This is a free-to-download, web-friendly version of HSG268 (published 2014). You can order a printed version at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg268.htm or visit the website at www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox.

Packed with sound advice to put you on the right track, The health and safety toolbox: How to control risks at work covers the most common workplace hazards. It shows how most small to medium-sized businesses can put measures into place to control the risks.

The book is easy to use and will help you comply with the law and prevent workplace accidents and ill health. It’s great value for those starting up or running a small business, or those who have been appointed as a safety representative in a larger organisation, or want additional advice on how to control workplace hazards. Whatever line of work you’re in, it will help you run a safe and healthy workplace.

It replaces HSE’s most popular guidance book Essentials of health and safety at work and builds on that title’s success by including:

- case studies showing how accidents and cases of ill health have occurred, with helpful tips on how to avoid similar things happening in the future;
- simplified advice on key duties to make it easier for you to comply with the law and run your business;
- helpful lists of ‘dos and don’ts’ for key hazards which summarise the actions you need to take;
- updates on legal changes;
- detailed lists of useful websites and sources of advice.
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Introduction

Why use this book?

In general, health and safety laws apply to all businesses, no matter how small. As an employer, or a self-employed person, you are responsible for health and safety in your business. You need to take the right precautions to reduce the risks of workplace dangers and provide a safe working environment.

Health and safety management should be a straightforward part of managing your workplace as a whole. It involves practical steps that protect people from harm and at the same time protect the future success and the growth of your business. Good practice in health and safety makes sound business sense.

This book explains what the law requires and helps you put it into practice.

What are the main causes of ill health and accidents at work?

Each year people are killed at work and many are injured or suffer ill health. The most common causes of serious injury at work are slips and trips and falls from height. There are health conditions that can be caused or made worse by work and working environments, including cancer, asthma, skin complaints, stress and musculoskeletal disorders such as back pain.

The law and guidance

The main law governing health and safety at work in the United Kingdom is the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSW Act). This places general duties on you to do what is ‘reasonably practicable’ (see page 12) to ensure health and safety.

Other regulations supporting the HSW Act set out more detailed legal duties for specific activities or industries. The relevant regulations are set out in ‘The law’ sections in each chapter.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has produced publications to help you understand what the duties mean in practice (http://books.hse.gov.uk).

Information about useful publications and websites is given in ‘Find out more’ sections throughout the book.
How to use this book

This book is easy to use and will help you comply with the law and prevent workplace accidents and ill health.

It is aimed at those starting up or running a small to medium-sized business, those who have been appointed as a safety representative in a larger organisation, employees and those who want additional advice on how to control workplace hazards. Whatever line of work you’re in, it will help you run a safe and healthy workplace.

Chapter 1 suggests how you can tackle the basics of health and safety. It shows how you can identify, assess and control the activities that might cause harm in your business.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 cover issues to consider when looking at how you operate your business and things you need to take account of regarding your workers’ health and safety.

Chapters 5 to 19 are for anyone who needs to know more about tackling a particular hazard. They tell you what you need to do to work safely, as well as which laws apply. The Contents pages (3–5) will help you find the topics most relevant to you, including electricity, gas, harmful substances etc.

Looking at your workplace in the way this book suggests will help you and your workers stay safe and healthy. It will also go a long way to satisfying the law – including the risk assessment that you must do under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
1 How to manage health and safety

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

This chapter provides information on what you need to consider when managing health and safety and assessing the risks in your workplace. It shows how you can follow a ‘Plan, Do, Check, Act’ approach.

### PLAN

Describe how you manage health and safety in your business (your legally required policy) and plan to make it happen in practice.

### DO

Prioritise and control your risks – consult your employees and provide training and information.

### CHECK

Measure how you are doing.

### ACT

Learn from your experience.

**Planning for health and safety**

Planning is the key to ensuring your health and safety arrangements really work. It helps you think through the actions you have set out in your policy and work out how they will happen in practice. Consider:

- what you want to achieve, eg how you will ensure that your employees and others are kept healthy and safe at work;
- how you will decide what might cause harm to people and whether you are doing enough or need to do more to prevent that harm;
- how you will prioritise the improvements you may need to make;
- who will be responsible for health and safety tasks, what they should do, when and with what results;
- how you will measure and review whether you have achieved what you set out to do.
The law

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 you have to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable (see page 12), the health and safety of yourself and others who may be affected by what you do or do not do. It applies to all work activities and premises and everyone at work has responsibilities under it, including the self-employed.

