary for the performance of the duty imposed on him by the preceding paragraph;

(c) to take such steps as are necessary to secure that persons supplied by that person with the substance are provided with adequate information about any risks to health or safety to which the inherent properties of the substance may give rise, about the results of any relevant tests which have been carried out on or in connection with the substance and about any conditions necessary to ensure that the substance will be safe and without risks to health at all such times as are mentioned in paragraph (a) above and when the substance is being disposed of; and (b) to take such steps as are necessary to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons so supplied are provided with all such revisions of information provided to them by virtue of the preceding paragraph as are necessary by reason of its becoming known that anything gives rise to a serious risk to health or safety.]

(5) It shall be the duty of any person who undertakes the manufacture of any [substance] to carry out or arrange for the carrying out of any necessary research with a view to the discovery and, so far as is reasonably practicable, the elimination or minimisation of any risks to health or safety to which the substance may give rise [at all such times as are mentioned in paragraph (a) of subsection (4) above].

(6) Nothing in the preceding provisions of this section shall be taken to require a person to repeat any testing, examination or research which has been carried out otherwise than by him or at his instance, in so far as it is reasonable for him to rely on the results thereof for the purposes of those provisions.

(7) Any duty imposed on any person by any of the preceding provisions of this section shall extend only to things done in the course of a trade, business or other undertaking carried on by him (whether for profit or not) and to matters within his control.

(8) Where a person designs, manufactures, imports or supplies an article [for use at work or an article of fairground equipment and does so for or to another] on the basis of a written undertaking by that other to take specified steps sufficient to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the article will be safe and without risks to health [at all such times as are mentioned in paragraph (a) of subsection (1) or, as the case may be, in paragraph (a) of subsection (1) or (1A) above], the undertaking shall have the effect of relieving the first-mentioned person from the duty imposed [by virtue of that paragraph] to such extent as is reasonable having regard to the terms of the undertaking.

(8A) Nothing in subsection (7) or (8) above shall relieve any person who imports any article or substance from any duty in respect of anything which—

(a) in the case of an article designed outside the United Kingdom, was done by and in the course of any trade, profession or other undertaking carried on by, or was within the control of, the person who designed the article; or

(b) in the case of an article or substance manufactured outside the United Kingdom, was done by and in the course of any trade, profession or other undertaking carried on by, or was within the control of, the person who manufactured the article or substance.]34

(9) Where a person ("the ostensible supplier") supplies any [article or substance] to another ("the customer") under a hire-purchase agreement, conditional sale agreement or credit-sale agreement, and the ostensible supplier—

(a) carries on the business of financing the acquisition of goods by others by means of such agreements; and

(b) in the course of that business acquired his interest in the article or substance supplied to the customer as a means of financing its acquisition by the customer from a third person ("the effective supplier"), the effective supplier and not the ostensible supplier shall be treated for the purposes of this section as supplying the article or substance to the customer, and any duty imposed by the preceding provisions of this section on suppliers shall accordingly fall on the effective supplier and not on the ostensible supplier.

(10) For the purposes of this section an absence of safety or a risk to health shall be disregarded in so far as the case in or in relation to which it would arise is shown to be one the occurrence of which could not reasonably be foreseen; and in determining whether any duty imposed by virtue of paragraph (a) of subsection (1), (1A) or (4) above has been performed regard shall be had to any relevant information or advice which has been provided to any person by the person by whom the article has been designed, manufactured, imported or supplied or, as the case may be, by the person by whom the substance has been manufactured, imported or supplied.]

**7 General duties of employees at work**

It shall be the duty of every employee while at work:

(a) to take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself and of other persons who may be affected by his acts or omissions at work; and

(b) as regards any duty or requirement imposed on his employer or any other person by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions, to cooperate with him so far as is necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with.

**8 Duty not to interfere with or misuse things provided pursuant to certain provisions**

No person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions.

**9 Duty not charge employees for things done or provided pursuant to certain specific requirements**

No employer shall levy or permit to be levied on any employee of his any charge in respect of anything done or provided in pursuance of any specific requirement of the relevant statutory provisions.

## ACTIVITY 8: - Involving members

Without the support of your members you can often become isolated. Management will accuse you of getting things out of proportion. The first step is to show that a real problem exists – that means getting members' support.

If members are not particularly keen on health and safety, there may be reasons for this:

- They may work with hidden hazards and be unaware of the real dangers.
- They may feel that health and safety is not their main problem, or even that pushing health and safety matters could harm earnings and job security.
- They may accept the idea that workers' carelessness is the main problem.
- They may see health and safety as just another management attempt to control the way they work – doing the job in a certain way or being forced to wear uncomfortable protective clothing.
- They may see hazards as inevitable – the facts of life or part of the job.

It is no good just criticising your members. If you want support, it is up to you to involve your members by:

- Listening to what they have to say about hazards.
- Convincing them of the dangers where they may not be obvious.
- Making them aware of the benefits of trade union action on health and safety.

**The changing workplace – knowing who your members are**

It is more difficult for safety reps to communicate with workers because of:

- Changes in working time.
- Increases in the pace of work.
- The introduction of new technology.
- The move towards casual and temporary contracts.

They may not see members on a regular basis and certain departments or groups of workers may not be unionised. Safety reps need to think carefully about communications with:

- Workers on unusual shift patterns e.g. night work, zero hour workers, short term/casual workers, agency workers.
- Women workers where the hazards they face may not have been taken seriously in the past.
- Young workers and new starters who have not been approached by the union or who require a health and safety induction.
- Workers with disabilities whose work and access to different jobs could be improved if employers met their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Workers for whom English may not be their first language and who require information about the union and health and safety procedures.
- Workers who move around in their job, may work alone or who may even work from

**Improving links with members**

You need to plan how to develop links with these workers and ensure that their views are included in inspections, reports and meetings. Here are some examples of things you can do to improve membership links:

- Use time off, facilities and mobility rights to enable safety reps to contact all sections of their membership. Shift workers' safety reps may need special arrangements to enable them to go to day-time meetings.
- Report back from the course. Consult members, pass on information and involve them. Some members may feel that the course is just an easy day off work. Show them how they stand to benefit.
- Encourage discussion and feedback. Use the opportunities you have to talk with members at work – in the canteen, during tea breaks, while you are working. Encourage members to tell you if they think hazards have not been put right. Normally workers should try telling the supervisor first.
- Try holding some short discussion meetings on a health and safety topic at break times. Where organisation is poor arrange one-to-one or small group discussions around health and safety issues that concern workers and encourage members to become safety reps.
- Pick winners. Health and safety problems can provide opportunities for involving and educating members. Results are the best advertisement for your work as a Safety Rep. Choose the first issues you take up with care and make sure that some will result in recognisable benefits for members. After that, make sure your publicise your achievements so people understand the work that you and the union have done.
- Explain things clearly. Technical and legal information will not build support if members do not understand and lose interest. See Skillnote 4 on Giving Reports (page 191).
- Use your members' knowledge. Members will have day-to-day knowledge of their jobs and problems with hazards and working conditions. Use this as much as you can. Some members, in your union or in other unions, will have technical or specialist knowledge which could prove valuable.
- Find out what interests members. It might be anti-smoking, environmental concerns, women's health and safety. You can use topics like these to encourage members to take an interest in health and safety. Suggest that they come to meetings with a friend or, if they show an interest in becoming a safety rep, invite them to a safety meeting or an inspection to see what happens.
- Use 'like for like' to recruit members. Some shift workers, or scattered workers may need their own safety rep. Women, black and young members will be more likely to join the union or become involved if they are approached by someone who they have empathy with and who they think will represent their interests.

**Involve all your members**

Some workers find it harder to get involved or to contact a union rep.
For example:

- Parents may be unable to get to an evening meeting.
- Members with religious beliefs may not like to meet in pubs or at particular times of the day or week. Choose the time and venue carefully so as many people as possible can come.
- Women workers may be unable to get to meetings because of responsibilities outside the workplace. Women, in addition to paid work, still do most of the household tasks and take most of the responsibility for childcare.
- Part-time workers may be unable to stay after work, they may have different break times.
- Some members may not speak English as their first language and would find it helpful if the union provided interpreters and minority language publicity.
- Members with disabilities may not be able to get to union meetings because of access problems. Blind or partially sighted members may be unable to read union leaflets and circulars. Deaf members may face problems at meetings.
- Mobile workers such as home carers, social workers or gas fitters may be hard to contact and difficult to bring together.
- Some safety reps may cover members scattered in small units over a wide area, for example in banks or in local government.
- Shift workers may become isolated from other members, and may not be able to go to union branch meetings.

**ACTIVITY 9: -** Management of health and safety at work regulations (MHSWR)

**REFER TO UNITE HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDE**

## ACTIVITY 11: - Mental Health and Wellbeing

You will find a wide range of resources available at www.learnwithunite.org. These can be found under the 'Reps Resources' button on the homepage.

## ACTIVITY 12: Gender issues and Health and Safety at Work

## REFER TO THE UNITE HEATH & SAFETY GUIDE

## ACTIVITY 13: Taking action on problems – negotiating with management

**TUTOR PIP POWERPOINT**

## ACTIVITY 14: Health and Safety Committees

### What your H & S committee will do - HSE Guidance to employers

A committee meeting gives you the opportunity to discuss with your employee representatives the general matters about which you must consult your workforce.
To ensure you cover all relevant issues, the committee should agree some standing items for the agenda and allow for other items to be added as necessary. Consider standing items such as:

- statistics on accident records, ill health, sickness absence;
- accident investigations and subsequent action;
- inspections of the workplace by enforcing authorities, management or employee health and safety representatives;
- risk assessments;
- health and safety training;
- emergency procedures; and
- changes in the workplace affecting the health, safety and welfare of employees.

If the health and safety committee is discussing accidents, the aim is to stop them happening again, not to give blame. Committees should:

- look at the facts in an impartial way
- consider what precautions might be taken
- recommend appropriate actions
- monitor progress with implementing the health and safety interventions.

**Good practice**

- Think about minor incidents - when considering statistics on accident and injury records, examine information about minor injuries and incidents ...
- Address strategic issues - to be effective, health and safety committees should address strategic issues...

### 1977 regulations

If you recognise trade unions in any part of the business:

- the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 will apply;
- the trade union may appoint health and safety representatives (referred to as “safety representatives” in the regulations); and

you must consult the union-appointed health and safety representatives on health and safety matters affecting the employees they represent. (See What to consult them about?)

You may have:

- different representatives from the same union for different parts of the business;
- different representatives from different unions for different parts of the business;
- union representatives representing employees who belong to other unions by agreement with the other unions; and
- union representatives representing employees who are not union members

## Union-appointed health and safety representatives

Functions of union-appointed health and safety representatives.

Recognised unions and employers should discuss and agree how many representatives to appoint. The number of health and safety representatives will depend on different factors. If there are disagreements that need to be resolved, use your existing employment relations processes or contact Acas.
The nature of your business could mean that you and trade unions will have to be more flexible about the group or groups of employees represented and the number of representatives suitable for your workplace, for example:

- when there are rapidly changing situations and conditions in a workplace as work develops, or frequent changes in the numbers of employees (e.g. on building and construction sites, in shipbuilding and ship repairing, docks, and factories)
- if most of your employees go out to their actual place of work somewhere else but report back to you (e.g. goods and freight depots, builders' yards, and service depots of all kinds)
- if a workplace in one location has a wide variety of work activities going on (e.g. retail stores, hospitals, and manufacturing plants)
- workplaces with very high process risks (e.g. construction sites at particular stages like demolition or excavations, and some chemical works and research establishments)
- if most employees are employed in low-risk activities, but where one or two processes or activities or items of plant have special risks connected with them
- where there is a mix of direct employees and others in the workplace, such as contract and agency workers
- where there is a mix of employees who are members of trade unions and those who are not.

### Experience of representatives

Normally, trade unions will write to tell you who the appointed health and safety representative is, and make it clear which groups of employees the representative is representing. An appointed representative should usually have worked for you for the previous two years, or had at least two years' experience doing similar work. This is to ensure they will have a level of knowledge that allows them to make a responsible and practical contribution to the health and safety effort.

There may also be times when it is not practical to appoint a representative with two years' experience in your organisation or in the job. For instance if:

- you are a new employer or the location is newly established;
- the work is of a short duration; or
- there is a high turnover of employees.

In such cases, trade unions will appoint the most appropriate representatives, taking their experience and skills into account.

If two or more union health and safety representatives ask in writing for a health and safety committee, you must set one up within three months

(See Health and safety committees: Setting them up and making them work).
http://www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/1977.htm

## Unite Guidance

When at least two safety reps have put their request for a safety committee in writing, an employer must set it up within three months. During this process, the employer must consult the safety reps that made the request and the representatives of recognised trade unions whose members work in any workplace to be covered by the committee. A notice must be prominently displayed, stating the composition of the committee and the work areas that it will cover.

The Guidance to the SRSCR states that the size, shape and terms of reference of a safety committee must depend on discussion and agreement between employers and unions.

It recommends that:

- Committees should be compact.
- There should be 50/50 management and union representation.
- Safety advisers, doctors and other health and safety professionals should be ex-officio members.
- Safety committees could also provide a link with the enforcing authorities.

**Agendas**

Agendas for safety committee meetings could usefully include:

- Studying accident and ill health trends.
- Examining safety inspection reports.
- Considering information from inspectors, unions, employer and industry bodies.
- Discussing reports from safety reps.
- Developing safe systems of work.
- Examining the health and safety implications of new plant, equipment and processes.
- Reviewing the health and safety content of employee training.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the employer's health and safety services.
- Reviewing risk assessments.
- Reviewing the operation of the employer's health and safety policy and making an annual assessment of health and safety performance, problems and future priorities.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of health and safety information and publicity materials.

## Improving safety committees

The measure of a good health and safety committee is whether or not it can secure change. If it is only 'talking shop', or never takes any decisions, or the same items appear again and again on the agenda, safety reps should take action to put this right by, for example:

- Making sure meeting dates are agreed in advance and postponed only by joint agreement
- Making sure that a senior person with managerial health and safety responsibility is committed to being present. (This person should be named in the employer's health and safety policy. The TUC suggests a board member or director). Influencing the agenda.
- Making sure that named people are given the responsibility for actions and are committed to a completion date.
- Making sure the minutes are issued promptly, well displayed and reflect discussions, decisions and agreed timetables for action.

One of the most frustrating experiences for a safety rep is to be part of a weak or poorly organised health and safety committee. Safety reps should make sure that committees have the power to improve health and safety at the workplace. They should not be used as a means for employers to avoid taking action.

## ACTIVITY 15: - Workplace inspections

**The Formal Inspection**

Rules an inspector should follow:

- Observe, not merely look.
- Delve deep – examine in detail.
- Take time.
- Be patient and careful.
- Ask:
  - What is wrong?
  - Why is it wrong?
  - What if such and such should happen?

**Inspections are mainly fact finding and fact collecting exercises.**

Whenever and wherever there are hazards, they should be:

- Identified.
- Assessed.
- Controlled

**Methodical systematic checklists.**

The inspection tasks should be broken down into manageable parts.

### Guide To Health And Safety Inspections

**Introduction**

Carrying out inspections is one of the main functions of a health and safety representative. Inspections help to identify potential hazards. They also show your members that you are taking your responsibilities seriously.

The Safety Representatives Regulations give you the right to formally inspect every 3 months (or more frequently if agreed with management). Arrangements for three-monthly and other more frequent inspections will normally be agreed with employers.

You also have the right to inspect after any notifiable accident, dangerous occurrence or notifiable disease, where there is a substantial change in working conditions or if new information becomes available.

Formal inspections are no substitute for daily observation, but they provide a useful opportunity to carry out a full-scale examination of all or part of the workplace.

An inspection includes the inspection of documents required by health and safety legislation such as risk assessments and certificates concerning the testing of equipment.

It is also an opportunity to talk to your members. Management have to right to be present but make sure you always have to opportunity to speak to workers on their own.

Some safety representatives do the inspection on their own or with other safety representatives and then meet management to report their findings. Others prefer to be accompanied by a manager or the employers' safety advisor.

Make sure that you have agreed who does what if there are several safety representatives. You can divide the workplace up between you or inspect as a group.

You do not have to do all the workplace at one time, you can break it up and do separate inspections.

Make sure that you inspect at different times if there are shifts in your workplace as some problems may only be apparent on shifts.

Remember to include groups like cleaners and security staff who may work outside standard hours.

Safety representatives should complete an inspection form following an inspection, recording the date, time and details. Send one copy to the employer and retain a copy for your own records and for reference during safety committee discussions. However if a problem is identified that requires immediate action by the employer, do not rely on just a form, tell them at once verbally as well.

**Preparing for an inspection**

You should prepare in advance. It is often an idea to agree a date and put up a notice telling members when the inspection will take place. Ask them to let you know of any problems. Check the accident book and get details of any reports under RIDDOR.

Ask your employer to show you the risk assessments and any safety cases, inspection records, training records and safety data sheets. You are entitled to see these by law. It is useful to take risk assessment reports with you during the inspection to check whether they have covered all likely risks.

Many safety representatives use a checklist. You can devise a checklist to suit your own needs. Carrying out an inspection.

A new safety representative might want to be accompanied by a more experienced representative on his or her first inspection.

Use your checklist and fill in the report form as you go round. Take the opportunity to talk to workers about any issues or problems.

Safety representatives cover all workers. Any potential risk to non-members is a potential risk to your members and should not be ignored. Health and safety is a great organising tool. Problems such as workload, working time and training are just as important as physical hazards. Take your time and make plenty of notes. On some issues you may have to seek advice later on from your union, the employer’s safety officer or the HSE.

**Inspections after an incident**

The inspection should take place as soon as possible where there has been an accident, dangerous occurrence or a notifiable disease. You should still notify your employer in advance however.

Do not investigate until you are sure that the workplace is safe. The area should be treated as a crime scene and not be touched until the HSE or local authority inspectors have seen it if there has been a serious incident that has lead to someone being badly injured, or there had been a major occurrence such as the collapse of scaffolding.

The safety representative should get anyone who witnessed the incident to write down details of what happened while it is still fresh in their mind.

Work should not start until the cause of the incident has been ascertained and measures put in place to ensure that it cannot happen again. If your employer does try to restart work after a serious incident without an investigation contact your union for advice immediately.

**Reporting problems after an inspection**

Safety representatives should record every health and safety problem or any unsatisfactory welfare arrangement on a report form. Serious problems should also be notified verbally immediately.

The report form should be submitted to the employer. Many safety representatives also put a copy on the notice board so that members can see it. This is a good way of involving members and showing the usefulness of union safety representatives.

The safety representative must make sure that management act on the report.

The guidance to the safety representatives' regulations states that:

"Where safety representatives have made a written report to the employer, appropriate remedial action will normally be taken by the employer. Where remedial action is not considered appropriate, or cannot be taken within a reasonable period of time, or the form of remedial action is not acceptable to the safety representatives, then the employer should explain the reasons and give them in writing to the safety representatives"

The guidance also recommends that management's response should be publicised. The best way of doing that is putting it on the notice board next to the safety representative's report. If there are several problems you may want to try to agree with management a timetable for getting things done. If there is a serious matter that is likely to cause injury or illness and the employer is not treating it with the urgency it deserves, please contact your union immediately for further advice.

Check that the measures have been carried out by the agreed date even if management have agreed a programme to rectify any problems.

**Union Inspection Notices (UINs)**

Some safety representatives have negotiated a system whereby the employer agrees the line manager will respond to any queries within a certain time (such as 14 days). If not the matter will be referred to the employers safety officer or HR Manager for action. This system can also be linked to inspections, but is not suitable for urgent matters.

## Safety Inspection Form

Date and time of inspection:

Area or workplace inspected:

| Name(s) of union representative(s) taking part in the inspection: | Signature(s) of union representative(s) taking part in the inspection: |
|---|---|
| Name(s) of employer representative taking inspection (if appropriate): | Name(s) of employer representative the art in taking part in the inspection: |

**Record of receipt of inspection form by employer or employer's representative:**

Signature: Date:

This record does not imply that the conditions are safe and healthy or that the arrangements for welfare at work are satisfactory.

## Safety Report Form

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Notification to the employer or their representative of conditions and working practices considered to be unsafe or unhealthy and of arrangements for welfare at work considered to be unsatisfactory.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Date and time of inspection:</td></tr>
<tr><td>AND<br>Particulars of matters notified to employer their representative:<br><br>Name(s) of safety representative(s) notifying matters to the employer or their representative</td><td>(To be completed by the employer and or information relayed to Safety Representative)<br><br>Remedial action taken (with date) or explanation if no remedial action taken.<br><br>Name and signature(s) of employer or employer’s representative</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Signature of Safety Representative: Date:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Record of receipt of form by employer or employer’s representative:<br><br>Signature: Date:</td></tr>
</table>

This record does not imply that the conditions are safe and healthy or that the arrangements for welfare at work are satisfactory in all.

## Sample Inspection Checklist 1

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| **Asbestos** | | |
| Are any areas containing asbestos identified, marked and an up-to-date record kept? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is all the asbestos in good condition/sealed in and monitored? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Has the risk of exposure to asbestos dust and fibres been assessed and an up-to-date written record kept? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are there arrangements in place to inform any contractors about any asbestos presence, or where it is not known if that area is clear? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is there a plan for specialist removal of asbestos? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Chemicals** | | |
| Are all containers clearly labelled with contents, hazards warnings and the precautions to be taken? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are there safety data sheets for all chemicals including cleaning and other materials? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is training provided in safe use of chemicals and on what to do in an emergency (spillage, poisoning, splashing etc.)? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Cleanliness** | | |
| Are all work surfaces, walls and floors kept tidy and regularly cleaned? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Electrical safety** | | |
| Are all electrical equipment, fittings, and tools regularly checked and maintained? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is access to live high voltage equipment restricted to authorized people only? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Fire precautions** | | |
| Are there separate storage arrangements for flammable materials? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are bins regularly emptied and rubbish safely disposed of? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are cigarettes and matches disposed of separately from other rubbish? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are clear fire instructions displayed throughout the workplace? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Have sources of ignition (portable heaters etc.) been replaced with safer alternatives? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are fire drills carried out regularly and at least once per year? | ☐ | ☐ |

# Resources

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Are fire alarms and smoke detectors checked and tested weekly? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are the alarms capable of warning employees throughout the building? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are there other forms of fire warning for the hearing-impaired? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are all employees given information, instruction and training on fire risks and precautions, as well as what to do in the event of a fire or fire alarm? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is emergency lighting provided and tested regularly? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are fire escape routes clearly signed, kept clear and wide enough to prevent a crush? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do escape routes lead quickly and directly to a safe area? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are fire doors and exits clearly marked, kept clear on both sides at all times? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are fire doors never left open, and do they open easily and quickly in the direction of escape? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **First aid, accidents and illnesses**<br>Is there a first aid box and is it fully equipped and accessible to staff? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is there a trained first aider or appointed person on the premises? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is it clear who the first aider(s)/appointed person is/are and how they may be contacted? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is a clean and properly equipped first aid room available? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are all accidents, near misses and illnesses caused by work reported and recorded in an accident book? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Gas safety**<br>Are gas appliances regularly checked and serviced by qualified people? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do staff know what to do if there is a gas leak? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Lighting**<br>Is the lighting bright enough, especially over workstations? | ☐ | ☐ |

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Are stairs and corridors etc properly lit? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are light bulbs replaced promptly? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are windows clean on both sides and free from obstructions? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Lifting and manual handling**<br>Have all staff who are at risk from lifting or moving been trained in manual handling? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is mechanical equipment used whenever possible, have staff been trained in its use, and is there enough space to use it? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Where mechanical assistance is not possible, are staff trained in safe lifting techniques and is there enough space to use them? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are heavy items stored at a convenient or adjustable height to suit the user? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is the weight of loads known and clearly marked, and are they small and light enough? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are unbalanced, uneven, slippery, sharp or too hot or too cold loads avoided? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are loads securely packed to avoid them shifting or spilling? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are work surfaces at a comfortable or adjustable height to suit the user? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are work surfaces at compatible heights to reduce lifting from one to another? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is frequent or prolonged stooping, stretching or reaching above shoulder height, or sideways twisting avoided? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are lifting and handling needs included in patient/client care plans? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do uniforms, protective equipment and other clothing that is provided allow easy movement? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Machinery and equipment**<br>Are all staff trained to use, clean and adjust equipment safely? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is all equipment regularly inspected and maintained? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is there a procedure for reporting faulty equipment and for taking it out of use until repaired? | ☐ | ☐ |

# Resources

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Are all guards in place on machinery? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are potentially dangerous machines only operated by properly trained staff aged 18 and over? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Noise**<br>Are noise levels below the recommended maximum? (Can you talk with someone a metre away without shouting)? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Have the causes of noise been tackled? | ☐ | ☐ |
| As a last resort, are suitable earmuffs or plugs provided? | ☐ | ☐ |
| If so, are they regularly checked, cleaned and maintained, and stored in a clean and safe place? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Overcrowding**<br>Is there enough space for staff to work safely? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Protective clothing**<br>Is proper and appropriate protective clothing provided free of charge? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is it effective, comfortable and well fitting? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is it replaced as soon as they are worn out or damaged? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are clean overalls provided regularly? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Slips, trips and falls**<br>Are floors and stairs in good condition, free from obstructions and non-slip? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are spills cleared up immediately? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is non-slip footwear provided free of charge where needed? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Do all staircases have securely fixed handrails? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are trailing leads and cables secured or covered? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is there enough storage space? | ☐ | ☐ |

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Has a risk assessment been done and measures implemented on all work from heights? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Stress**<br>Do risk assessments include stress? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Has your employer done a stress audit? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are there measures in place to avoid or minimise the risk? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Has the employer introduced the HSE Stress Management Standards? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Temperature (working indoors)**<br>Is the temperature comfortable all year? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Does the temperature reach at least 16°C within one hour of starting work? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Can breaks be taken away from hot areas? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Temperature (working outdoors)**<br>Is warm clothing provided in cold weather? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are there facilities for warming up and making hot drinks when cold? | ☐ | ☐ |
| In hot conditions, is cool drinking water provided and can breaks be taken in the shade? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Can the work be organised so that it takes place in the shade or not during mid-day when the sun is at its strongest? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Toilets, wash and rest facilities**<br>Are there enough toilets, and are they clean and in good repair? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are washing facilities (hot water, soap and towels) provided? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are sanitary disposal facilities provided in women's toilets? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are lockers (or something similar) provided for staff? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is there a rest room, and is it clean, properly lit, and ventilated? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are there suitable facilities for pregnant and nursing mothers to rest? | ☐ | ☐ |

# Resources

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Are there facilities for workers to eat meals? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Ventilation**<br>Are fumes, steam and stale air removed? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is there a supply of fresh air without draughts? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are special precautions taken when working in confined spaces? | ☐ | ☐ |
| **VDUs (computer users)**<br>Are workstations and seating fully adjustable? | ☐ | ☐ |
| and are staff trained and encouraged to make adjustments? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Does seating give proper back support? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are footrests provided where needed? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is furniture and equipment checked and maintained regularly, with faulty items taken out of service and replaced? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Can users easily read screens, and are they flicker and glare free? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is the pace of work comfortable and can breaks be taken? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are users offered full free eye tests? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are reports of aches, pains, numbness or tingling in limbs investigated? | ☐ | ☐ |
| Is the work free from awkward postures, movements and very repetitive work? | ☐ | ☐ |

Is training provided about the use of equipment, methods of work, and how to avoid repetitive strain injury (RSI)?

Refer to alternative checklists

## ACTIVITY 17: Ensuring disabled workers are treated fairly

## HSE document – Key points to remember

This guidance is for you whether you are in work or looking for work. Guidance is also provided for people doing risk assessments.

Health and safety is, on occasions, used as a false excuse to justify discriminating against disabled workers, HSE is committed to tackling this. A disability is a physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long term adverse effects on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**Health and safety and you**

Everyone at work is responsible for health and safety: both employers and employees. As an employee, you should:

- Take reasonable care of your own health and safety – for instance, follow rules, warnings or guidance.
- Cooperate with your employer or manager if you see something that might harm you or someone else.

Inform your employer or manager if you see something that might harm you or someone else If you have a disability or long term health condition, you may need to tell your employer so you can:

- Meet your health and safety responsibilities.
- Work with your employer on any reasonable adjustments that may be needed.
- Work with your employer if a risk assessment is needed or if you have concerns about its results. If you have a safety representative, he or she may help.

**Your Employer should:**

- Assess and manage the work risks to everyone.
- Include you in any health and safety information and training.
- Involve you if they need to know whether your disability affects workplace health and safety and, if so,to what extent. This is so you can work to find the best outcome, for instance reasonable adjustments that over come risk.
- Involve others, such as specialists or your representative, if needed to understand the effects on workplace health and safety of your disability or long-term health condition.
- Ask for your consent before approaching specialists or your GP (your doctor) who can advise on options for workplace adjustment.
- Be sensitive and timely about making risk assessments if these are needed.
- Make other, short term arrangements to support you when delay cannot be helped (for instance, if your employer is waiting for an Access to work grant).
- Create a working environment that allows you to feel comfortable talking about your disability or long term health condition.
- Finally, employers should remember our lives can never be free from risks and the don't need to overprotect you. They should work with you to make sure adjustments are a help, not a hindrance.

**Mental Health**

Mental health may also require adjustments in the workplace with employees and employers working together.

## ACTIVITY 18: Contents of a Health and Safety Policy

### Health and safety policies

**Introduction**

The main emphasis of recent health and safety legislation has been on making employers manage health and safety actively, rather than deal with health and safety in a piecemeal way. One main requirement is for the employer to have a health and safety policy. If a safety rep is able to influence the employer to produce, implement and monitor their policy, then health and safety standards will improve.

**Finding your policy**

Safety policies differ enormously from employer to employer. In a large organisation there may be a general policy, which applies to the whole enterprise, with detailed organisation and arrangements documents that are written for specific sites or subsidiaries. Smaller organisations may have the whole policy statement in one document. In all cases, safety reps should have access to the statement and any documents that are part of it.

**Why health and safety policies matter**

The written safety policy itself is only a guide to what should be happening. What is important is that management actually does what they say they will do in the policy. A safety policy is a good place to start from if you want to check that the employer is meeting his/her responsibilities. There is evidence that employers with poor safety records are likely to have no, or inadequate, safety policies. This is because they have not thought through the management responsibilities to make the workplace safe and healthy.

**What the law requires**

Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 states that:

"Except in such cases as may be prescribed, it shall be the duty of every employer to prepare and as often as may be appropriate revise a written statement of his general policy with respect to the health and safety at work of his employees and the organisation and arrangements for the time being in force for carrying out that policy, and to bring the statement and any revision of it to the notice of all of his employees."

Section 2(3) requires all employers with five or more workers to produce a written policy statement specifying the following:

- General policy – the employer's overall objectives for health and safety.
- Organisation – which managers are going to do what to implement the general policy.
- Arrangements – the rules and procedures which will be applied to ensure that conditions are healthy and safe.

Section 2(3) also requires:

- Monitoring and revision – regular checking to ensure that the policy, organisation and arrangements work and are altered to suit new developments.
- Information to workers – ensuring that workers know about the policy and revisions to it.

## ACTIVITY 19: Draft health and safety induction programme

Induction Training is absolutely vital for new starters. Good induction training ensures new starters are retained, and then settled in quickly and happily to a productive role. Induction training is more than skills training. It's about the basics that seasoned employees all take for granted: what the shifts are; where the notice-board is; what's the routine for holidays, sickness; where's the canteen; what's the dress code; where the toilets are.

Proper induction training is increasingly a legal requirement. Employers have a formal duty to provide new employees with all relevant information and training relating to health and safety particularly.

Induction training must include the following elements:

- General training relating to the organisation, including values and philosophy as well as structure and history, etc.
- Mandatory training relating to health and safety and other essential or legal areas.
- Job training relating to the role that the new starter will be performing.
- Training evaluation, entailing confirmation of understanding, and feedback about the quality and response to the training.

**Check list:**

- Food and drink, catering.
- Smoking areas and policy.
- Timings and induction training overview.
- Organizational history and background overview.
- Ethics and philosophy.
- Mission statement(s).
- Organization overview and structure.
- Local structure if applicable.
- Departmental structure and interfaces.
- Who's who (names, roles, responsibilities).
- Site layout.
- Other sites and locations.
- Dress codes.
- Basic communications overview.
- Facilities and amenities.
- Pay.
- Absenteeism and lateness.
- Holidays.

# Resources

- Sickness.
- Health insurance.
- Pension.
- Trades Unions.
- Rights and legal issues.
- Personnel systems and records overview.
- Access to personal data.
- Time and attendance system.
- Security.
- Transport and parking.
- Creche and childcare.
- Grievance procedures.
- Discipline procedures.
- Career paths.
- Training and development.
- Appraisals.
- Mentoring.
- Awards and Incentives.
- Health and Safety, and hazard reporting.
- Physical examinations, eye test etc.
- Emergency procedures, fire drill, first aid
- Accident reporting.
- Personal Protective Equipment.
- Use, care, and issue of tools and equipment.
- Other housekeeping issues.
- General administration.
- Restricted areas, access, passes.
- Local departmental amenities, catering, washrooms, etc.
- Local security, time and attendance, sickness, absenteeism, holidays, etc.
- Local emergency procedures.
- Local departmental structure.
- Department tour.
- Departmental functions and aims.
- Team and management.
- People and personalities overview (extremely helpful, but be careful to avoid sensitive or judgemental issues).
- Related departments and functions.
- How the department actually works and relates to others.
- Politics, protocols, unwritten rules (extremely helpful, but be careful to avoid sensitive or judgemental issues)
- The work-flow – what are we actually here to do?
- Customer service standards and service flow.
- How the job role fits into the service or production process.
- Reporting,communications and management structures.
- Terminology, jargon, glossary, definitions of local terms.
- Use and care of issued equipment.
- Work space or workstation.
- Local housekeeping.
- Stationery and supplies.
- Job description – duties, authority, scope, area/coverage/territory.
- Expectations, standards, current priorities.
- Use of job specific equipment, tools, etc.
- Use of job specific materials, substances, consumables.
- Handling and storage.
- Technical training – sub-categories as appropriate.
- Product training – sub-categories as appropriate.
- Services training – sub-categories as appropriate.
- Job specific health and safety training.
- Job-specific administration, processing, etc.

## ACTIVITY 20: Ensuring Employers have effective procedures

The key elements of successful health and safety management are set out in this summary. Diagram 1 outlines the relationship between them.

**Policy**

Effective health and safety policies set a clear direction for the organisation to follow. They contribute to all aspects of business performance as part of a demonstrable commitment to continuous improvement. Responsibilities to people and the environment are met in ways which fulfil the spirit and letter of the law. Stakeholders' expectations in the activity (whether they are shareholders, employees, or their representatives, customers or society at large) are satisfied. There are cost-effective approaches to preserving and developing physical and human resources, which reduce financial losses and liabilities.

**Organising**

An effective management structure and arrangements are in place for delivering the policy. All staff are motivated and empowered to work safely and to protect their long-term health, not simply to avoid accidents. The arrangements are:
underpinned by effective staff involvement and participation; and sustained by effective communication and the promotion of competence which allows all employees and their representatives to make a responsible and informed contribution to the health and safety effort.

There is a shared common understanding of the organisation's vision, values and beliefs.
A positive health and safety culture is fostered by the visible and active leadership of senior managers.

**Planning**

There is a planned and systematic approach to implementing the health and safety policy through an effective health and safety management system. The aim is to minimise risks. Risk assessment methods are used to decide on priorities and to set objectives for eliminating hazards and reducing risks. Wherever possible, risks are eliminated through selection and design of facilities, equipment and processes. If risks cannot be eliminated, they are minimised by the use of physical controls or, as a last resort, through systems of work and personal protective equipment. Performance standards are established and used for measuring achievement. Specific actions to promote a positive health and safety culture are identified.

**Measuring performance**

Performance is measured against agreed standards to reveal when and where improvement is needed. Active self-monitoring reveals how effectively the health and safety management system is functioning.

# Resources

This looks at both hardware Successful health and safety management Page 8 of 98 Health and Safety Executive (premises, plant and substances) and software (people, procedures and systems) including individual behaviour and performance. If controls fail, reactive monitoring discovers why by investigating accidents, ill health or incidents which could cause harm or loss. The objectives of active and reactive monitoring are: to determine the immediate causes of sub-standard performance; and to identify the underlying causes and the implications for the design and operation of the health and safety management system. Longer-term objectives are also monitored.

Reactive Monitoring:
Working out accident statistics

Annual Injury Incident Rate used to compare industries sectors etc

This is the method used by the Health and Safety Executive

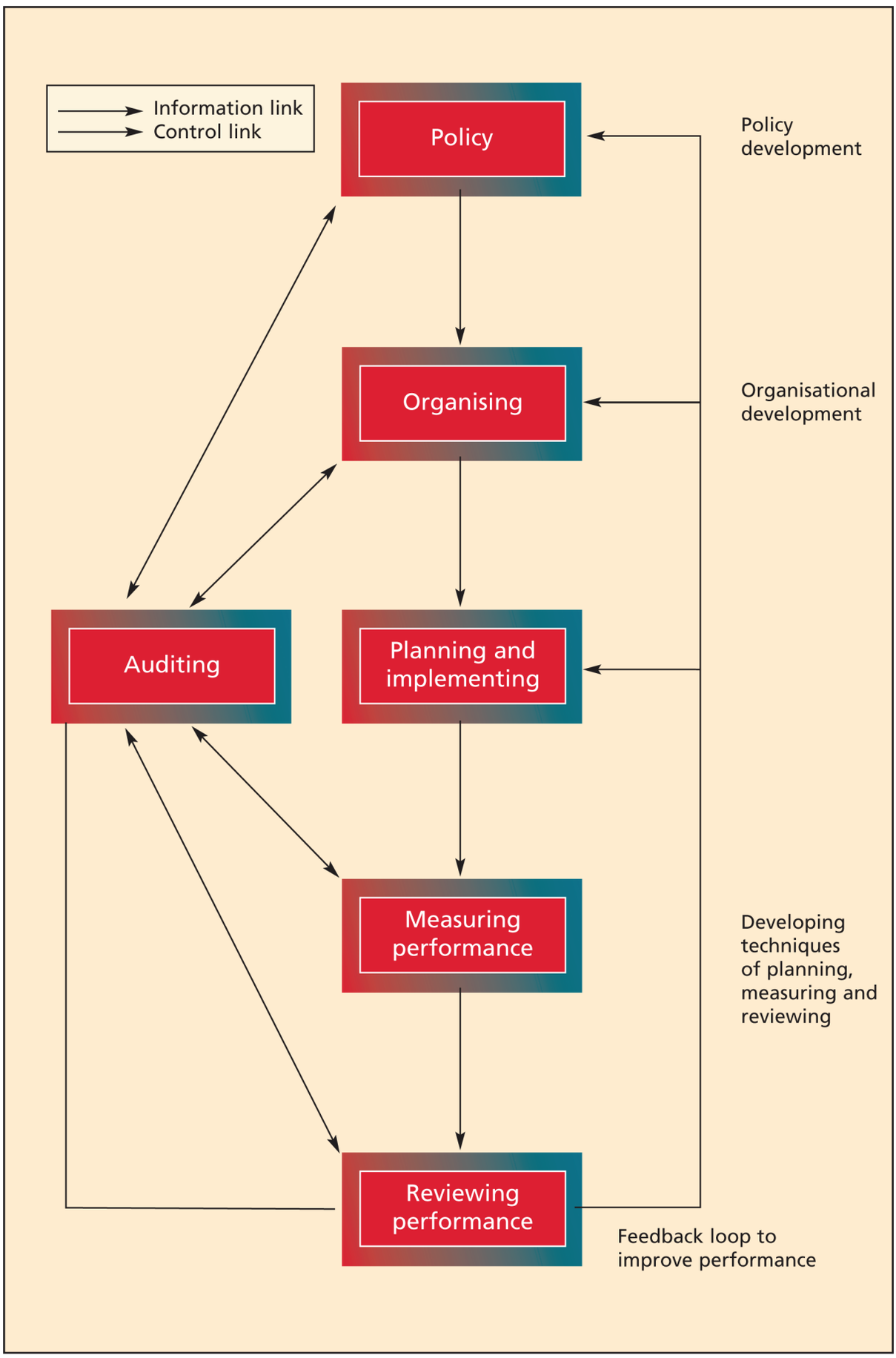
number of reportable injuries
over x 100,000
average number of employees

e.g: 100 employees dived into 1 injury = .01 x 100,000 = incidence rate 1000

**Auditing and reviewing performance**

The organisation learns from all relevant experience and applies the lessons. There is a systematic review of performance based on data from monitoring and from independent audits of the whole health and safety management system. These form the basis of self-regulation and of complying with sections 2 to 6 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSW Act) and other relevant statutory provisions. There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement involving the constant development of policies, systems and techniques of risk control. Performance is assessed by: internal reference to key performance indicators; and external comparison with the performance of business competitors and best practice, irrespective of employment sector.