Employees must take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions at work. They must also co-operate with employers and co-workers to help everyone meet their legal requirements.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 also apply to every work activity and workplace and require all risks to be assessed and, where necessary, controlled.

Find out more

If you want more information to help you put suitable arrangements in place to manage health and safety, see www.hse.gov.uk/managing.

Writing a health and safety policy

Your business must have a health and safety policy, and if you have five or more employees, that policy must be written down.

Most businesses set out their policy in three sections:

- **The statement of general policy on health and safety at work** sets out your commitment to managing health and safety effectively, and what you want to achieve.
- **The responsibility section** sets out who is responsible for specific actions.
- **The arrangements section** contains the detail of what you are going to do in practice to achieve the aims set out in your statement of health and safety policy.

To help you structure your policy, there is an example and an interactive template on the HSE website (www.hse.gov.uk/risk).

The arrangements section should say how you will meet the commitments you have made in your statement of health and safety policy. Include information on how you are going to eliminate or reduce the risks of hazards in your workplace.

What do we mean by 'hazard' and 'risk'?

A **hazard** is something in your business that could cause harm to people, such as chemicals, electricity and working at height. A **risk** is the chance – however large or small – that a hazard could cause harm.
Additional arrangements

The additional actions you take to manage health and safety should be set out in the arrangements section of your policy. They could include:

- staff training;
- using signs to highlight risks;
- improved safety equipment such as guards or additional personal protective equipment including goggles, safety boots or high-visibility clothing;
- replacing hazardous chemicals with less harmful alternatives;
- improved lighting;
- anti-slip flooring.

Focus your attention on the activities that could present a risk to people or cause serious harm.

Controlling the risks

As part of managing the health and safety of your business, you must control the risks in your workplace. To do this you need to think about what might cause harm to people and decide whether you are doing enough to prevent that.

This process is known as risk assessment and it is something you are required by law to carry out. If you have fewer than five employees you don’t have to write anything down.

Risk assessment is about identifying and taking sensible and proportionate measures to control the risks in your workplace, not about creating huge amounts of paperwork.

You are probably already taking steps to protect your employees, but your risk assessment will help you decide whether you should be doing more.

Think about how accidents and ill health could happen and concentrate on real risks – those that are most likely and which will cause the most harm.

For some risks, other regulations require particular control measures. Your assessment can help you identify where you need to look at certain risks and these particular control measures in more detail.

These control measures do not have to be assessed separately but can be considered as part of, or an extension of, your overall risk assessment.
Identify the hazards

One of the most important aspects of your risk assessment is accurately identifying the potential hazards in your workplace.

A good starting point is to walk around your workplace and think about any hazards. In other words, what is it about the activities, processes or substances used that could injure your employees or harm their health?

When you work in a place every day it is easy to overlook some hazards, so here are some tips to help you identify the ones that matter:

- **Check manufacturers’ instructions** or data sheets for chemicals and equipment as they can be very helpful in explaining the hazards and putting them in their true perspective.
- **Look back at your accident and ill-health records** – these often help to identify the less obvious hazards.
- **Take account of non-routine operations** (eg maintenance, cleaning operations or changes in production cycles).
- **Remember to think about long-term hazards to health** (eg high levels of noise or exposure to harmful substances).

There are some hazards with a recognised risk of harm, for example working at height, working with chemicals, machinery, and asbestos. Depending on the type of work you do, there may be other hazards that are relevant to your business.

Who might be harmed?

Then think how employees (or others who may be present such as contractors or visitors) might be harmed. Ask your employees what they think the hazards are, as they may notice things that are not obvious to you and may have some good ideas on how to control the risks.

For each hazard you need to be clear about who might be harmed – it will help you identify the best way of controlling the risk. That doesn’t mean listing everyone by name, but rather identifying groups of people (eg ‘people working in the storeroom’ or ‘passers-by’). Remember:

- Some workers may have particular requirements, for example new and young workers, migrant workers, new or expectant mothers, people with disabilities, temporary workers, contractors, homeworkers and lone workers (see Chapter 3).
- Think about people who might not be in the workplace all the time, such as visitors, contractors and maintenance workers.
- Take members of the public into account if they could be harmed by your work activities.
- If you share a workplace with another business, consider how your work affects others and how their work affects you and your workers. Talk to each other and make sure controls are in place.
- Ask your workers if there is anyone you may have missed.
**Evaluate the risks**

Having identified the hazards, you then have to decide how likely it is that harm will occur, ie the level of risk and what to do about it.