Performance is also often recorded in annual reports.


Information link
Control link
Policy
Organising
Auditing
Planning and implementing
Measuring performance
Reviewing performance
Policy development
Organisational development
Developing techniques of planning, measuring and reviewing
Feedback loop to improve performance

## ACTIVITY 21: - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences

### What is RIDDOR?

RIDDOR is the law that requires employers, and other people in control of work premises, to report and keep records of:

- work-related accidents which cause death;
- work-related accidents which cause certain serious injuries (reportable injuries);
- diagnosed cases of certain industrial diseases; and
- certain 'dangerous occurrences' (incidents with the potential to cause harm).

There are also special requirements for gas incidents (see 'Reportable gas incidents').

### RIDDOR 2013 Changes

From 1 October 2013, RIDDOR 2013 comes into force, which introduces significant changes to the existing reporting requirements. The main changes are to simplify the reporting requirements in the following areas:

- the classification of 'major injuries' to workers is being replaced with a shorter list of 'specified injuries';
- the previous list of 47 types of industrial disease is being replaced with eight categories of reportable work-related illness;
- fewer types of dangerous occurrence require reporting.

There are no significant changes to the reporting requirements for:

- fatal accidents;
- accidents to non-workers (members of the public);
- accidents which result in the incapacitation of a worker for more than seven days.

Recording requirements remain broadly unchanged, including the requirement to record accidents resulting in the incapacitation of a worker for more than three days.

### Why report?

Reporting certain incidents is a legal requirement. The **report** informs the enforcing authorities (HSE, local authorities and the Office for Rail Regulation (ORR)) about deaths, injuries, occupational diseases and dangerous occurrences, so they can identify where and how risks arise, and whether they need to be investigated. This allows the enforcing authorities to target their work and provide advice about how to avoid work-related deaths, injuries, ill health and accidental loss.

### What must be reported?

#### *Work-related accidents*

For the purposes of RIDDOR, an accident is a separate, identifiable, unintended incident that causes physical injury. This specifically includes acts of non- consensual violence to people at work.

Not all accidents need to be reported, a RIDDOR report is required only when:

- the accident is **work-related**; and
- it results in an injury of a type which is **reportable** (as listed under 'Types of reportable injuries').

When deciding if the accident that led to the death or injury is work-related, the key issues to consider are whether the accident was related to:

- the way the work was organised, carried out or supervised;
- any machinery, plant, substances or equipment used for work; and
- the condition of the site or premises where the accident happened.

If none of these factors are relevant to the incident, it is likely that a report will not be required.

See www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/do-i-need-to-report.htm for examples of incidents that do and do not have to be reported.

## Types of reportable injury

### *Deaths*

All deaths to workers and non-workers must be reported if they arise from a work- related accident, including an act of physical violence to a worker. Suicides are not reportable, as the death does not result from a work-related accident.

### *Specified injuries to workers*

- The list of 'specified injuries' in RIDDOR 2013 (regulation 4) includes:
- a fracture, other than to fingers, thumbs and toes;
- amputation of an arm, hand, finger, thumb, leg, foot or toe;
- permanent loss of sight or reduction of sight;
- crush injuries leading to internal organ damage;
- serious burns (covering more than 10% of the body, or damaging the eyes, respiratory system or other vital organs);
- scalpings (separation of skin from the head) which require hospital treatment;
- unconsciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia;
- any other injury arising from working in an enclosed space, which leads to hypothermia, heat-induced illness or requires resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours.

### *Over-seven-day injuries to workers*

This is where an **employee, or self-employed person, is away from work or unable to perform their normal work duties for more than seven consecutive days** (not counting the day of the accident).

### *Injuries to non-workers*

Work-related accidents involving members of the public or people who are not at work must be reported if a person is injured, and is taken from the scene of the accident to hospital for treatment to that injury. There is no requirement to establish what hospital treatment was actually provided, and no need to report incidents where people are taken to hospital purely as a precaution when no injury is apparent.

If the accident occurred at a hospital, the report only needs to be made if the injury is a 'specified injury' (see above).

## Reportable occupational diseases

Employers and self-employed people must report diagnoses of certain occupational diseases,

where these are likely to have been caused or made worse by their work. These diseases include (regulations 8 and 9):

- carpal tunnel syndrome;
- severe cramp of the hand or forearm;
- occupational dermatitis;
- hand-arm vibration syndrome;
- occupational asthma;
- tendonitis or tenosynovitis of the hand or forearm;
- any occupational cancer;
- any disease attributed to an occupational exposure to a biological agent.

### Reportable dangerous occurrences

Dangerous occurrences are certain, specified 'near-miss' events (incidents with the potential to cause harm.) Not all such events require reporting. There are 27 categories of dangerous occurrences that are relevant to most workplaces. For example:

- the collapse, overturning or failure of load-bearing parts of lifts and lifting equipment;
- plant or equipment coming into contact with overhead power lines;
- explosions or fires causing work to be stopped for more than 24 hours.

Certain additional categories of dangerous occurrences apply to mines, quarries, offshore workplaces and certain transport systems (railways etc). For a full, detailed list, refer to the online guidance at: www.hse.gov.uk/riddor.

### Reportable gas incidents

If you are a distributor, filler, importer or supplier of flammable gas and you learn, either directly or indirectly, that someone has died, lost consciousness, or been taken to hospital for treatment to an injury arising in connection with the gas you distributed, filled, imported or supplied, this can be reported online.

If you are a gas engineer registered with the Gas Safe Register, you must provide details of any gas appliances or fittings that you consider to be dangerous to the extent that people could die, lose consciousness or require hospital treatment. This may be due to the design, construction, installation, modification or servicing, and could result in:

- an accidental leakage of gas;
- inadequate combustion of gas; or
- inadequate removal of products of the combustion of gas.

You can report online.

## Exemptions

In general, reports are not required (regulation 14) for deaths and injuries that result from:

- medical or dental treatment, or an examination carried out by, or under the supervision of, a doctor or registered dentist;
- the duties carried out by a member of the armed forces while on duty; or
- road traffic accidents, unless the accident involved:
  - the loading or unloading of a vehicle;
  - work alongside the road, eg construction or maintenance work;
  - the escape of a substance being conveyed by the vehicle; or
  - a train.

## Recording requirements

**Records** of incidents covered by RIDDOR are also important. They ensure that you collect sufficient information to allow you to properly manage health and safety risks. This information is a valuable management tool that can be used as an aid to risk assessment, helping to develop solutions to potential risks. In this way, records also help to prevent injuries and ill health, and control costs from accidental loss.

**You must keep a record of:**

- any **accident, occupational disease or dangerous occurrence** which requires reporting under RIDDOR; and
- any other occupational accident causing injuries that result in a worker being away from work or **incapacitated for more than three consecutive days** (not counting the day of the accident but including any weekends or other rest days). You do not have to report over-three-day injuries, unless the incapacitation period goes on to exceed seven days.

If you are an employer who has to keep an accident book, the record you make in this will be enough.

You must produce RIDDOR records when asked by HSE, local authority or ORR inspectors.

## How to report

### *Online*

Go to www.hse.gov.uk/riddor and complete the appropriate online report form. The form will then be submitted directly to the RIDDOR database. You will receive a copy for your records.

### *Telephone*

All incidents can be reported online but a telephone service remains for reporting **fatal and specified injuries only**. Call the Incident Contact Centre on 0845 300 9923 (opening hours Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 5 pm).

## Reporting out of hours

HSE has an out-of-hours duty officer. Circumstances where HSE may need to respond out of hours include:

- a work-related death or situation where there is a strong likelihood of death following an incident at, or connected with, work;
- a serious accident at a workplace so that HSE can gather details of physical evidence that would be lost with time; and
- following a major incident at a workplace where the severity of the incident, or the degree of public concern, requires an immediate public statement from either HSE or government ministers.

# Resources

If you want to report less serious incidents out of normal working hours, you should complete an online form at www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/report.htm#online.

You can find more information about contacting HSE out of hours at www.hse.gov.uk/contact/outofhours.htm. www.hse.gov.uk/contact/outofhours.htm.

Source: - http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg453.pdf

## ACTIVITY 22: - What are we using? What forms do they come in? Types of health risk.

Every year, thousands of workers are made ill by hazardous substances, contracting lung disease such as asthma, cancer and skin disease such as dermatitis. These diseases cost many millions of pounds each year. The costs to industry include the need to replace trained workers due to ill health. The social costs include the need for medicines and disability allowances and the costs to individuals who may lose their jobs due to ill health or injury.

Employers are responsible for taking effective measures to control exposure and protect health. These measures can also improve production or cut waste.

The health and safety executive define COSHH as covering substances that are hazardous to health. Substances can take many forms and include:

- chemicals
- products containing chemicals
- fumes
- dusts
- vapours
- mists
- nanotechnology
- gases and asphyxiating gases and
- biological agents (germs). If the packaging has any of the hazard symbols then it is classed as a hazardous substance.
- germs that cause diseases such as leptospirosis or legionnaires disease and germs used in laboratories.

Source: - http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/basics/substance.htm

COSHH does not however cover Lead, Asbestos or radioactive substances, as these are all covered by their own specific regulations.

The hazards are not always easy to spot or seem dangerous at first glance. Some hazards are naturally occurring and may seem very safe for example:

- Dusty or fume-laden air can cause lung diseases, eg in welders, quarry workers or woodworkers.

- Metalworking fluids can grow bacteria and fungi which cause dermatitis and asthma.

- Benzene in crude oil can cause leukaemia

We would all agree that these are dangerous and easy to identify but the following are not!

- Flowers, bulbs, fruit and vegetables can cause dermatitis.

- Wet working, eg catering and cleaning, can cause dermatitis.

- Prolonged contact with wet cement in construction can lead to chemical burns and/or dermatitis.

.
Many other products or substances used at work and in our homes can be harmful, such as paint, ink, glue, lubricant, detergent and beauty products.

**Myth** 'It's natural so it can't be harmful.'

**Reality** Natural materials can be harmful. For example, henna can cause dermatitis and asthma, wood dust can cause asthma, stone or concrete dust can cause lung disease such as silicosis, and citrus oils can cause skin problems.

Substances can also have other dangerous properties. They may be flammable, for example solvent-based products may give off flammable vapour. Clouds of dust from everyday materials, such as wood dust or flour, can explode if ignited.

### How do I know a substance is hazardous?

Your employer should have a hazardous substance register as well as a safe place to store materials (COSHH Locker). This is not always the case and you need to be aware of the materials and substances you use at work and at home.

The best way to find out if a substance is dangerous is to check the information that came with it. This could be in the form of a leaflet or safety data sheet or as a label on the bottle or container. If the substance is dangerous it should be listed in a standard format using approved safety symbols.

### Safety data sheets

Products you use may be 'dangerous for supply'. If so, they will have a label that has one or more hazard symbols. Some examples are given here.
These products include common substances in everyday use such as paint, bleach, solvent or fillers. When a product is 'dangerous for supply', by law, the supplier must provide you with a safety data sheet. Note: medicines, pesticides and cosmetic products have different legislation and don't have a safety data sheet. Ask the supplier how the product can be used safely.

Safety data sheets can be hard to understand, with little information on measures for control. However, to find out about health risks and emergency situations, concentrate on:

- Sections 2 and 16 of the sheet, which tell you what the dangers are;

- Sections 4-8, which tell you about emergencies, storage and handling.

Since 2009, new international symbols have been gradually replacing the European symbols. Some of them are similar to the European symbols, but there is no single word describing the hazard. Read the hazard statement on the packaging and the safety data sheet from the supplier.

## European Symbols


## New International Symbols

## What do the symbols mean?

### CLASS A - COMPRESSED GAS:

Compressed gases are dangerous because they are under pressure. If a container of compressed gas is broken, dropped, crushed or punctured, it may torpedo, causing a safety hazard to anyone in the area. Containers of compressed gas may explode if exposed to variations in temperature or heated. A lot of compressed gas is liquefied because it is under extremely high pressure. Spills of liquefied compressed gas can cause frostbite and severe burns.

Safety measures:

1. Keep the container closed tightly at all times
2. Handle the container with care; do not drop
3. Do not subject the container to variances in temperature or heat (furnaces, open flames, etc.)
4. Store in areas designated by your supervisor.

**CLASS B - FLAMMABLE AND COMBUSTIBLE MATERIAL:**

These materials may explode, ignite or spontaneously burst into flame. Flammable materials will ignite at normal room temperatures. Combustible materials must be heated before they will ignite.

There are six separate divisions within this class:

1. Flammable Gases - compressed gases that are also flammable, ie. Propane

2. Flammable Liquids - liquids with a flashpoint less than 100 degrees F

3. Combustible liquids - liquids with a flashpoint less than 200 degrees F but more than 100 degrees F

4. Flammable Solids - solids that cause fire through retained heat or friction from processing or that are easily ignitable and burn violently & persistently.

5. Flammable Aerosols - most common aerosols use flammable propellants

6. Reactive Flammable Materials - these materials may become spontaneously combustible in air or in contact with water

Safety Measures:

1. Keep away from heat/smoking/sources of ignition
2. Keep container tightly closed
3. Avoid sparks or static discharges
4. Separate the material from other combustible and incompatible materials
5. Store the material in a cool, well-ventilated area as designated by your immediate supervisor.

**CLASS C - OXIDIZING MATERIAL:**

Oxidizers may release oxygen which promotes burning of flammable and combustible material. Oxygen is necessary for combustion. Any substance that increases the supply of oxygen enhances combustion and could cause otherwise safe materials to become spontaneously combustible (ie. wood).
They may burn skin and eyes on contact. Most oxidizers themselves are not flammable.

Safety Measures:

1. Keep in a cool place
2. Avoid friction or shock
3. Keep away from combustible/flammable material and store materials in designated areas
4. Never smoke when working near combustibles.
5. Wear proper protective equipment including eye, face and hand protection and protective clothing.

**CLASS D - POISONOUS AND INFECTIOUS MATERIAL**

This class also includes three divisions of materials listed below.

**DIVISION 1 - MATERIALS CAUSING IMMEDIATE AND SERIOUS TOXIC EFFECTS**

These materials are highly dangerous to health and life. Their effects may include nausea, dizziness, headaches and in severe cases, death. Their effects are

immediate and usually result from a single (acute) exposure. These materials may be swallowed (ingested), absorbed or inhaled.

Safety Measures:

1. Avoid contact with the skin and eyes
2. Avoid inhalation of gas or vapours
3. Handle material with extreme caution
4. Wear proper protective equipment including eye, face and hand protection and protective clothing.
5. Wear proper respiratory equipment and work in well ventilated areas
6. Wash thoroughly after handling the material
7. Store material in designated areas only

**DIVISION 2 - MATERIALS CAUSING OTHER TOXIC EFFECTS**
These materials are toxic but their effects result from repeated exposure to the material over long periods of time (chronic). Some examples of chronic effects are cancer, asbestosis, skin/eye irritation, etc. These materials may produce a chemical allergy or may cause cancer, birth defects or sterility. These materials may be ingested, absorbed or inhaled.

Safety Measures:

1. Avoid skin contact
2. Avoid inhalation of gas or vapours
3. Wear proper protective equipment including eye, face and hand protection and protective clothing.
4. Wear proper respiratory equipment and work in well ventilated areas
5. Wash thoroughly after handling the material
6. Store material in designated areas only

**DIVISION 3 - BIOHAZARDOUS INFECTIOUS MATERIAL**

These are organisms that cause disease in persons and animals. They contain viruses, fungi, bacteria as well as diagnostic specimens/cultures containing or suspected of containing the organisms. These would typically be found in our work environment. You are to assume that all specimens/samples are contaminated and treat them accordingly.

Safety Measures:

1. Keep material contained in a tightly closed container; handle only in designated areas

2. Wear proper protective equipment including eye, face and hand protection and protective clothing.

3. See your doctor if you feel sick

**CLASS E - CORROSIVE MATERIAL**

These materials may cause severe burns to the skin, eyes and the tissues of the respiratory tract. These burns usually result in irreversible tissue damage. Acids and bases are corrosive. Most are liquid but it is important to remember that some gases are also corrosive such as chlorine.
Safety Measures:
1. Avoid skin contact
2. Keep material contained in a tightly closed container
3. Do not breath fumes/vapours - wear proper respirator and work in a well ventilated area
4. Wear proper

**CLASS F - DANGEROUSLY REACTIVE MATERIAL**

This section contains a lot of different chemicals that are unstable and potentially self-reactive. Chemicals in this class have the potential to be self-reactive. They may react with water to release a poisonous gas, become self-reactive under temperature/pressure increases or shock or they might undergo vigorous polymerization, decomposition or condensation.

The MSDS will indicate the material is UNSTABLE under Section 5 (reactivity data). Safety Measures:

1. Avoid contact with water/dampness

2. Do not expose to heat

3. Avoid shock and friction or temperature changes

4. Wear appropriate personal protective equipment when handling

5. Handle containers with extreme care-do not drop or shake chemicals

6. Store chemicals in a cool, flame-proof area as designated by your immediate supervisor

Source: - https://www.londonhospitals.ca/departments/medical_affairs/courses/documents/LHSCSJHCWHIMISRevised.pdf

These classifications include some that are specific to the medical and research fields. As Unite has members within both these sectors we have included them with the more generic classification list.

## Classifying hazardous materials

### Three categories for hazardous materials

Hazardous materials in the workplace are classified into three categories:

- Biological
- Chemical
- Physical

### Biological Hazard

Biological hazards are living organisms or its properties that can adversely affect your health. A needle-stick injury is an example of an accidental exposure to possible blood borne pathogens.

### Chemical Hazard

Chemical hazards include inhalation of fumes and powders. They also include skin contact from splashes, spills and touch. The products safety data sheet contains safety information on the hazardous components, chemical characteristics and stability of the product and first aid measures.

### Physical Hazard

Physical hazards are environmental. They include temperature, noise, vibration and radiation

## Defining exposure levels

## Acute Exposure

Acute exposure relates to short-term exposure lasting minutes, hours or days. Acutely Hazardous Materials: Substances with a high degree of acute toxicity are those that can cause death, disability, or serious injury after a single, relatively low-level exposure.

## Chronic exposure

Chronic exposure relates to long-term exposure lasting for months or years. Again the results of chronic exposure to many substances can be fatal. Asbestosis and other dust related illnesses are usually caused by chronic exposure to a substance. Less fatal long tern exposure such as vibration white finger, dermatitis and eczema are all linked to chronic exposure, even to very low levels of contamination or use.

## Hazard Control

The most effective way to control exposures to hazardous materials is '**at the source'** by eliminating, substituting or isolating the hazard.

The second best control is **'along the path'**. This includes the use of controls such as general ventilation, barriers or shields.

The least satisfactory method for controlling a hazard is '**at the worker'**. This includes personal protective equipment, job rotation, and good personal hygiene.

## ACTIVITY 23: COSHH Duties on the employer and employees

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended)

Approved code of practice and guidance defines the following duties on the employer.

### The workplace

36 The definition of 'workplace' in COSHH is based on that used in the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 19925 but is wider in scope as it also applies to domestic premises, ie private dwellings. Certain words in the definition are themselves defined in section 53 of the HSW Act.6

37 'Premises' means any place (whether or not there is a structure at that place). It includes vehicles, vessels, any land-based or offshore installations, movable areas to which employees have access while at work, and their means of access to and exit from the workplace. Common parts of shared buildings, private roads and paths on industrial estates and business parks are included.

38 Public roads which are used to get to or from the workplace are not covered by the definition. However, in some circumstances a public road may itself become the workplace, and if substances hazardous to health are used or produced during the work activity, COSHH may apply, eg road repairing or resurfacing, kerbstone cutting, line painting etc.

### Regulation 3 Duties under these Regulations

*(1) Where a duty is placed by these Regulations on an employer in respect of his employees, he shall, so far as is reasonably practicable, be under a like duty in respect of any other person, whether at work or not, who may be affected by the work carried out by the employer except that the duties of the employer –*

*(a) under regulation 11 (health surveillance) shall not extend to persons who are not his employees; and*

*(b) under regulations 10, 12(1) and (2) and 13 (which relate respectively to monitoring, information and training and dealing with accidents) shall not extend to persons who are not his employees, unless those persons are on the premises where the work is being carried out.*

*(2) These Regulations shall apply to a self-employed person as they apply to an employer and an employee and as if that self-employed person were both an employer and an employee, except that regulations 10 and 11 shall not apply to a self-employed person.*

*(3) These Regulations shall not apply to the master or crew of a ship or to the employer of such persons in respect of the normal shipboard activities of a ship's crew which –*

*(a) are carried out solely by the crew under the direction of the master; and*

*(b) are not liable to expose persons other than the master and crew to a risk to their health and safety,*

*and for the purposes of this paragraph "ship" includes every description of vessel used in navigation, other than a ship forming part of Her Majesty's Navy.*

**Duties of employers**

39 Table 1 summarises the scope of the employer's duties under COSHH towards employees and other people likely to be affected by the work, eg contractors, visitors to a site and, where biological agents are concerned, patients in a hospital or visitors to a petting zoo. However, there may be more wide-ranging requirements, eg under the Management of Health and Safety at Work (MHSW) Regulations. SFARP stands for 'so far as reasonably practicable' and an explanation of this is provided at www.hse.gov.uk/risk/faq/htm.

Table 1 The employer's duties

| **Duty of employer relating to:** | **Duty for the protection of:** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Employees** | **Other people on the premises** | **Other people likely to be affected by the work** |
| Assessment (regulation 6) | Yes | SFARP | SFARP |
| Prevention/control of exposure (regulation 7) | Yes | SFARP | SFARP |
| Use of control measures and maintenance, examination and test of control measures (regulations 8 and 9) | Yes | SFARP | SFARP |
| Monitoring exposure (regulation 10) | Yes, where required | SFARP | No |
| Health surveillance (regulation 11) | Yes, where appropriate | No | No |
| Information, training etc (regulation 12) | Yes | SFARP | No |
| Arrangements to deal with accidents and emergencies (regulation 13) | Yes | SFARP | No |

**The visiting employer**

40 When working at another employer's premises, the two employers should co-operate and collaborate to ensure that all the duties imposed by COSHH are fulfilled. They may need to decide which of them will carry out a particular duty. For example, it is usually appropriate for the employer who creates the risk to carry out any necessary monitoring of exposure. On larger sites, it is sometimes the practice for the contractor in overall charge to arrange for health surveillance to be provided for

all those working on the site exposed to hazardous substances, including employees of subcontractors; regulation 2(2) is not intended to discourage this.

**The employer occupying the premises**

41 The employer occupying the premises should provide the visiting employer with sufficient information about any substances hazardous to health that may be used or produced at the premises. This information should be detailed enough to allow the visiting employer to provide their own employees with information and instruction on complying with the occupying employer's control measures.

42 The occupier of the premises will also need to know about any substances hazardous to health that are likely to be used or produced by the work the visiting employer will be doing. This information is essential so that the occupying employer can:

- be satisfied that the measures put in place by the visiting employer will not only protect visiting employees from exposure to the substances concerned, but also the occupier's employees;
- provide their employees with information and instruction about any hazardous substances that the visiting employer will be using or that the work will produce;
- reassure their employees that any exposure to the substances concerned and any risks to their health are being properly controlled.

**People working under the control and direction of others**

43 Only the courts can give an authoritative interpretation of the law. However, when deciding whether duties under COSHH apply, the following points should be considered:

- People working under the control and direction of others may be treated as self-employed for tax and national insurance purposes, but they may be treated as their employees for health and safety purposes.
- It may, therefore, be necessary to take appropriate action to protect them.
- If doubt exists about who is responsible for the health and safety of a worker, this could be clarified and included in the terms of a contract.

44 A legal duty under section 3 of the HSW Act cannot be passed on by means of a contract and there will still be duties towards others.

## Duties and responsibilities of employees:

• Employees have a duty to read all COSHH information posters and signs as displayed in the companies premises and to use all hazardous substances safely and in accordance with instructions given

.

• To ensure that warning labels are not removed from any container holding any hazardous substance.

• To inform the Management of any situation that they consider may lead to a serious and immediate danger to health or safety or, of any shortcomings they may find in the arrangements for COSHH.

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES are employees to bring substances onto the premises that the Company does not use in connection with its business.**

Source: - http://www.morelli.co.uk/managers_pdfs/H&S_information/COSHH_Responsibilities_Information.pdf

# Resources

**ACTIVITY 24:** **COSHH risk assessment**

**REFER TO WORKBOOK**

## ACTIVITY 25: - Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV)

### Local exhaust ventilation (LEV) in your workplace should carry away any harmful dust, mist, fumes or gas in the air.

To protect your health:

- It needs to be the right type for the job.
- It needs installing properly in the first place.
- It needs regular checking and maintenance throughout the year.
- It needs testing thoroughly at least once every year.
- If you move LEV, make sure it still works.
- It needs an indicator to show it's working properly.
- You need to check that it works properly every time you use it.
- You need to use it properly.

Check for yourself to see how effective the LEV is where you work.

### Daily checklist for LEV

Does the indicator show the LEV is working properly?
Is it taking away all the harmful dust, mist, fumes and gas? Remember, some of these may be invisible.
Are you close enough to it so it can do its job properly?
Are there any signs it is not working properly, like smells or settled dust? Are there any unusual noises or vibration coming from it?
Has it been thoroughly tested, with a 'tested' label that is within date? Have you told your supervisor about anything you think may be wrong?

### Further information

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit www.hse.gov.uk/. You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website.

## ACTIVITY 26: - Using the manual handling regulations 1992 to assess risk

**Definition**

The term WRULD is used here as synonymous with Repetitive Strain Injury, Cumulative Trauma Disorder etc. **It is a somewhat vague term under which a large variety of conditions and symptoms are classed**. A fundamental distinction can be made between those conditions with a specific recognised medical diagnosis and
those of a so-called 'diffuse' nature which still lack a clear-cut diagnosis. Within the first category, the non-diffuse group, the following conditions are frequently encountered:

- carpal tunnel syndrome
- tendonitis
- tenosynovitis
- de Quervain's syndrome
- tennis elbow
- thoracic outlet syndrome and others.

All these are 'classic' conditions, well recognised, with prescribed clinical tests and clear-cut associated symptoms.

This is in contrast to the diffuse group of conditions, which **largely escape the clinical tests and sophisticated medical investigation**. The factors that are consistent in this group are:

- similarities in individuals' causative history
- similarities in individuals' symptoms and symptom behaviour
- often disappointing results to non-diffuse type treatment

The diffuse group of conditions is characterised by a **range of symptoms** (ache, pain, tingling, cramps, numbness, heaviness, tightness and others) which tend to vary in location, intensity and nature. It is typical for symptoms to 'jump around' and once established, to appear spontaneously without obvious trigger or cause. Symptoms are often felt 'deep' in the tissues and can be hard to describe by those who experience them. Another aspect can be the emergence of symptoms generally associated with the sympathetic nervous system. Examples include the reporting of heaviness, hands feeling hot or cold, swelling and tightness, usually without any visible signs.

In contrast with conditions such as 'tennis elbow' and carpal tunnel syndrome, **the structure at fault is not easily identifiable**. Difficulties with diagnostic tests and changing symptoms have in the past led some people to believe that this condition is predominantly 'in the mind' rather than reflecting a physical injury. Even though psychological factors do play a role, recent research has clearly identified measurable nerve function deficits.

**Risk Factors**

In spite of the wealth of information and opinions on diffuse WRULD's, the **current medical understanding** of exactly how this condition is caused, what the damage consists of and how to determine a prognosis, **is still very limited**. However, 3 groups of risk factors have been identified and are generally accepted as such.

These are:

- static muscle loading
- overuse and repetition
- stress

These risk factors are identical for both the diffuse and the non-diffuse conditions. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that people using the keyboard and mouse are more likely to develop a diffuse condition. Those working in an industrial setting seem to be more likely to develop a more specific form of WRULD. This is likely to be related to the different 'mix' of risk factors in these settings.
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**Static muscle loading**

Static muscle loading describes muscular activity, which focuses on holding an object or on maintaining a certain posture or position which involves little or no movement. **The problem with this form of activity is related to the muscle structure and the way muscles work**. For muscles to be able to contract they require energy which is delivered to them via the blood circulation. When muscles contract they effectively compress the blood vessels which feed them and if a contraction is maintained for any length of time, as during static activity, their blood supply is reduced and a build-up of waste products can accumulate. This results in muscle fatigue and can be experienced as an ache or discomfort. Computer work tends to be more static and less varied than clerical or administration work and can cause static muscle loading in a variety of body areas unless regular breaks and changes in activity occur. When using the keyboard, static muscle work is required to hold the arms and hands in place. Furthermore, if the back is not well supported, static muscle activity will occur there and in the muscles of the neck. Over time, this can lead to localised muscle tightness and postural imbalances, which can compromise the blood supply and the nerve function in the arms and hands.

**Overuse and repetition**

Overuse of specific muscles and repetition of certain activities can carry the risk of straining tissues beyond their normal capacity. Initially fatigue occurs and if demands increase or sufficient changes in activity or breaks are not provided aches, pains and injury can result. **Any repetitive task performed continuously without sufficient breaks or changes in activity will place demands on specific structures and result in a risk of injury**. The way in which an activity is performed will affect the likelihood of a problem occurring. As an example, we can use the angle of the wrist while typing or using the mouse. With the wrists in a neutral position, the risk of an overuse problem is greatly reduced compared with typing or using the mouse with wrists extended or deviated. This is due to the affected structures working in a neutral, relaxed position, causing minimal compression or stretch and requiring minimal effort and muscle activity.

**Stress**

Stress and other psychological factors, perhaps surprisingly, can play an important part in the onset and experience of WRULD's too. This is due to stress causing increased muscle tension and generally sensitising the nervous system, which leads to an increased perception of pain. Stress factors, whether related to work, family or any other area, can therefore be important contributors to WRULD's.

**The reason why this condition has been particularly prominent among computer users is probably due to the fact that often all 3 of these risk factors are present in the modern office environment.**

**Pathology**

Which parts of the body are actually affected and how can the often-varying symptoms be explained? Different structures have been suspected of causing the pains associated with WRULD's and there now is strong evidence that **the main site of injury and symptom generation is the nerves rather than muscles, tendons or joints**. Although a tendinitis, muscle strain or joint problem may coexist, the real cause of the diffuse pains appears to be located in the nerve structures. A combination of nerve compression, reduced blood supply and over-excitation through the body's stress response is believed to cause a low level inflammation of the nerves. This in turn alters the

functioning of these neural structures, generating any of the symptoms listed earlier. As a result, normal touch can cause discomfort and gentle movements can become acutely painful. As the nervous system itself is affected, symptoms can vary greatly. No longer do these nerves simply transmit the information its receptors pick up but they may distort the messages and can even generate their own.

**Treatment**

Frequently people with WRULD seek treatment only when the symptoms start to seriously interfere with their work or when their pains persist even during rest. This is unfortunate as **early intervention produces the best and fastest results**. In our experience the most effective treatment lies in a combination of hands-on techniques, exercises, relaxation, good workstation ergonomics and advice on posture and work pacing. Rest alone does not cure WRULD's, it may at best settle the symptoms temporarily. However, prolonged rest will lead to a deconditioning and weakening of the muscles and associated structures. Before embarking on an exercise regime it is advisable to have an assessment by a physiotherapist who is specialised in the treatment of these disorders to ensure appropriate exercises are given. From an initial
assessment the therapist should be able to determine the main underlying contributory factors and develop an appropriate treatment programme for each individual. During the course of treatment, the symptoms experienced by the individual often change. An experienced therapist is able to interpret these changes and to adjust and progress the treatment accordingly. As these disorders take some time to develop, they tend to take time to resolve and often require changes in work pattern and in postural or tension habits. Therefore, treatment can continue over a longer period of time than initially expected.

At times, when a person is first assessed, his or her symptoms are quite acute. As the symptoms ease, the treatments are spread out over time with emphasis being placed on self- management. This should allow for new postural and work habits to be formed and a set of exercises to be carried out regularly. There is no standard treatment period: for some people who seek treatment early three or four sessions are sufficient;

for others who have developed a more chronic problem treatment may continue for a number of years with appointments at three- or six-monthly intervals.
The physiotherapy techniques that have been found to be most effective include:

- neural and spinal mobilisation
- soft tissue techniques
- postural and muscle imbalance work

Exercises are a crucial part of treatment and a specific programme should be developed for each individual to follow. This should include exercises to be used both at home and at work. We often recommend taking up some form of general exercise.
This can involve gentle gym workouts, swimming or organised classes. As a rule swimming, yoga, gentle stretch classes and walking are preferable to racquet sports and weight training.

People with an established and chronic condition will benefit from a formal work rehabilitation programme, which will progressively increase the tolerance to the critical activity.

**Prognosis**

Most people with WRULD make a good recovery with appropriate treatment. Some need a long time and some might have to limit or space out particularly straining tasks.
Factors that affect the prognosis are:

- The duration of WRULD symptoms
- The intensity and spread of symptoms
- The time it takes symptoms to ease when stirred up.

There may also be underlying postural problems such as a long-standing old back injury or an altered spinal curvature that can affect the prognosis. The work that people are involved in and their ability to manage it, allowing sufficient rest periods or avoidance of specific tasks, will also be of importance as may stress or psychological factors.

Source: - http://www.system-concepts.com/articles/industrial-ergonomics-articles/2004/a-guide-to-work-related-upper-limbdisorders-wrulds.html

## Manual Handling

Manual handling relates to the moving of items either by lifting, lowering, carrying, pushing or pulling. But it's not just a case of 'pulling something' due to the weight of the tem, although this can be a cause of injury. Injuries can be caused because of the mount of times you have to pick up or carry an item, the distance you are carrying it, the height you are picking it up from or putting it down at (picking it up from the floor, putting it on a shelf above shoulder level) and any twisting, bending stretching or other awkward posture you may get in whilst doing a task.

Manual handling is one of the most common causes of injury at work and causes over a third of all workplace injuries which include work related Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) such as upper and lower limb pain/disorders, joint and repetitive strain injuries of various.

Manual handling injuries can occur almost anywhere in the workplace and heavy manual labour, awkward postures and previous or existing injury can increase the risk.
Work related manual handling injuries can have serious implications for both the employer and the person who has been injured. Employers may have to bear substantial costs, through lost production, sickness absence costs of retraining, wages/overtime to cover for the absent person and potentially compensation payments. The injured person may find that their ability to do their job is affected and there may be an impact on their lifestyle, leisure activities, ability to sleep and future job prospects.

It is essential therefore that employers manage the risks to their employees. If possible you should not carry out any manual handling tasks. Where these are necessary mitigate the risk by using some equipment - trollies, fork lift truck etc.

Where tasks are essential and cannot be done using lifting equipment, conveyors or wheeled trollies/cages, a suitable and sufficient risk assessment should be conducted.

## Manual Handling Assessment Charts (MAC)

The Manual Handling Assessment Charts (MAC) is a tool aimed at employers, health and safety managers and safety representatives and is used by health and safety inspectors. The tool will help individuals to assess the most common risk factors in lifting (and lowering), carrying and team handling operations and was developed to identify high-risk manual handling.

**What does the law say?** The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 set out a clear hierarchy of measures for dealing with risk likely to cause harm from manual handling. These are:

- avoid hazardous manual handling operations so far as reasonably practicable;
- assess any manual handling operations that cannot be avoided;
- reduce the risk of injury to as low as reasonably practicable.

## ACTIVITY 28: - Working with Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

**The** Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992

**Regulations require that work equipment is:**

- right for the job;
- used safely by trained people; and,
- maintained so it remains safe.

**What is Display Screen Equipment?**

1 (2)(a) “display screen equipment” means any alphanumeric or graphic display screen, regardless of the display process involved;

Both conventional (cathode-ray tube) display screens and other types such as liquid crystal or plasma displays used in flat-panel screens, touchscreens and other emerging technologies.

Display screens mainly used to display line drawings, graphs, charts or computer-generated graphics are included, as are screens used in work with television or film pictures

The definition is not limited to typical office situations or computer screens but also covers, for example non-electronic display systems such as microfiche. DSE used in factories and other non-office workplaces is included.

**Who is a display screen user or operator?**

1 (2)(d) “user” means an employee who habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of his normal work, whether they are employed to work:

(a) at their own employer’s workstation

(b) at a workstation at home

(c) at another employer’s workstation.

**What is a workstation?**

1 (2) (e) “workstation” means an assembly comprising –

(i) display screen equipment (whether provided with software determining the interface between the equipment and its operator or user, a keyboard or any other input device)
(ii) any optional accessories to the display screen equipment

(iii) any disk drive, telephone, modem, printer, document holder, work chair, work desk, work surface or other item peripheral to the display screen equipment, and

(iv) the immediate work environment around the display screen equipment.

**What are the main safety concerns?**

The main risks that may arise in work with DSE are: -

- musculoskeletal disorders such as back pain
- upper limb disorders (sometimes known as repetitive strain injury or RSI)
- visual fatigue
- mental stress

**Table taken [https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l26.htm](https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l26.htm)**

| Job example | Does the jobholder's DSE work involve: | | | | | | | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Continuous spells of an hour or more? | Daily use of DSE? | Fast information transfer? | High attention and concentration? | High dependency on the DSE? | Little choice whether or not to use the DSE? | Special training or skills? | |
| Word processing | Yes | Yes | Yes | Maybe | Yes | Yes | Yes | Definitely 'users' or 'operators' |
| Secretary | Yes | Yes | Yes | Maybe | Maybe | Maybe | Yes | |
| Data input operator | Yes | Yes | Yes | Maybe | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| News sub-editor | Yes | Yes | Yes | Maybe | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| Journalist | Yes | Yes | Yes | Maybe | Maybe | Maybe | Yes | |
| Telesales/ complaints/ enquiries | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| Assembly/ testing operative | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| TV editing technician | Yes | Yes | Yes | Maybe | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| CCTV control room worker | Yes | Yes | Maybe | Maybe | Yes | Yes | Maybe | |
| Air traffic controller | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| Financial dealer | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| Graphic designer | Yes | Yes | Yes | Maybe | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| Librarian | Yes | Yes | Yes | Maybe | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| Scientist/ technical advisor | Maybe | Yes | Maybe | Maybe | Maybe | Yes | No | May be 'users' or 'operators' |
| Client manager | Maybe | Yes | Maybe | Maybe | Maybe | Yes | No | |
| Banking customer support | Maybe | Yes | Maybe | Maybe | Yes | Yes | Maybe | |
| Airline check-in clerk | Maybe | Yes | Maybe | Maybe | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| Community care fieldworker | Maybe | Maybe | Maybe | Maybe | Maybe | Maybe | No | |
| Receptionist (first example) | Maybe | Yes | Maybe | No | Maybe | Yes | Yes | |
| Senior manager (first example) | No | Yes | No | Maybe | Maybe | Maybe | No | Not 'users' or 'operators' |
| Senior manager (second example) | Maybe | No | No | Maybe | Maybe | No | No | |
| Receptionist (second example) | No | No | No | No | No | Maybe | No | |

**Yes** means this does apply on a typical working day (not necessarily on all days).
**Maybe** means either this applies to the job on some days but not others, or that it applies to some such jobs but not others. In either case, there may be a need for further thought or investigation to reach a decision.
**No** means this never applies, or there are only occasional days in the year when it applies.
Note that Table 2 relates to the specific examples described in Table 1. Decisions on whether a job holder is a user or operator might be different for other jobs with the same job titles.

**Legislation resources & Guidance**

Gov.uk: - The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992

**https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1992/2792/contents/made**

HSE Legal Series: - Work with display screen equipment: Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations **2002**

**https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l26.pdf**

HSE: - Display screen equipment (DSE) workstation checklist

**https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck1.pdf**

HSE: - Working with display screen equipment (DSE)

**https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf**

HSE: - Ergonomics and human factors at work

**https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg90.pdf**

## ACTIVITY 29: - Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER)

**The Regulations require that work equipment is:**

- right for the job;
- used safely by trained people; and,
- maintained so it remains safe.

**What is work equipment?**

Work equipment is any machinery, appliance, apparatus, tool or installation for use at work (whether exclusively or not). This includes equipment which employees provide for their own use at work. The scope of work equipment is therefore extremely wide, some examples: -

- Hammers
- Knives
- Ladders
- drilling machines
- power presses
- circular saws
- photocopiers
- lifting equipment (including lifts)
- dumper trucks and motor vehicles

**The Regulations also include the use of equipment and any risk assessments must include the following: -**

- any activity involving work equipment
- starting or stopping the equipment
- programming
- setting
- repairing
- modifying
- maintaining
- servicing
- cleaning and transporting

**Employees do not have duties under PUWER**

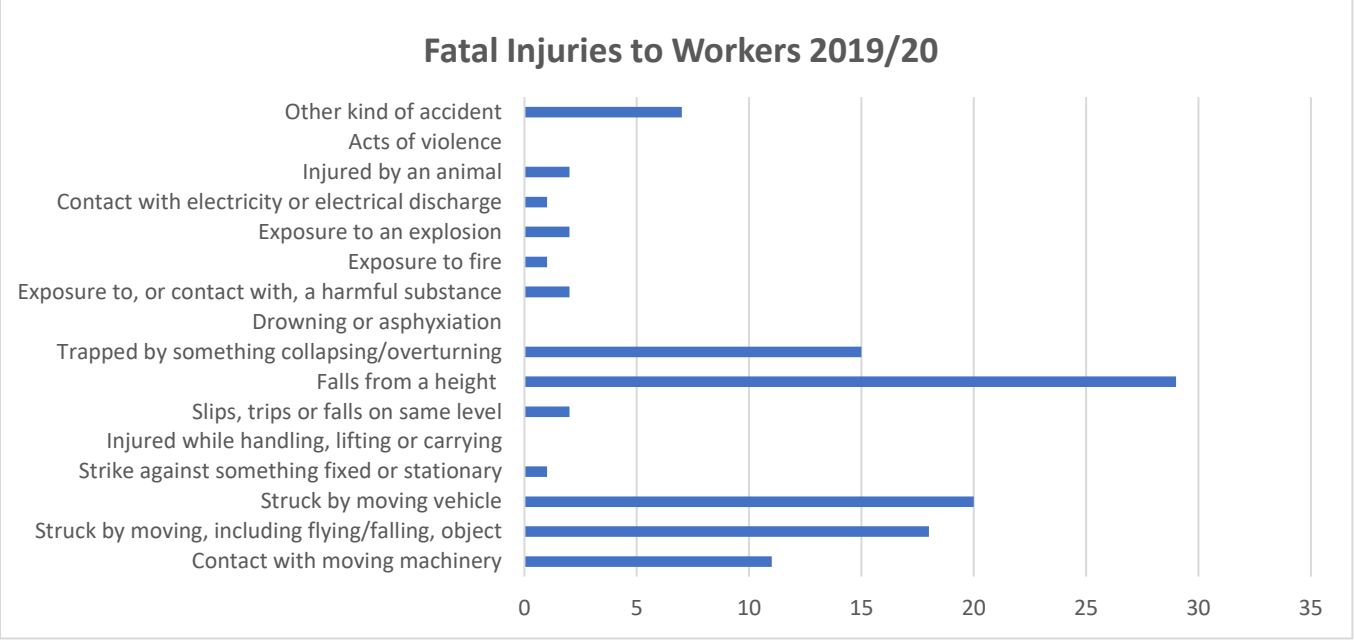
However, employees still hold duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations to take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their undertaking.

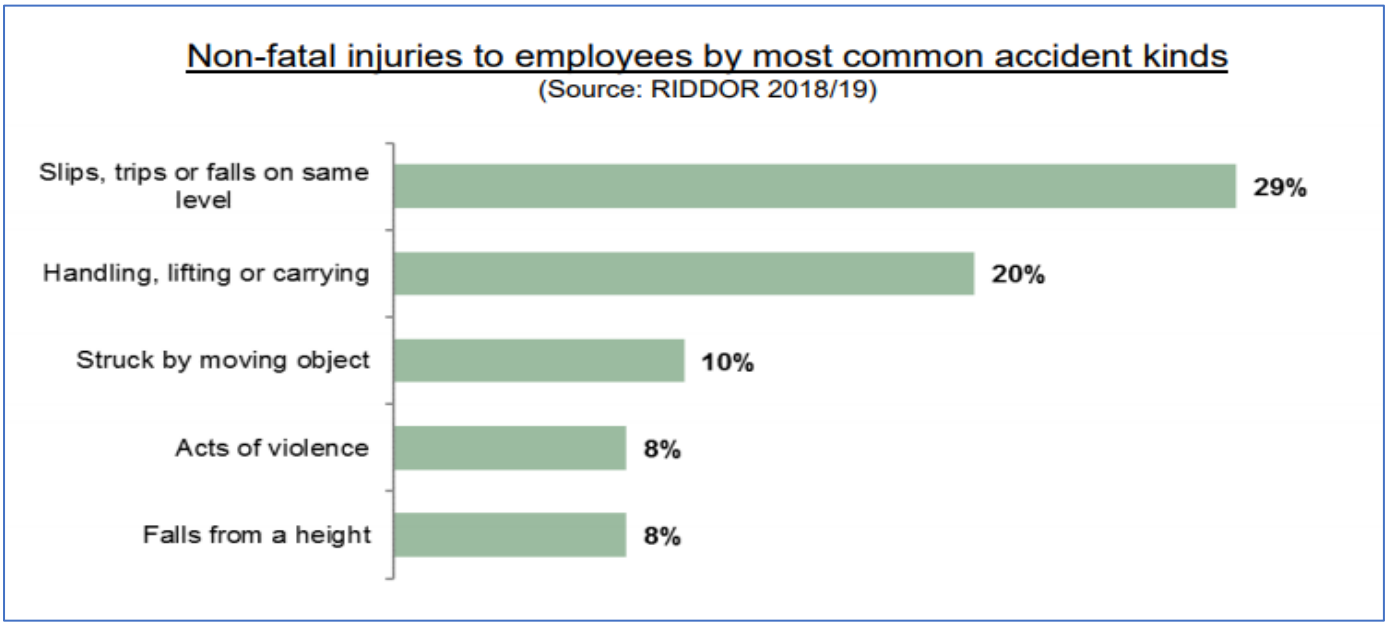
**Which Regulations apply?**

| | |
|---|---|
| **All Equipment**<br>**Regulations 4 to 9** | **Existing Equipment**<br>**Regulations 11 to 24** |
| **New Equipment**<br>**Regulations 10** | **Mobile Equipment**<br>**Regulations 25 30** |
| **Power Presses**<br>**Regulations 31 to 35** | |

## Statistics Provided by the HSE

In 2019/20, 111 workers were killed at work. In addition, an estimated 581,000 workers sustained non-fatal injuries



**TUC resources**

- TUC Guides and Reports for Safety Reps

  https://www.tuc.org.uk/guides-and-reports-health-and-safety-reps

**Legislation resources**

- HSE Legal Series L22 Safe Use of Work Equipment: Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998: Approved Code of Practice and Guidance

  https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l22.pdf

- HSE INDG 291 Simple Guide to Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

  https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg291.pdf

- HSE INDG 229 Using Work Equipment Safely

  https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg229.htm

- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998: PUWER: Open Learning Guidance.

  https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/puwer.pdf

- HSE Legal Series L24 Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
  https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l24.pdf

- HSE Legal Series L153 Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015

  https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l153.pdf

## ACTIVITY 30: Noise in the workplace

Noise has been described as unwanted sound, which may be distracting, annoying or cause physical damage to the body (e.g. temporary or permanent hearing damage).

The damaging effects of noise are related to the 'dose' that the ear receives and this depends on the duration of the exposure and the noise level. Equal doses will cause the same amount of damage. Therefore short exposure to high levels of noise will cause similar damage to lower levels of noise exposure that are of longer duration.

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations are intended to protect against risks to health and safety from exposure to noise, risk of hearing damage and other risks such as interference with the employee's ability to hear instructions or warnings.

### Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005

This policy has been revised to reflect changes in the legislation, which arise from an increasing knowledge about noise levels that cause hearing damage. The Regulations introduce new, lower levels at which employers must control noise exposure and include a new limit value, above which employers are required to take immediate action to reduce exposure.

The requirements for noise risk assessment and suitable control measures have been updated, but remain broadly similar to existing requirements. However the requirements for health surveillance have become more stringent since regular exposure above the revised upper exposure action value can pose a risk of hearing damage.

The Regulations do not apply to members of the public exposed to noise from non-work activities, or who choose to enter noisy places. Nor do the Regulations apply to noise 'nuisance', which causes no risk to health.

### Exposure limits and action values

Noise is measured in decibels (dB).

The annotation dB(A) means 'A-weighted', a measure of noise levels in the audible range for humans. A 'C-weighting', written as dB(C), is used to measure peak, impact or explosive noises. Both measures are important in relation to the exposure limits and action values.

The Regulations require action at specific values relating to the levels of noise exposure averaged over a working day or week, and the maximum noise (peak sound pressure) to which employees are exposed over a working day.

**(a) Lower exposure action values are:**

(i) Daily or weekly exposure 80dB (A), (previously 85)

(ii) Peak sound pressure 135dB (C)

**(b) Upper exposure action values are:**

(i) daily or weekly exposure of 85dB(A), (previously 90)

(ii) peak sound pressure of 137dB(C)

Use of a weekly exposure, rather than a daily exposure, may be appropriate where exposure to noise varies from day to day (e.g. the use of power tools on one day but not on others). No allowance should be made for the effects of hearing protection when determining an employee's noise exposure in relation to the upper or lower action values.

**(c) Exposure limits have also been set which must not be exceeded:**

(i) daily or weekly exposure of 87dB(A)

(ii) peak sound pressure of 140dB(C)

In this case, account may be taken of the reduction in noise exposure afforded by hearing protection. However if an employee is exposed to noise at or above the exposure limit values then departments must take immediate action to bring exposure down below this level.

## Assessment of exposure

"Noisy" areas, work activities or processes where there is likely to be risk from noise exposure must be assessed by a competent person. The findings of the assessment should be compared to the action and exposure limit values detailed in section 3.

Examples of areas and work activities that may require assessment include woodworking and other machinery workshops, print-rooms, arboriculture, boiler rooms, ventilation plant rooms and areas which contain air compressors.

An assessment will also be required where noise becomes intrusive for most of the working day, for example where a vacuum cleaner runs continuously throughout the day, or where employees have to raise their voices to hold a normal conversation 2m away from each other.

In many cases noise measurements will not be necessary and sufficient information about noise emissions may be obtained from equipment manufacturers and suppliers.

Some examples of typical noise levels are given in the Table in section 14.

If the assessor is satisfied that noise levels are below the first action value of 80dB(A) then this should be recorded. No further action is required other than to ensure that there are no changes to the area, process or activity, or to take action if changes do arise.

Where estimates approach the action values or exposure limit, noise measurements may be required to determine the specific departmental duties under the Regulations. Generally, noise measurements will be arranged via the safety officer or safety committee.

In all cases the assessment should be recorded and reviewed at least every two years, or when there is a significant change that may invalidate the original assessment.

## Control of exposure

Where necessary workplaces must put in place appropriate noise control measures, which should eliminate the risks, where this is reasonably practicable. Where this is not possible then risks should be reduced to as low as reasonably practical by engineering means and management controls. Control of exposure to noise must not be via hearing protection alone.

Where employees or others are exposed at or above the second action value, i.e. 85dB(A), departments must draw up a planned programme of noise control measures. The immediate risk can be managed by the provision of hearing protection. However departments should identify short and long term targets to reduce noise exposure, draft a timetable for implementation of the noise control measures and assign responsibilities to individuals to deliver relevant parts of the plan.

## Hearing protection

(a) Where employees are exposed to noise levels at or above 80db(A), but below 85db(A), they are entitled to request ear protection. Departments must provide this free of charge.

Information, instruction and training on the risk to hearing from the equipment, process or activity should be provided by the department and should include information about any hearing protection provided, where and how it should be used and the proper way to clean, store and maintain it.

(b) At or above exposures of 85db(A), departments must devise, implement and maintain a noise control programme (section 5), in addition to providing ear protection and information, instruction and training. Where ear protection is provided the department must enforce its use and those exposed must use it.

(c) Careful consideration should be given to the selection of hearing protection. Noise levels must be attenuated to less than 85dB(A) at the ear.

Hearing protectors must be suitable for the environment, comfortable for the wearer and compatible with other personal protective equipment such as hard hats, respirators or eye protection.

## Hearing protection zones

Hearing protection zones should be designated in any area for which hearing protection is required, i.e. in areas where exposure to noise is above the upper action

value of 85dB(A). The area must be clearly marked "Ear Protection Zone" and suitable signs posted to indicate that hearing protection is mandatory in these areas.

## Use and maintenance of noise control equipment

Workplaces should check regularly that noise control equipment is being properly used, with suitable instructions and adequate supervision to ensure that this is the case.

Equipment, e.g. silencers and attenuating enclosures, should be checked at least annually, and maintained in good condition to ensure continued effectiveness. Records of these checks and any maintenance should be kept in the department.

Re-usable ear protection should be inspected periodically and replaced when necessary. A system of reporting defects should be devised and a person nominated to undertake appropriate and prompt remedial action.

## Labelling noisy machines

Where machine operators are required to wear ear protection because noise exposure is at or above 85db(A), a sign must be posted on the machine.

## New machinery/equipment/plant

All new machinery, equipment or plant must be designed and constructed to ensure that the noise produced is as low as possible, with a ‘Declaration of Conformity’ to show that it meets the required health and safety requirements.

Suppliers should be asked to provide information about noise emissions under actual working conditions, as well as any specific instructions for installation and assembly that reduce noise.

Every attempt should be made to install only equipment with noise emissions below 85db(A), but if this is not possible, the risk and risk control measures should be discussed with the Safety Office before an order is placed.

## Health surveillance

(a) Employees regularly exposed to noise levels at or above the second action value, that is 85d(A), must be included in a health surveillance programme.

(b) Where exposure is between the first and second action value, i.e. 80dB(A) and 85dB(A); or where employees are only exposed occasionally to noise levels above 85dB(A), then surveillance will be required only if information comes to light that the employee is particularly sensitive to noise induced hearing loss.

## Information, instruction and training.

The importance of training cannot be understated and in many cases the employee's exposure to noise will be determined by their diligence in using control measures and adhering to good practice. Employees at risk from exposure to noise must understand the risk to their health, the control measures in place to control exposure and the importance of using these appropriately. Training records should be maintained.

## Summary of departmental action

- Identify noisy areas during departmental inspections
- Identify those likely to be at risk from noise exposure
- Identify any employees or groups of employees whose health may be at particular risk from noise exposure, e.g. pregnant or young workers
- Identify any likely detrimental health effects arising from an interaction between noise and other agents (e.g. vibration)
- Obtain a reliable estimate of noise exposure (e.g. from manufacturers' and suppliers data) and compare the exposure to the action values and limit value
- If the first action value is being exceeded arrange for daily personal noise exposure levels to be measured, via the Safety Office. Make hearing protection available to exposed employees
- At or above the second action value, identify the controls necessary to eliminate or reduce noise exposure using recognised noise control solutions, management control measures, good practice, and hearing protection. Designate hearing protection zones and ensure that hearing protection is used and maintained
- Provide suitable information, instruction and training about noise risks, any control measures in place, safe working practices and hearing protection
- Identify employees at particular risk who may require health surveillance and refer such individuals to Occupational Health
- Record the findings of the noise assessment, including those assessments for which no action was required
- Review the assessment every two years to ensure that the findings remain valid, or when changes are introduced. Take action where required

## Guide to Noise Levels

| Activity | dB(A) |
|---|---|
| Quiet office | 40-50 |
| Normal conversation | 50-60 |
| Loud radio | 65-70 |
| Tractor cab | 75-85 |
| Busy street | 78-85 |
| Power drill | 90-100 |
| Heavy lorry (7m away) | 95-100 |
| Bar of a night club | 95-105 |
| Road drill | 100-110 |
| Chain saw | 115-120 |
| Jet aircraft taking off (25m away) | 140 |

**Table 1 Section 14**

Source: - http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/safety/policy-statements/s1-06/

## ACTIVITY 31: - Fire

### Firefighting equipment

The types of equipment you need depend on your business premises. You'll need to have any equipment properly installed, tested and maintained and train your staff to use them if necessary

### Maintenance and testing

You must carry out regular checks to make sure that: • all fire alarm systems are working • the emergency lighting is working • you record any faults in systems and equipment • all escape routes are clear and the floor is in good condition • all fire escapes can be opened easily • automatic fire doors close correctly • fire exit signs are in the right place.

### Fire drills and training.

You need to train new staff when they start work and tell all employees about any new fire risks. You should carry out at least one fire drill per year and record the results. You must keep the results as part of your fire safety and evacuation plan.

### Who's responsible

You're responsible for fire safety in business or other non-domestic premises if you're:

- an employer
- the owner
- the landlord
- an occupier
- anyone else with control of the premises, for example a facilities manager, building manager, managing agent or risk assessor

You're known as the 'responsible person'. If there's more than one responsible person, you have to work together to meet your responsibilities.

The Fire Safety Order also applies if you have paying guests, for example if you run a bed and breakfast, guesthouse or let a self-catering property.

Fire safety rules are different in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

**Responsibilities**

As the responsible person you must:

- carry out a fire risk assessment of the premises and review it regularly

- tell staff or their representatives about the risks you've identified
- put in place, and maintain, appropriate fire safety measures
- plan for an emergency
- provide staff information, fire safety instruction and training

You can read about how to make sure your premises are safe from fire.

## Non-domestic premises

Non-domestic premises are:

- all workplaces and commercial premises
- all premises the public have access to
- the common areas of multi-occupied residential building

## Shared premises

In shared premises it's likely there'll be more than one responsible person. You'll need to co-ordinate your fire safety plans to make sure people on or around the premises are safe.

For common or shared areas, the responsible person is the landlord, freeholder or managing agent.

## Alterations, extensions and new buildings

When building new premises or doing building work on existing premises, you must comply with building regulations. This includes designing fire safety into the proposed building or extension.

## Fire risk assessments

As the responsible person you must carry out and regularly review a fire risk assessment of the premises. This will identify what you need to do to prevent fire and keep people safe. You must keep a written record of your fire risk assessment if your business has 5 or more people. Carrying out the assessment

1. Identify the fire hazards.

2. Identify people at risk.

3. Evaluate, remove or reduce the risks.

4. Record your findings, prepare an emergency plan and provide training.

5. Review and update the fire risk assessment regularly.

The fire safety risk assessment chart gives more detailed information about these steps. (See appendix)

You'll need to consider:

- emergency routes and exits
- fire detection and warning systems
- Firefighting equipment
- the removal or safe storage of dangerous substances
- an emergency fire evacuation plan
- the needs of vulnerable people, eg the elderly, young children or those with disabilities
- providing information to employees and other people on the premises
- staff fire safety training

### Help with the assessment

You can do the fire risk assessment yourself with the help of standard fire safety advice documents.

You'll need to appoint a 'competent person' to help, eg a professional risk assessor, if you don't have the expertise or time to do the fire risk assessment yourself.

Your local fire and rescue authority might be able to give you advice if you're not sure your risk assessment's been carried out properly. However, they can't carry out risk assessments for you.

### Fire safety and evacuation plans

Your plan must show how you have:

- a clear passageway to all escape routes
- clearly marked escape routes that are as short and direct as possible
- enough exits and routes for all people to escape
- emergency doors that open easily
- emergency lighting where needed
- training for all employees to know and use the escape routes
- a safe meeting point for staff

### People with mobility needs

You should also make special arrangements for people with mobility needs, eg make sure there are people to help wheelchair users get downstairs if there's a fire.

### Legislation resources

- Gov.uk: - Fire safety in the workplace
  https://www.gov.uk/workplace-fire-safety-your-responsibilities

- Gov.uk: -Fire Safety Risk Assessment 5 step Checklist

  https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/14899/fsra-5-step-checklist.pdf

- Gov.uk: - Risk Assessment forms
  https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/risk-assessment-template-and-examples.htm

- Gov.uk: -A short guide to making your premises safe from fire

  https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/14879/making-your-premises-safe-short-guide.pdf

- Gov.uk: - Fire prevention and rescue

  https://www.gov.uk/government/fire-prevention-and-rescue

- HSE Legal Series: - L138 Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 Approved Code of Practice and guidance

  https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l138.pdf

## Fire Extinguisher types

| |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wood, paper & textiles A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ |
| Flammable liquids B | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ |
| Flammable gases C | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ |
| Burning metals D | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Electrical contact | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ |
| Cooking oils & fats F | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ |

## Enforcement, appeals and penalties

Your local fire and rescue authority visits premises to check the fire risk assessment and fire prevention measures are appropriate. Fire safety officers should help you understand the rules and comply with them.

They can also take action if they think your fire safety measures aren't adequate. For example, they might issue an informal notice suggesting safety measures.

They could also give you a formal fire safety notice. They'll tell you how to fix the problems described in the notice.

## ACTIVITY 32: Review of previous accident investigations, workplace experience / procedures.

The Royal Society for the prevention of accidents gives the following definition

An accident may be defined as:

“An unplanned, uncontrolled event which has led to or could have led to injury to people, damage to plant, machinery or the environment and/or some other loss."

The Health and Safety Executive also provides the following definition:

“An undesired circumstance(s) which gives rise to ill health, injury, damage, production losses or increased liabilities."

### What is an incident?

**1.** A definite and separate occurrence; an event.

**2.** A usually minor event or condition that is subordinate to another.

**3.** Something contingent on or related to something else.

**4.** An occurrence or event that interrupts normal procedure or precipitates a crisis: an international incident.

Not all accidents or incidents need reporting to the HSE, however they do clearly identify what incidents do need reporting. In terms of reporting the HSE gives the following definition in relation to major incidents

### Definition of a major incident

A major incident is defined as a significant event, which demands a response beyond the routine, resulting from uncontrolled developments in the course of the operation of any establishment or transient work activity.

The event may either cause, or have the potential to cause, either:

- multiple serious injuries, cases of ill health (either immediate or delayed), or loss of life, or
- serious disruption or extensive damage to property, inside or outside the establishment

Events which, taken in isolation, may not warrant classification as major incidents, may do so when considered together.

What this means in simple terms is that a series of smaller incidents taken together can be seen as in fact a major incident. Similarly a minor incident where a chemical spill is cleaned up and does not lead to immediate injury, but does over a period lead to a number of employees falling ill could be classed then as a major incident.

## Occupational Safety: Facts & Figures

**Did you know?**

### Fatal injuries

The number of workers fatally injured in work related accidents in 2010/11 was 171. This figure was down to 133 in 2013/14.

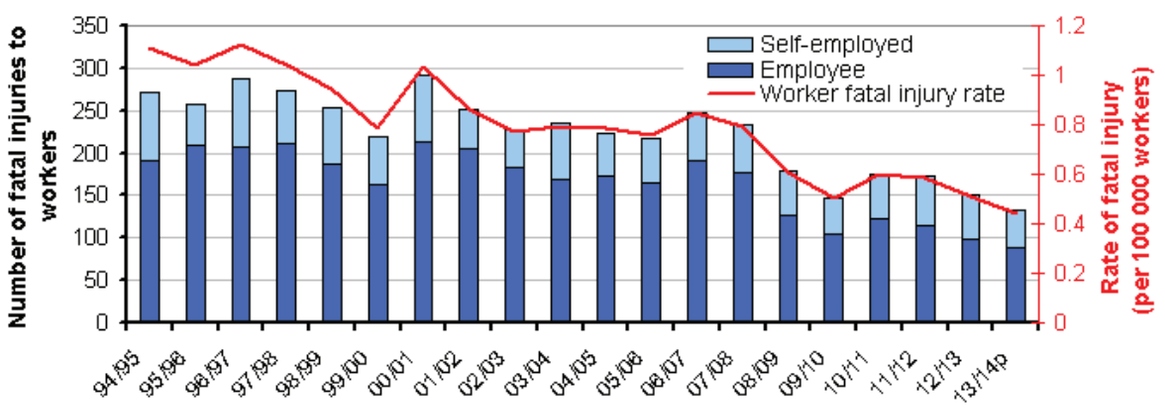
This is equivalent to a rate of fatal injury of approx 1 in 160,000 workers, an increase on the previous year's figures but it is consistent with a longer-term downward trend. [1]

Again in 2013/14 the provisional figure has dropped again to just 0.44 deaths per 100,000 workers. [7]

Of the main industrial sectors, construction, agriculture and waste and recycling have the highest rates of fatal injuries.

The most common kinds of accident involved with fatal injuries are: falling from a height; being struck by a moving vehicle; and being struck by moving or falling objects. [2]

**Figure 1: Number and rate of fatal injury to workers[1] 1994/95 – 2013/14p**




p = Provisional.

1 **The term 'workers' describes both employees and self-employed combined.**

This document is available from www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/

### Fatal diseases

There are an estimated 12,000 deaths per year as a result of past exposure to harmful working conditions.

The current estimate of the annual number of occupational cancer deaths in Great Britian is around 8,000, 4,000 of those due to past exposure to asbestos.

An estimated 4,000 Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease deaths are caused each year due to past occupational exposure to fumes, chemicals and dust. [1]

### Injury

There were over 600,000 self-reported work-place injuries reported in 2010/11. [3];

- Over 100,000 non-fatal injuries reported by employers, a rate of approx 1 in 2,000 employees
- 200,000 reportable injuries -defined as over 3 day absence- occurred, a rate of approx 1 in 140

Resulting in 4.4 million working days lost due to workplace injury in 2010-11. [1]

Slips and trips, often resulting in broken bones, are the biggest cause of the 26,000 major incidents reported. [3]

### Ill health

HSE estimates that there are 1.2 million cases of ill health every year caused or made worse by work, with 22.1 million working days lost due to work-related illness.

Stress, depression or anxiety and musculoskeletal disorders accounted for the majority of days lost due to work-related ill health, 10.8 and 7.6 million days respectively. [1]

Introduction to Occupational Health

### Cost

26.4 million working days are lost annually due to work-related injury and illness

The cost to British employers of health and safety failure was estimated to be £3.1 billion in 2009/10 [4]. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) suggests that £910 million to £3,710 million comes from accidental damage to property and equipment. [5]

## Cost of Accidents

### Penalties

Those found guilty in a magistrate's court of health and safety offences can face fines of up to £20,000 and/or up to 12 months imprisonment. Conviction in a Crown Court can result in an unlimited fine and/or a period of imprisonment of up to two years. [6]

### Work Related Road Risk

Up to a third of all road traffic accidents are estimated to involve somebody who is at work at the time, accounting for 20 fatalities and 250 serious injuries every week. [7]

**References and further reading**

1. Health and Safety Executive Annual Statistics Report 2010/11
2. Health and Safety statistics for 2010/11 - Kind of Accidents
3. At a glance guide to Health and Safety Statistics 2010/11, HSE Cost to Britain of workplace injuries and work-related ill health: 2009/10 update, Health and Safety Executive
4. HSE Better Business Website: Cost Savings of Health and Safety
5. HSE Enforcement Policy Statement
6. Driving at work Managing work-related road safety, Department for Work and Transport, HSE, 2003
7. www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/

Source: - http://www.rospa.com/faqs/detail.aspx?faq=255 Date Updated: 20/07/2012 / Author: RB/CH Rsopa

### Reviewing your policies

Every employer should have an accident incident reporting policy, these should not just be a written statement as appears below in our example. It should be a robust document that covers not just reporting but also investigation and implementation.

## Sample Accident Reporting Policy

**(Employer)** has an obvious concern for employees and the care they receive as a result of a work-related accident or illness. In order to streamline and improve the processes involved with accident reporting and claims management, and in an effort to facilitate an early return to work following a work-related injury, **(Employer)** is implementing the following guidelines.

1. As a condition of employment, all employees are required to report a work-related injury or illness immediately or as soon as practicable. In almost all instances, this will mean prior to the end of the shift on which the injury/illness occurred. This will allow the Company to promptly investigate each situation to determine the cause of the injury/illness and what the Company must do to prevent a reoccurrence of a similar situation. “Near-miss” events are to be reported immediately and will be investigated just as those events causing injuries. Employees must report all injuries/illnesses/near-misses to their immediate supervisor. If the immediate supervisor is not available, employees must contact another management representative and report the situation to him/her. The supervisor/management representative will complete an internal accident report as soon as possible following the report of the injury/illness. The accident report will require signatures from both the employee and supervisor. Employees will assist in the investigations and will be a vital part of making recommendations to prevent further accidents.
2. Employees that are off work as a result of a work-related accident/illness must contact the Company on the day of the occurrence or no later than the first day of absence to provide information on their condition and a probable return-to-work date. Employees must inform their medical providers that the Company offers modified/restricted-duty options. Employees may have medical providers call the Company with any questions regarding this program.
3. Employees that are off work more than one week due to work-related injuries/illnesses must contact the Company at least once per week to provide updates on their medical status and probable return to work.
4. Modified and/or restricted duty may be available at the Company’s discretion. Employees will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to see if they qualify for restricted or modified duty. Assignment to modified/restricted duty is contingent upon several factors, and not all employees will be allowed to return to work under this program. The modified/restricted-duty option is a temporary remedy and the length of time allowed on this program will be decided by management on a case-by-case basis.

**(Employer)** intends to provide a safe, healthy workplace for its employees. As such, employees must understand that as a condition of employment, the preceding procedures and policies must be followed. Failure to abide by these policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension with intent to discharge. If there are any questions, please contact your supervisor.

### What have you got?

If your policy looks like the one above you have a lot of work to do! Health and safety legislation is in place to make your workplace a safer place. Your policies and procedures should be robust, fair and above all fit for purpose.

## ACTIVITY 33 - 35: Why carryout accident investigations?

When accidents are investigated, the emphasis should be concentrated on ***finding the root cause of the accident*** rather than the investigation procedure itself so you can prevent it from happening again. The purpose is to find facts that can lead to actions, not to find fault. Always look for deeper causes. Do not simply record the steps of the event.

Reasons to investigate a workplace accident include:

- most importantly, to find out the cause of accidents and to prevent similar accidents in the future
- to fulfill any legal requirements
- to determine the cost of an accident
- to determine compliance with applicable safety regulations
- to process workers' compensation claims

Incidents that involve no injury or property damage should still be investigated to determine the hazards that should be corrected. The same principles apply to a quick inquiry of a minor incident and to the more formal investigation of a serious event.

### Who should do the accident investigating?

Ideally, an investigation would be conducted by someone experienced in accident causation, experienced in investigative techniques, fully knowledgeable of the work processes, procedures, persons, and industrial relations environment of a particular situation.

Some jurisdictions provide guidance such as requiring that it must be conducted jointly, with both management and a union representative, or that the investigators must be knowledgeable about the work processes involved.

In most cases, the supervisor should help investigate the event. Other members of the team can include:

- employees with knowledge of the work
- safety officer (employer)
- health and safety committee (more likely a delegate not all of them)
- union representative (this could be for the above)
- employees with experience in investigations
- "outside" expert (depending on the accident)
- representative from local government (depending on the accident)

### Should the immediate supervisor be on the team?

The advantage is that this person is likely to know most about the work and persons involved and the current conditions. Furthermore, the supervisor can usually take immediate remedial action.

The counter argument is that there may be an attempt to gloss over the supervisors shortcomings in the accident. This situation should not arise if the accident is investigated by a team of people, and if the union representative(s) and the members review all accident investigation reports thoroughly.

### Why look for the root cause?

An investigator who believes that accidents are caused by unsafe conditions will likely try to uncover conditions as causes. On the other hand, one who believes they are caused by unsafe acts will attempt to find the human errors that are causes. Therefore, it is necessary to examine some underlying factors in a chain of events that ends in an accident.

The important point is that even in the most seemingly straightforward accidents, **seldom, if ever, is there only a single cause**. For example, an "investigation" which concludes that an accident was due to worker carelessness, and goes no further, fails to seek answers to several important questions such as:

- Was the worker distracted? If yes, why was the worker distracted?
- Was a safe work procedure being followed? If not, why not?
- Were safety devices in order? If not, why not?
- Was the worker trained? If not, why not?

An inquiry that answers these and related questions will probably reveal conditions that are more open to correction than attempts to prevent "carelessness".

### The Five Stages of an Accident Investigation

- Reporting
- Gathering information
- Analysing information
- Identifying risk control measures
- Action planning and implementing

This is often a standard approach but lacks one or two crucial steps. The HSE recommend a four stage process, they miss off the reporting element at stage one.

A more robust way to investigate and implement is listed below, note the differences between the two approaches.

- Report the accident occurrence to a designated person within the organisation and externally if required
- Provide first aid and medical care to injured person(s) and prevent further injuries or damage
- Investigate the accident
- Identify the causes
- Report the findings
- Develop a plan for corrective action
- Implement the plan
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the corrective action
- Make changes for continuous improvement
- Report the accident to a designated person within the organisation and externally if required
- Provide first aid and medical care to injured person (s) and prevent further injury or damage.
- Investigate the accident
- Identify the causes
- Report the findings
- Develop a plan for corrective action
- Implement the plan

As little time as possible should be lost between the moment of an accident or near miss and the beginning of the investigation. In this way, one is most likely to be able to observe the conditions as they were at the time, prevent disturbance of evidence, and identify witnesses. The tools that members of the investigating team may need (pencil, paper, camera, film, camera flash, tape measure, etc.) should be immediately available so that no time is wasted.

Let's now look at each step in more detail:-

## What should be looked at as the cause of an accident?

### Accident Causation Models

Many models of accident causation have been proposed, ranging from Heinrich's domino theory to the sophisticated Management Oversight and Risk Tree (MORT).
The simple model shown in Figure 1 attempts to illustrate that the causes of any accident can be grouped into five categories - task, material, environment, personnel, and management. When this model is used, possible causes in each category should be investigated. Each category is examined more closely below. Remember that these are sample questions only: no attempt has been made to develop a comprehensive checklist.

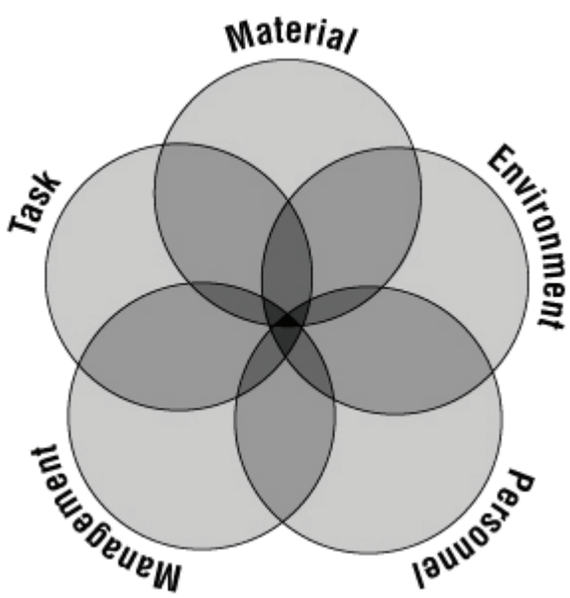



Figure 1: Accident Causation

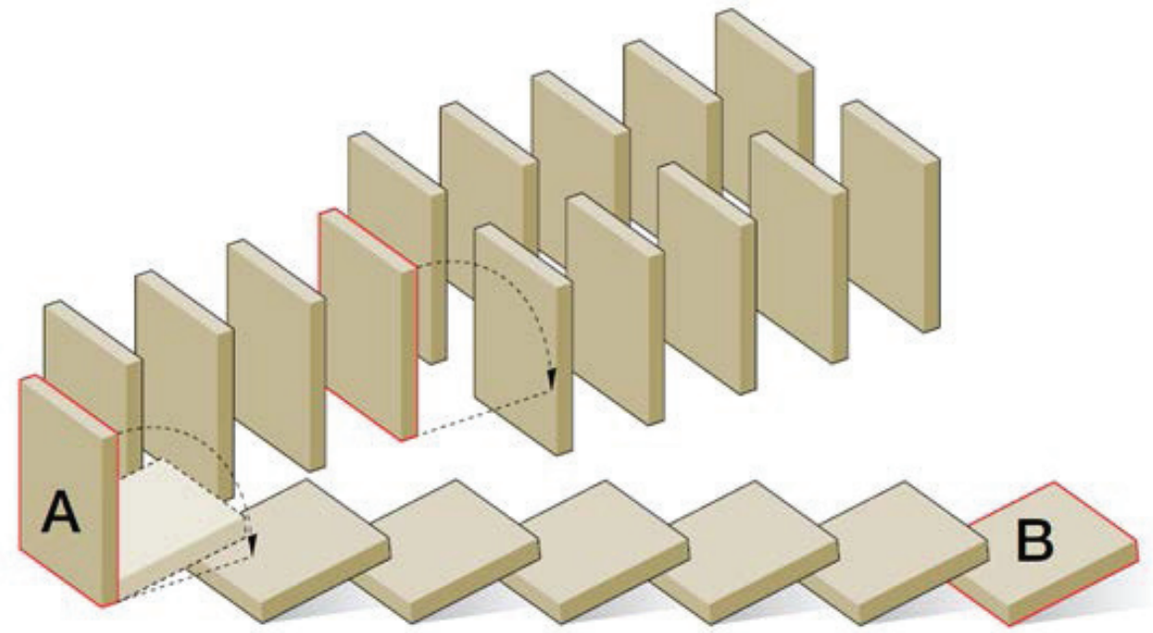



Figure 2: Accident Causation the domino effect

Adverse events have many causes. What may appear to be bad luck (being in the wrong place at the wrong time) can, on analysis, be seen as a chain of failures and errors that lead almost inevitably to the adverse event. (This is often known as the Domino effect.)

Note: Each domino represents a failing or error which can combine with other failings and errors to cause an adverse event. Dealing with the immediate cause (B) will only prevent his sequence. Dealing with all causes, especially root causes (A) can prevent a whole series of adverse events.

### Task

Here the actual work procedure being used at the time of the accident is explored. Members of the accident investigation team will look for answers to questions such as:

- Was a safe work procedure used?
- Had conditions changed to make the normal procedure unsafe?
- Were the appropriate tools and materials available?
- Were they used?
- Were safety devices working properly?
- Was lockout used when necessary?

For most of these questions, an important follow-up question is "If not, why not?"

### Material

To seek out possible causes resulting from the equipment and materials used, investigators might ask:

- Was there an equipment failure?
- What caused it to fail?
- Was the machinery poorly designed?
- Were hazardous substances involved?
- Were they clearly identified?
- Was a less hazardous alternative substance possible and available?
- Was the raw material substandard in some way?
- Should personal protective equipment (PPE) have been used?
  Was the PPE used?
- Was the raw material substandard in some way?
- Should personal protective equipment (PPE) have been used?
- Was the PPE used?
- Were users of PPE properly trained?

Again, each time the answer reveals an unsafe condition, the investigator must ask **why** this situation was allowed to exist.

## Environment

The physical environment, and especially sudden changes to that environment, are factors that need to be identified. The situation at the time of the accident is what is important, not what the "usual" conditions were. For example, accident investigators may want to know:

- What were the weather conditions?
- Was poor housekeeping a problem?
- Was it too hot or too cold?
- Was noise a problem?
- Was there adequate light?
- Were toxic or hazardous gases, dusts, or fumes present?

## Personnel

The physical and mental condition of those individuals directly involved in the event must be explored. The purpose for investigating the accident is **not** to establish blame against someone but the inquiry will not be complete unless personal characteristics are considered. Some factors will remain essentially constant while others may vary from day to day:

- Were workers experienced in the work being done?
- Had they been adequately trained?
- Can they physically do the work?
- What was the status of their health?
- Were they tired?
- Were they under stress (work or personal)?

## Management

Management holds the legal responsibility for the safety of the workplace and therefore the role of supervisors and higher management and the role or presence of management systems must always be considered in an accident investigation. Failures of management systems are often found to be direct or indirect factors in accidents. Ask questions such as:

- Were safety rules communicated to and understood by all employees?
- Were written procedures and orientation available?
- Were they being enforced?
- Was there adequate supervision?
- Were workers trained to do the work?
- Had hazards been previously identified?
- Had procedures been developed to overcome them?
- Were unsafe conditions corrected?
- Was regular maintenance of equipment carried out?
- Were regular safety inspections carried out?

This model of accident investigations provides a guide for uncovering all possible causes and reduces the likelihood of looking at facts in isolation. Some investigators may prefer to place some of the sample questions in different categories; however, the categories are not important, as long as each pertinent question is asked. Obviously there is considerable overlap between categories; this reflects the situation in real life. Again it should be emphasized that the above sample questions do not make up a complete checklist, but are examples only.

### How are the facts collected?

The steps in accident investigation are simple: the accident investigators gather information, analyse it, draw conclusions, and make recommendations. Although the procedures are straightforward, each step can have its pitfalls. As mentioned above, an open mind is necessary in accident investigation: preconceived notions may result in some wrong paths being followed while leaving some significant facts uncovered. All possible causes should be considered. Making notes of ideas as they occur is a good practice but conclusions should not be drawn until all the information is gathered.

### Injured workers(s)

The most important immediate tasks--rescue operations, medical treatment of the injured, and prevention of further injuries--have priority and others must not interfere with these activities. When these matters are under control, the investigators can start their work.

### Physical Evidence

Before attempting to gather information, examine the site for a quick overview, take steps to preserve evidence, and identify all witnesses. In some jurisdictions, an accident site must not be disturbed without prior approval from appropriate government officials such as the coroner, inspector, or police. Physical evidence is probably the most non-controversial information available. It is also subject to rapid change or obliteration; therefore, it should be the first to be recorded. Based on your knowledge of the work process, you may want to check items such as:

- positions of injured workers
- equipment being used
- materials or chemicals being used
- safety devices in use
- position of appropriate guards
- position of controls of machinery
- damage to equipment
- housekeeping of area
- weather conditions
- lighting levels
- noise levels
- time of day

You may want to take photographs before anything is moved, both of the general area and specific items. Later careful study of these may reveal conditions or observations missed previously. Sketches of the accident scene based on measurements taken may also help in subsequent analysis and will clarify any written reports. Broken equipment, debris, and samples of materials involved may be removed for further analysis by appropriate experts. Even if photographs are taken, written notes about the location of these items at the accident scene should be prepared.

## Eyewitness Accounts

Although there may be occasions when you are unable to do so, every effort should be made to interview witnesses. In some situations witnesses may be your primary source of information because you may be called upon to investigate an accident without being able to examine the scene immediately after the event. Because witnesses may be under severe emotional stress or afraid to be completely open for fear of recrimination, interviewing witnesses is probably the hardest task facing an investigator.

Witnesses should be kept apart and interviewed as soon as possible after the accident. If witnesses have an opportunity to discuss the event among themselves, individual perceptions may be lost in the normal process of accepting a consensus view where doubt exists about the facts.

Witnesses should be interviewed alone, rather than in a group. You may decide to interview a witness at the scene of the accident where it is easier to establish the positions of each person involved and to obtain a description of the events. On the other hand, it may be preferable to carry out interviews in a quiet office where there will be fewer distractions. The decision may depend in part on the nature of the accident and the mental state of the witnesses.

## Interviewing

Interviewing is an art that cannot be given justice in a brief document such as this, but a few do's and don'ts can be mentioned. The purpose of the interview is to establish an understanding with the witness and to obtain his or her own words describing the event:

DO...

- Put the witness, who is probably upset, at ease
- emphasize the real reason for the investigation, to determine what happened and why
- let the witness talk, listen
- confirm that you have the statement correct
- try to sense any underlying feelings of the witness
- make short notes or ask someone else on the team to take them during the interview
- ask if it is okay to record the interview, if you are doing so
- close on a positive note

DO NOT...

- intimidate the witness
- interrupt
- prompt
- ask leading questions
- show your own emotions
- jump to conclusions

Ask open-ended questions that cannot be answered by simply "yes" or "no". The actual questions you ask the witness will naturally vary with each accident, but there are some general questions that should be asked each time:

- Where were you at the time of the accident?
- What were you doing at the time?
- What did you see, hear?
- What were the environmental conditions (weather, light, noise, etc.) at the time?
- What was (were) the injured worker(s) doing at the time?
- In your opinion, what caused the accident?
- How might similar accidents be prevented in the future?

If you were not at the scene at the time, asking questions is a straightforward approach to establishing what happened. Obviously, care must be taken to assess the credibility of any statements made in the interviews. Answers to a first few questions will generally show how well the witness could actually observe what happened.

Another technique sometimes used to determine the sequence of events is to re-enact or replay them as they happened. Obviously, great care must be taken so that further injury or damage does not occur. A witness (usually the injured worker) is asked to reenact in slow motion the actions that preceded the accident.

### Background Information

A third, and often an overlooked source of information, can be found in documents such as technical data sheets, health and safety committee minutes, inspection reports, company policies, maintenance reports, past accident reports, formalized safe-work procedures, and training reports. Any pertinent information should be

studied to see what might have happened, and what changes might be recommended to prevent recurrence of similar accidents.

### What should I know when making the analysis and conclusions?

At this stage of the investigation most of the facts about what happened and how it happened should be known. This has taken considerable effort to accomplish but it represents only the first half of the objective. Now comes the key question--why did it happen? To prevent recurrences of similar accidents, the investigators must find all possible answers to this question.
You have kept an open mind to all possibilities and looked for all pertinent facts. There may still be gaps in your understanding of the sequence of events that resulted in the accident. You may need to reinterview some witnesses to fill these gaps in your knowledge.

- When your analysis is complete, write down a step-by-step account of what happened (your conclusions) working back from the moment of the accident, listing all possible causes at each step. This is not extra work: it is a draft for part of the final report. Each conclusion should be checked to see if:
- it is supported by evidence
- the evidence is direct (physical or documentary) or based on eyewitness accounts, or
- the evidence is based on assumption.

This list serves as a final check on discrepancies that should be explained or eliminated.

### Why should recommendations be made?

The most important final step is to come up with a set of well-considered recommendations designed to prevent recurrences of similar accidents. Once you are knowledgeable about the work processes involved and the overall situation in your organization, it should not be too difficult to come up with realistic recommendations. Recommendations should:

- be specific
- be constructive
- get at root causes
- identify contributing factors

Resist the temptation to make only general recommendations to save time and effort.

For example, you have determined that a blind corner contributed to an accident. Rather than just recommending "eliminate blind corners" it would be better to suggest:

- install mirrors at the northwest corner of building X (specific to this accident)
- install mirrors at blind corners where required throughout the worksite (general)

**Never** make recommendations about disciplining a person or persons who may have been at fault. This would not only be counter to the real purpose of the investigation, but it would jeopardize the chances for a free flow of information in future accident investigations.

In the unlikely event that you have not been able to determine the causes of an accident with any certainty, you probably still have uncovered safety weaknesses in the operation. It is appropriate that recommendations be made to correct these deficiencies.

### The Written Report

If your organisation has a standard form that must be used, you will have little choice in the form that your written report is to be presented. Nevertheless, you should be aware of, and try to overcome, shortcomings such as:

- If a limited space is provided for an answer, the tendency will be to answer in that space despite recommendations to "use back of form if necessary."
- If a checklist of causes is included, possible causes not listed may be overlooked.
- Headings such as "unsafe condition" will usually elicit a single response even when more than one unsafe condition exists.
- Differentiating between "primary cause" and "contributing factors" can be misleading. All accident causes are important and warrant consideration for possible corrective action.
- Highlight the shortcomings and recommend using the standard HSE form.

Your previously prepared draft of the sequence of events can now be used to describe what happened. Remember that readers of your report do not have the intimate knowledge of the accident that you have so include all pertinent detail. Photographs and diagrams may save many words of description. Identify clearly where evidence is based on certain facts, eyewitness accounts, or your assumptions.

If doubt exists about any particular part, say so. The reasons for your conclusions should be stated and followed by your recommendations. Weed out extra material that is not required for a full understanding of the accident and its causes such as photographs that are not relevant and parts of the investigation that led you nowhere. The measure of a good accident report is quality, not quantity.

Always communicate your findings with workers, supervisors and management. Present your information 'in context' so everyone understands how the accident occurred and the actions in place to prevent it from happening again.

## What should be done if the investigation reveals human error

A difficulty that has bothered many investigators is the idea that one does not want to lay blame. However, when a thorough worksite accident investigation reveals that some person or persons among management, supervisor, and the workers were apparently at fault, then this fact should be pointed out. **The intention here is to remedy the situation, not to discipline an individual.**

Failing to point out human failings that contributed to an accident will not only downgrade the quality of the investigation. Furthermore, it will also allow future accidents to happen from similar causes because they have not been addressed.

However never make recommendations about disciplining anyone who may be at fault. Any disciplinary steps should be done within the normal personnel procedures.

## How should follow-up be handled?

Management is responsible for acting on the recommendations in the accident investigation report. The health and safety committee, if you have one, can monitor the progress of these actions.

Follow-up actions include:

- Respond to the recommendations in the report by explaining what can and cannot be done (and why or why not).
- Develop a timetable for corrective actions.
- Monitor that the scheduled actions have been completed.
- Check the condition of injured worker(s).
- Inform and train other workers at risk.
- Re-orient worker(s) on their return to work.

**ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION FORM**
*Ref: HSA001 - Accident/Incident Reporting and Investigation*

## Part A – The Injured Person

| | |
|---|---|
| **Accident reference number** *(H&S Team only)* | |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Name:** | **DOB:** |
| **Address:** | |
| | |

## Part B - Investigating Officer

| | |
|---|---|
| **Name:** | **Designation:** |
| **Address:** | |
| | |
| **E-mail:** | |
| **Post Code:** | **Telephone no:** |

## Part C - Information Gathering

| |
|---|
| **1. Where did the accident happen?** |
| **2. Who was injured or suffered ill-health?** |
| **3. What injuries or ill-health effects were caused?** |
| **4. How did the accident/incident happen?** *(Note working environment issues, layout, equipment and/or substances involved – did these influence the accident?)* |

**5. What activities/tasks were being carried out at the time of the accident?**

**6. Was there a risk assessment covering the activities/tasks being undertaken?**
*a) Provide copies of risk assessments and relevant safe systems of work/working procedure.*
*b) Detail any relevant safety equipment in use.*

**7. Was the injured person trained and competent to carry out activities?** *(Provide copies of training records)*

**8. In relation to the working environment and/or equipment involved, was maintenance and cleaning up to date?**

## Part D - Analysis and Further Action

**10. What were the immediate, underlying and root causes of the accident?**

**a) Immediate causes:**

**b) Underlying causes:**

**c) Root causes:**

| 11. What additional risk control measures are required to prevent recurrence? | |
|---|---|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| 4. | |
| 5. | |
| 12. Do similar risks exist elsewhere? | |
| Print Name: | |
| Signature: | Date: |

**Please send completed from to:** Health and Safety Team

**E- mail:**

---

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY (Health & Safety Team)**

| Date Received (stamp) | Data entry date | Data entry by (initial) |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

# Learning from Safety Failure

## Introduction

Although many businesses have made progress in getting to grips with risk assessment (looking forwards to anticipate and prevent harm before it occurs), many are still failing to gain maximum benefit from their approach to the investigation of accidents and incidents. Consequently, they are still failing to learn vital lessons, which could help them, improve their overall management of health and safety.

RoSPA, challenges all organisations to review their approach to accident and incident investigation. Here we discuss essential aspects of investigation and provide a ten point prompt list designed to help organisations identify ways in which they can improve their ability to learn from their safety failures.

## Some General Points

- Accidents are extremely costly in both human and financial terms but, if investigated correctly, they also represent highly valuable safety learning opportunities.
- Effective accident investigations can provide a 'window on reality' (providing a means of discovering what was really going on).
- All organisations need to develop a strong capability to 'dig deep' following accidents in order to develop a clear understanding of their immediate and underlying causes.
- Good investigations can provide unique opportunities for achieving learning and change in organisations. As well as yielding important lessons which can help prevent recurrence of accidents and incidents, investigation can be a powerful educational experience for those directly involved, for example, by improving understanding of health and safety management principles and embedding the resulting lessons in the corporate memory.
- The 'Woolf ' civil litigation reforms, require full and early disclosure of the facts following accidents (for the purpose of deciding compensation claims), have helped to remove some of the barriers to a full and open approach to learning from prevention failures. 1

## Essential steps

Although in practice they may be telescoped together, the essential steps involved in investigation can be described as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Step 1** | taking prompt emergency action (providing first aid, making things safe); |
| **Step 2** | prompt reporting within the organisation and to other agencies where necessary; |
| **Step 3** | securing the scene (preventing disturbance of vital evidence..); |
| **Step 4** | deciding on the level of investigation required (e.g. according to safety significance, learning potential etc) and establishing terms of reference and allocating responsibilities in the investigation process; |
| **Step 5** | gathering the evidence (establishing the facts by gathering physical evidence, conducting witness interviews, identifying documentation etc); |
| **Step 6** | analysing and integrating the evidence (putting the facts together); |
| **Step 7** | identifying gaps in the evidence (significant unknowns) and seeking further evidence and/or clarification (for example, by studying previous events that may be relevant); |
| **Step 8** | developing and testing hypotheses - what happened, how, why etc (again looking further evidence if necessary); |
| **Step 9** | generating conclusions and recommendations; and |
| **Step 10** | Communicating recommendations and tracking closure with stakeholders. |

## Barriers to learning from failure

Accidents and incidents often arouse powerful emotions, particularly where they have resulted in death or serious injury. On the positive side, this means everyone's attention can be focused on improving prevention. On the negative side however the same emotions can also cause organisations and individuals to become highly defensive. This is natural and understandable but needs to be addressed positively if a culture of openness and confidence is to be engendered to support a mature approach to learning from accidents and incidents.

All too often, in the wake of an accident, the tendency is to seek to attribute blame (frequently to blame the victim) rather than to search for root causes. Yet arguably, the most important thing to establish about accidents is not just how they happened but why they were not prevented. Because ultimately everyone at work has some degree of responsibility for health and safety, a totally "blame free" approach may not be realistic. Nevertheless, organisations should endeavour to create fair and just

cultures in which individuals are not blamed for organisational safety failures over which they have had no control.

Being able to learn from accidents and incidents presupposes that organisations have already got a health and safety management system in place, for example, along the lines suggested by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in their guidance "Successful Health and Safety Management" HSG65. Unless they approach OS&H systematically, their approach to investigation is likely to be cursory and superficial - leading to narrow, technically focused "quick fixes" rather than seeking a better understanding of underlying causes which could enable them to make "root and branch" changes in management systems.

In RoSPA's view, some of the major pitfalls in accident and incident investigation include:

- No reporting of accidents and near misses (often due to employee fear of consequences)
- No investigation at all (coupled with massive under-reporting to enforcing authorities)
- No clear procedures for investigation (and/or no managerial involvement)
- No workforce involvement (trades union safety representatives have a legal right to investigate accidents)
- No scaling of the level of investigation (everything investigated in the same way rather than matching investigation effort to safety significance or learning potential)
- Failure to gather all the relevant facts (particularly as a result of inadequate approaches to witness interview)
- No use of structured methods to integrate evidence
- Distortions in evidence gathering and analysis due to uncritical biases
- Concluding the investigation too early (not going far enough)
- Simply focusing on the errors of individuals
- No search for "root causes"
- In that context, no examination of safety management system failures
- Failure to think outside conventional rules and operating systems
- Poor communication of lessons learned
- Failure to secure closure on resulting recommendations.

## Team-based investigation

Research carried out for RoSPA has confirmed that a 'team approach' to learning from accidents, involving employees, including safety representatives (where they have been appointed), can be extremely powerful, particularly if it is led by senior managers and supported by OS&H professionals acting as facilitators.

### Team-based investigation

Research carried out for RoSPA has confirmed that a 'team approach' to learning from accidents, involving employees, including safety representatives (where they have been appointed), can be extremely powerful, particularly if it is led by senior managers and supported by OS&H professionals acting as facilitators.

- promote learning about how to investigate in general (i.e. not just H&S failures);
- create workforce 'champions' for OS&H, particularly informal support for closure on recommendations; and it can
- provide a check of safety management standards (acting as a complement to formal audit of management systems).

Team-based investigation works best where organisations have clear and well used 'near miss' procedures. Daily, informal investigation of lower risk safety issues and problems is important in creating a positive climate for more structured investigation when major safety failures occur.

**Check out your organisation's approach to accident investigation!** Ten Point Prompt List

### Looking Ahead

Accident investigation has been a RoSPA Occupational Safety ‘key issue’ since 1997 in pursuit of its mission '...to save lives and reduce injuries'

RoSPA believes that refocusing attention on accident investigation will provide a further stimulus for organisations to improve their approach to organisational learning about health and safety generally.

Some of the challenges include:

- providing training for senior managers to help them to develop a much richer understanding of accidents as complex multi-factorial events and to avoid over-simple explanations such as 'operator error';
- improving training for employees and others involved in investigation work, for example, training in essential investigation skills such as witness interview techniques and using structured methods . (Many of these skills are transferable beyond accident investigation into other areas such as investigating failures in quality, environment and business management failures generally.);
- improving access to necessary support services such as photography (particularly digital photography which can be quickly networked) to help capture accident scene data;
- encouraging insurers to improve support services to their clients so they can learn lessons from accidents and incidents, focusing on their shared, long term goal of improving standards of OS&H management; and
- finding new ways to help small firms to learn from the accident experiences of other similar businesses, for example, through web-based case studies.

Internet. This is more appropriate for larger businesses and do require the user to translate documents prepared with a particular corporate audience in mind. For many users, the value of the materials far outweighs the encumbrance of unusual phraseology and DOE specific instructions.

### Resources:

- Modern accident investigation and analysis By Ted S. Ferry 1988
- HSE 'Successful Health and Safety Management' (HSG65). (Provides a general discussion of accident investigation). Free to download
- HSE 'Investigating accidents and incidents - a workbook for employers, unions, safety representatives and safety professionals' (HSE Ref. HSG245). Free to download
- Human factors in accident investigations – HSE Website
- Video / DVD Accident and Incident Investigation. Pub. Training Video Associates
- Video / DVD So It Won't Happen Again. Pub. National Film Board of Canada (distrib. Educational Media International)

### Regulatory requirements for accident investigation

There are specific requirements for investigation in the following regulations:

- Gas Safety (Management) Regulations 1996
- The Railways (Safety Case) Regulations 1994
- The Ionising Radiations Regulations 1985
- Control of Major Hazard regulations (COMAH)
    - Investigation reports
- The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977

## References:

**1.** *Access to Justice: Final report* by the Right Honourable Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls July 1996

Source: - http://www.rospa.com/occupationalsafety/adviceandinformation/learningfromsafetyfailure, Date Created: 2002 / Date Updated: 09/01/2012 / Author: RB/CH

**ACTIVITY 37: Fatality case study**

# Mr. George Galloway's (MP. Glasgow, Kelvin) speech to the House of Commons: 3rd of March 1999

Extract from Hansard[1]

The Under-Secretary, my hon. Friend the Member for Mansfield (Mr. Meale), and I go back a long way. We share a strong commitment to health and safety at work and a sense of horror at some of the casualties that have been inflicted by careless or negligent employers on the battlefield which so much of the British industrial landscape has become. Almost 20 years of attrition against trade unions and the rights of workers to refuse hazardous employment conditions, and deregulation posing as a bonfire of red tape, have, in reality, represented the burning down of standards that responsible government and representative trade unionism took the best part of a century to construct.

I applied for this debate after reading the award- winning journalist, Seamus Milne, in *The Guardian,* and later in the "Big Issue", on the manslaughter of Simon Jones, a 24-year-old man who was killed on 24 April 1998 on his first day as a casual worker at a privately owned wharf at Shoreham docks. However, Simon was no dock worker. Driven by the jobseeker's allowance scheme, he was sent to his death by a company called Personnel Selection. This company undoubtedly failed in its statutory duty to ensure its client's suitability for the job to which it was sending him and to provide the written terms and conditions of the job.

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The company sent him to the docks and into the hands of a cowboy company called EUROMIN, of ultimately Dutch ownership--and with a low reputation even in the jungle that is the deregulated dock industry, 10 years after the abolition of the dock labour scheme, for whose retention some of us--my hon. Friend the Under- Secretary and I included--fought tooth and nail in this place. We warned then that casualisation kills. Simon Jones is just one of the mute witnesses to that truth.

Simon was taking a year off from Sussex university when he was killed. He died, almost decapitated by the grab of a crane, only two hours after starting work, and after only a two-minute briefing on what the job entailed. That two minutes was meant to equip him with the skills of a stevedore, one of Britain's five most dangerous occupations.

The reality in some of Britain's docks, illuminated by the case of Simon Jones, is like a still from Elia Kazan's epic film "On the Waterfront". Simon was put to work in the hold of a ship called the Cambrook, hooking bags of cobbles on to chains which had been welded to the inside of the crane's open grab. There was no need for a grab for that sort of cargo and the chains should have been attached to a hook instead. However, changing back and forth between hook and grab costs time and money.

With Simon and his workmate, Sean Currey, was just one crew member, a Pole who spoke no English, yet he was acting as banksman, guiding the crane driver. The banksman is supposed to communicate with the driver and monitor what is happening in the hold. Not only did the banksman not speak English, but even his hand signals were foreign to the crane driver. Moreover, from where he was standing he could not even see into the hold.

The grab and chains were brought in too low over the hold and the grab was accidentally closed on Mr. Jones's head. Only the chains prevented it shutting completely.

Sean Currey, who had nightmares for months afterwards, was asked later to clean the blood and remains of Simon off the bags of stones so that they could be sold. He was sent home for the day without pay for refusing to do so.

The general manager of EUROMIN, James Martell, was arrested by the police after the accident but released without charge. Last month, the Crown Prosecution Service decided not to charge EUROMIN or Martell with manslaughter because of insufficient evidence. Under pressure from Simon's family and their admirable campaign, the CPS is reviewing that decision and a final ruling is expected this week.

I have to tell the House that, according to Sean Currey, Mr. Martell--who is, in legal terms, undoubtedly the controlling mind of this company's UK activities--laughed out loud when told that he could face prosecution. Martell, who has not so much as sent two lines of condolences to his victim's family, has the blood of Simon Jones on his hands. Martell's contempt for the laws of health and safety in this country, his greed and hunger for profit and his negligence and carelessness slaughtered a young man just as clearly as if he had pushed him off the dock with his own hands.

In a way, Martell was right to laugh, because the chances of his ever being properly held to account were and are laughably small. Life is cheap on the British waterfront and in many of the privatised and deregulated sweatshops of which the previous Government boasted. That is the true legacy of the Thatcher era.

The average fine levied upon employers following fatal industrial accidents is less than £2,000. Unbelievably, it is cheaper to be fined for having caused the death of an employee than to take the necessary precautions for the avoidance of that death. As my right hon. Friend the Minister for the Environment said on the BBC last year:

> "I am absolutely outraged at penalties that perhaps are as little as £2,500, which I believe are derisory and insulting when awarded in the case of death or serious injury".

The whole House will welcome the Government's massive increase of 17 per cent. in expenditure on the Health and Safety Executive, which will produce an extra £4.5 million this year. However, as my right hon. Friend the Minister for the Environment said at the time:

> "I would be the first to say I think these significant increases are not enough."

The Government themselves admit that the money that we plan to spend on health and safety enforcement is not enough and that fines levied upon killer companies are often derisory and insulting. The question that needs to be asked and answered therefore is what more we can do and when we will be able to do it.

According to Gary Slapper, law director of the Open university, official figures for deaths at work massively underestimate the real number. Dr. Slapper argues that about 20 per cent. of such deaths present good prima facie cases for charges of manslaughter against the employers responsible, but such charges are rarely brought. Twenty per cent. would translate into about 90 prosecutions a year--that is two every working week. That contrasts with the actual rate of two prosecutions every 30 years.

The new offence of corporate killing, on which the Government are consulting, would be a step forward in cases where criminal negligence by employers causes deaths at work. It would allow companies to be fined at a much higher level than that allowed for breaching existing health and safety law. However, I believe that even high fines are not a sufficient deterrent for many rogue employers. Some would merely put their companies into liquidation rather than pay the fines. For others, even high fines would represent a scintilla of the high profits generated in part by the reckless cutting of corners.

I believe that only the imprisonment of directors of companies found to be responsible for such negligence would have a deterrent effect. After all, people are not fined for committing manslaughter outside the work place; they go to prison, sometimes for several years. As Professor Charles Woolfson from Glasgow university in my constituency put it, "When one goes down, the others sit up."

On the basis of an exhaustive three-year study, Dr. Slapper believes that many more charges of manslaughter could be brought, even under existing legislation, were it not for the fact that the prosecuting authorities are more lenient towards those engaged in business.

The Stephen Lawrence campaign has been a real inspiration to those campaigning in the memory of Simon Jones. Although in the five long years of the Lawrence campaign Stephen's family have failed to obtain justice for their dead son, they have exposed the truth about institutional racism to everyone. The Simon Jones campaign hopes to be equally successful in ensuring that the truth about casualisation--that it is killing people for profits--is equally widely understood.

The Thatcher era proved to be a killing field for innocent victims of corporate failure, from Occidental's towering inferno of Piper Alpha, in which 160 workers perished, through the King's Cross fire, the Clapham and Putney

rails disasters, the sinking of the Marchioness and the loss of the Herald of Free Enterprise in the Zeebrugge disaster. Altogether over the past few years there have been more than 500 fatalities in major incidents and more than seven times as many individual deaths. In virtually all of those, management failure was deemed to be a central cause of the incident.

A study of 739 deaths in the building and civil engineering industries during just four years from 1981 to 1985--the depths of Thatcherism--concluded that, in 70 per cent. of cases, positive action by management could have saved lives. Studying a range of industries in the early 1990s, the HSE concluded that management was primarily responsible in 54 per cent. of cases, and that, in 70 per cent. of cases,

> "positive management action could have saved lives".

Most deaths through industrial negligence go virtually unreported. However, involvement with the Simon Jones campaign has shown me that such incidents not only destroy the lives of the victims, but tear apart the lives of their families and friends.

For some reason, workers in Scotland are a third more likely to die in workplace accidents than workers in the rest of the United Kingdom. In 1996-97, almost 30 Scottish workers died at work and another 12,000 were injured, more than 2,000 of them seriously. Last October, there was the case of Raymond Stevenson, a 28-year-old father of two who was overcome by toxic fumes and fell into a sludge pit that he had been ordered to empty. Paisley sheriff court levied pitifully small fines on the

contractor and the site operator. The fatal accident inquiry report noted that safety issues

> "were matters of little or no importance to senior management".

In 1997, Alan Dale, a 30-year-old married man, died of suffocation, buried alive at the bottom of a 29 ft deep bin containing concrete dust that he had been ordered to remove. The sheriff at the fatal accident inquiry, at Glasgow sheriff court, said that the tragedy could have been avoided if suitable rescue equipment had been available on site. The company was fined £1,000. Last year, John Curry, aged 37, was crushed to death when a tool rack fell on him, on Shell's Tern platform in the North sea. The company was fined £3,000.

William Veetch, a father of three in Cumnock, Ayrshire, died after being pulled into the rotating drum of a huge washing machine for washing coal. The company was fined £1,500.

One of Mr. Veetch's sons said:

> "I just cannot believe my Dad's life is worth just £1,500."

None of that should be construed as an attack on the Health and Safety Executive. For years, it struggled to civilise Britain's industrial landscape, while starved of the necessary resources and operating in an atmosphere of thinly disguised hostility from Tory Governments who saw the executive's activities as just another burden on business. Now, that atmosphere has been dispelled by the Labour Government and a substantial increase in funding is forthcoming. I hope, however, that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary will agree that far more has to be done.

The HSE has a target of investigating one in five serious accidents in the workplace. I do not understand why its target should not be to investigate every serious accident in the workplace. Currently, however, the HSE is able to investigate only one in 20 serious accidents at work--only 5 per cent. of accidents that often involve the maiming, crippling or blinding of employees, and almost all of which mean that the victim will never work again. Thus, because of current investigation levels, more than 48,000 serious accidents every year go uninvestigated.

The Government should propose a clear timetable for progress in meeting the HSE target of investigating 20 per cent. of serious accidents in the workplace, and be ready to fund the level of inspectorate that meeting that target would require. The Government should reconsider the appallingly low level of fines levied in cases of serious accidents under current safety law, and speed the day when the new offence of corporate killing is added to the armoury of the law.

Since 1998 when Simon Jones was killed over 4,000 people have died as a result of workplace activity. Whilst unconfirmed it is believed close to one million have died from illness related to workplace activity

**ACTIVITY 38: - Gristle and Bone**

Day: Tuesday
Date: 17th February 2009
Time: 09.15
Place: Gristle & Bone Engineering
Wallsend
Tyne and Wear

OUTLINE: Two trainees, both 17 years of age, are working un-supervised with a small firm. They have been told by a supervisor to clean a large piece of old production machinery, containing heavy steel rollers, which have become contaminated with oil.

To carry out the job they have been provided with what is believed to be paraffin in an unmarked container and waste rags. They have also been supplied with absorbent cotton overalls but no other Personal Protection equipment.

The work involves reaching to a height (not working at height) to clean the rollers.

During the course of this activity their overalls become soaked with a mix of the oil and paraffin.

It is a cold day and during their break they go and stand in a nearby rest area next to a portable gas stove. The stove had been donated by another employee two years earlier after several members of the workforce

complained of the cold in rest area.


The paraffin on the overalls of one of the trainees vaporises and his clothing bursts into flame. He tries to beat the flames out with his hands, but quickly becomes engulfed.

The other trainee runs off to try and find a fire extinguisher, he cannot locate one. Several other employees roll the burning trainee on the floor and extinguish the flames. The fire brigade are not called nor are the Police. The injured trainee has suffered 2nd and 3 rd degree burns and is removed to hospital in a taxi called by the security officer.

You have attended the scene and now need to consider your next steps. You may wish to conduct this exercise in a separate note book. You should be working through and the exercise in pairs, discussing each part as a team, not separately dividing the work.

Information can be obtained from course reference books and the internet.

## ACTIVITY 40: - Research Skills

**How to get started**

When you are looking into an area to research, you do not have to start with a 'problem'. All you need is a general idea that something may be explored or improved.

Your general idea may stem from:

- A desire to know more about a topic
- A general idea that something could be further explored
- A promising new idea
- An existing idea that you feel may be built on or improved
- Looking to improve the current situation

Whatever the issue, topic or idea, you must focus your attention on:

- What is happening now?
- In what sense does this require further investigation?
- What can I do about it?

To get you thinking about how you will approach your research, you could consider some of the following general starting points:

- I would like to know more about….
- I would like to improve…
- I am puzzled by…
- I an unhappy about…
- I have an idea I would like to try out…
- I would like to see what….really do
- I would like to find out about what…. .feel about ….
- I would like to know the practical implications of….
- I would like to explore the use of…

**Remember….**

- **Don't tackle too large a subject area**

– if you have something that is too big for one person, work as a group and divide up the topic into sub-topics and allocate specific areas of research to each group member

- **Spend time calculating the scale of your topic**

- it is very easy to underestimate the scale and amount of time a research project will take

- **Choose a topic that is interesting and important to you**

- if the topic is something that interests you or is something that you are involved with anyway, your commitment to completing your research will be enhanced

- **Be open to information**

- research should be a genuine, open investigation – you should not be setting out simply to 'prove' pr confirm your prejudices

## Planning

The following are very important questions to think about very carefully while you are planning your investigation:

- What information will I need?
- How will I gather that information?
- What will I do with the information?

## Finding Information

Information comes in a variety of forms, places and details. Some is more useful than others, but what we choose and where we choose to look is often dependent on the way we want to use that information, our own experience and what we have available.

Knowing where to look is half the battle.

For example:

If you wanted to find out about information in local business initiatives, you might go and look in the Business section of the Times or another newspaper. It would take you

a long time to wade through likely issues in the paper and you are as likely to miss it what you're looking for as you are to find it using this method.

However, if you use the business section of the local library you will find relevant books on the subject very quickly. You might then supplement that information with newspaper articles in order to update the theoretical information with practical examples from the business world.

In addition, the librarian will be able to advise you on how to trace relevant newspaper articles quickly using indexes to the professional press.

**Libraries**

Information officers or librarians are highly trained and specialised people who keep information in a systematic way and then help you search for the information you want.

**Investigation**

Knowing what information, you require and where to find it is very important. The words:

- Why
- Where
- What **and**
- How

Are essential whenever you need to investigate something. Being an 'investigator' is a key element of research. By looking in more detail at each word, you will enhance your investigative powers.

## Sources of Information

### Components

We have already a variety of sources of information. These are sources of information which are used by most people in daily life. It is important to recognise that all such sources of information are legitimate when doing research.

However, there are 2 components to each source. The first is **reliability** and the second is the **nature of the material**, which will affect where it is stored and how accessible it is. Reliable information is that which is considered to be:

- Well informed
- Unbiased

**and above all,**

- Available for checking and confirmation

Sometimes you may use unreliable sources which are founded on conjecture, anecdotal experiences and unfounded claims. Be careful always to check your sources and especially use your own skills to ask such questions as

- How do they know?
- What is the basis?
- What is the evidence?

## Types of information

### Categories

Information with which we are all familiar may be categorised in the following way:

- **Very general information –** often an article in a magazine, an easy to read summary giving an overview of the subject
- **Very technical and specific –** highly detailed information with numerous references to other texts, often difficult to read in one sitting
- **Reference material in a library –** (i.e. cannot be borrowed) with numerous figures and values of which only a few are useful

### Types

There are 2 types of information which can be identified:

- **Primary information** – also called original source material. This is original data. Primary sources of information are at the first stage of the information cycle, they are the place where new information first appears (i.e. they constitute the generation of information). Primary information will be a direct report of work or investigations which have been carried out – written by the individual or people who did the work.

- **Secondary information** – this is the next stage of the information cycle. This kind of information is usually using primary information as its basis and either commenting on the original data, re-interpreting the original hypothesis or both.

## Reliable information

The problem with using any information is that you need to make a judgement about how reliable it is. Generally primary information is more reliable than secondary.

Can we accept just what we read?

A poll quoted in a newspaper should be primary information. But even these will have some bias introduced. Think about how the data was collected in the first place – who paid for the report – what information was included and what was left out?

Always read reports with an open and questioning mind. Think about the:

- The method used to collect the data
- Number of items collected
- Type of data collected
- Way the data was interpreted and why.

Using primary data may be very important to you because it allows you to make your own mind up about the:

- Validity
- Reliability
- Accuracy

## Different Types of Libraries

- **Public Libraries** – in particular the central or main public library. These offer a wide range of general information as well as some specialist information (such as commercial and technical) and a wide range of reference materials. You can telephone central libraries and they will answer reasonably quick enquiries over the telephone.
- **Branch Libraries** – your local library. These tend to have less stock and less specialist information but still have professional librarians who can advise you on

possible sources of information and may well be more likely to have local information and community information.

- **Colleges and University Libraries**. These offer support to the courses and research of the institution. This information will generally therefore be focused and of a particular academic level. You may be able to gain access to such libraries depending on their access policy.
- **Specialist Libraries** which are set up by associations (such as government departments, private companies or special interest groups) who want very subject-specific and technical information. Although these are often 'private' libraries, increasingly they are offering public access via the Internet.
- **The Internet**. The Internet is a network of computers connected to each other through the telephone system. There is a vast amount of information available via the Internet – some held in 'libraries' some held on individual web sites. Most sites allow free access to information, some require a subscription fee.

### Using the Library

Libraries are no longer quiet, formal settings – they are very much hives of activity. They have different sections for:

- Listening and viewing videos/DVDs
- Computing
- Using the catalogue
- Discussions with library staff
- Quiet work
- Group work
- Reprographics
- Reading newspapers
- Accessing archive newspapers

## Research using the internet

### Planning

Some points to consider:

- What kind of information do you need?

- How are you going to find this information? (i.e. if you are using Internet search engines, what keywords are you going to use?)
- How much time are you going to spend researching? (i.e. you could go on forever finding information, but you shouldn't. What would be a reasonable time frame for finding the information you need?)
- How are you going to evaluate your information? (i.e. when you are finished your research, it is always useful to reflect on the process. What things worked, what things didn't, what would you do next time?).

## Looking for Resources

Finding resources on the Internet can be like looking for a needle in a haystack. There are millions of documents on the Internet, published by specialists, scientists, teachers and students. Some of them will be useful for your research project, the trick is in finding them! Luckily there is an array of research tools you can use to locate the information you want.

## Directories

One of the easiest and safest methods of researching for relevant resources is by using Directories that have already been vetted by other organisations. Directories are collections of resources organised into categories. Sometimes the directory will focus on one subject area, others may collect and organise resources in a number of areas.

Out on the World Wide Web are other directories such as the WWW Virtual Library and Yahoo.

## Search engines – What are they and how do they work?

The internet is not like your library, with its shelves of well organised books. Simply browsing the internet is unlikely to find you the information you need, so in order to find the resources you want for your research project, you will need, at some point, to use a search engine.

Behind the scenes search engines compile databases of web pages which allow users to search the internet for specific resources, by doing what is termed a keyword search. When a user types in a search request such as "Egypt", the search engine already knows where all the pages including "Egypt" are located. The search engines use "bots" or "spiders" which prowl the internet collecting pages, but depending on the search engine, the databases of pages may be more or less up-to-date.

## Planning a search

When you are using a search engine it's important to clearly define your keywords. You need to be specific rather than general, because there is so much information out there, that a general search may return you hundreds of thousands of hits. In order to avoid being overloaded with information, think carefully about what you are searching for. For example, a search on Alta Vista for the word "cat" returned 500,000 hits! But a search for "cat health" returned only 200 hits, still a large number, but much more useful.

Before you start your search think about what you are looking for and do some preliminary work with a pen and paper. Think of all the possible terms you might use for your subject. Think of any differences there may be in terminology from country to country. For example, in the UK we talk about primary schools, in the US the term is elementary school. So, a search for "primary school" might not find you information about American schools. Of course, this might be an advantage if you were only looking for information about the UK.

Each search engine uses a slightly different language to help you with your searches, so it is worth the time it takes to read the search guides each engine provides. There are many different search engines, Google is probably the most widely used and the least cluttered. Google is able to search for images and groups also.

## Ask the Experts

One of the best things about the net is the access it gives you to experts in just about any field you might be interested in. From aeroplanes to xylophones, you can be sure that someone out there knows all about it and is willing to share their knowledge with you.

## Evaluating Resources

Finding the information, you want on the Internet is only the first step. There is a lot of material available, but not all of it is equally reliable and useful. Before you use any material, you have found, you need to spend some time evaluating it for accuracy and importance. Use the following questions as a guide, but also use your own experience and skills to make a decision. .

*Ask yourself:*

**Who put this information here?**
The source of the material might give you a clue to its reliability. A site maintained by a university or government organisation might be more reliable than a single person.

**How old is the material?**
Sometimes the age of information matters. If you need current statistics then check the age of the material you have found.

**Who wrote the information? What is their status? Is it reliable?**
Material provided by a known expert in the field or by a recognised institution is likely to be reliable. But just because you have never heard of the author it doesn't mean that the information is inaccurate or unreliable. Don't take it at face value. Do some cross-checking.

**Why is this material here?**
Who put the material on the Internet and why? Many special interest groups have web pages, and while this doesn't necessarily mean the material is biased it is something you need to think about.

**Cross-check**
Look at another site with similar material, look at book on the subject. Use your experience as well. If you have already done some research in the area you will already have some knowledge of the subject. How does this material fit in with what you already know?

**Site design**
How an Internet resource is designed may have a lot of influence on how you use it. A site which is always too busy to access, too slow to download or too difficult to navigate may not be worth your valuable time, no matter how useful and relevant the information is.

## People as a resource

People are an excellent information resource waiting to be 'tapped into'. In order to obtain information from people you could:

- Interview them – individually or as a group
- Survey them – using questionnaires
- Invite them to contribute information through an open letter etc.

# Resources

## Legislation resources & Guidance

HSE: - Health and safety statistics

https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/

**HSE: - Health and safety at work Summary statistics for Great Britain 2020**

**https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/overall/hssh1920.pdf**

**TUC**

https://www.tuc.org.uk/

**Unite the Union**

https://unitetheunion.org/