Risk is a part of everyday life and you are not expected to eliminate all risks. What you must do is make sure you know about the main risks and the things you need to do to manage them responsibly. Generally, you need to do everything ‘reasonably practicable’ to protect people from harm.

**What does ‘so far as reasonably practicable’ mean?**

This means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the real risk in terms of money, time or trouble. However, you do not need to take action if it would be grossly disproportionate to the level of risk.

Your risk assessment should only include what you could reasonably be expected to know – you are not expected to anticipate unforeseeable risks. Look at what you’re already doing and the control measures you already have in place. Ask yourself:

- Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?
- If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

Some practical steps you could take include:

- trying a less risky option;
- preventing access to the hazards;
- organising your work to reduce exposure to the hazard;
- issuing protective equipment;
- providing welfare facilities such as first-aid and washing facilities;
- involving and consulting with workers.

Improving health and safety need not cost a lot. For instance, placing a mirror on a blind corner to help prevent vehicle accidents is a low-cost precaution considering the risks. Failure to take simple precautions can cost you a lot more if an accident does happen.

Involve your workers, so you can be sure that what you propose to do will work in practice and won’t introduce any new hazards. You can find more advice on HSE’s website (www.hse.gov.uk/involvement).

If you control a number of similar workplaces containing similar activities, you can produce a ‘model’ risk assessment reflecting the common hazards and risks associated with these activities.

You may also come across ‘model’ assessments developed by trade associations, employers’ bodies or other organisations concerned with a particular activity. You may decide to apply these ‘model’ assessments at each workplace, but you can only do so if you:

- satisfy yourself that the ‘model’ assessment is appropriate to your type of work;
- adapt the ‘model’ to the detail of your own work situations, including any extension necessary to cover hazards and risks not referred to in the ‘model’. 
**Record your findings**

Make a record of your significant findings – the hazards, how people might be harmed by them and what you have in place to control the risks. Any record produced should be simple and focused on controls.

If you have fewer than five employees you don’t have to write anything down. But it is useful to do this so you can review it at a later date, for example if something changes. If you have five or more employees you are required by law to write it down.

Any paperwork you produce should help you to communicate and manage the risks in your business. For most people this does not need to be a big exercise – just note the main points down about the significant risks and what you concluded.

An easy way to record your findings is to use the risk assessment template on HSE’s website (www.hse.gov.uk/risk). When writing down your results keep it simple, for example ‘fume from welding – local exhaust ventilation used and regularly checked’.

A risk assessment must be ‘suitable and sufficient’, ie it should show that:

- a proper check was made;
- you asked who might be affected;
- you dealt with all the obvious significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who could be involved;
- the precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low;
- you involved your employees or their representatives in the process.

Where the nature of your work changes fairly frequently or the workplace changes and develops (eg a construction site), or where your workers move from site to site, your risk assessment may have to concentrate more on a broad range of risks that can be anticipated.

Take a look at our selection of example risk assessments. They show you what a completed risk assessment might look like for your type of workplace. You can use these as a guide when doing your own.

We have also developed online risk assessment tools, to help employers complete and print off their own records. The example risk assessments and online tools can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/risk.

If your risk assessment identifies a number of hazards, you need to put them in order of importance and address the most serious risks first.

Identify long-term solutions for the risks with the biggest consequences, as well as those risks most likely to cause accidents or ill health. You should also establish whether there are improvements that can be implemented quickly, even temporarily, until more reliable controls can be put in place.

Remember, the greater the hazard the more robust and reliable the control measures to control the risk of an injury occurring will need to be.
Regularly review your risk assessment

Few workplaces stay the same. Sooner or later, you will bring in new equipment, substances and procedures that could lead to new hazards. So it makes sense to review what you are doing on an ongoing basis, look at your risk assessment again and ask yourself:

- Have there been any significant changes?
- Are there improvements you still need to make?
- Have your workers spotted a problem?
- Have you learnt anything from accidents or near misses?

Make sure your risk assessment stays up to date.

Find out more

HSE’s risk management website: www.hse.gov.uk/risk

Risk assessment: A brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace Leaflet INDG163(rev4)

Accidents and investigations

Monitor the effectiveness of the measures you put in place to control the risks in your workplace. As part of your monitoring, you should investigate incidents to ensure that corrective action is taken, learning is shared and any necessary improvements are put in place. Investigations will help you to:

- identify why your existing control measures failed and what improvements or additional measures are needed;
- plan to prevent the incident from happening again;
- point to areas where your risk assessment needs reviewing;
- improve risk control in your workplace in the future.

Reporting incidents should not stop you from carrying out your own investigation to ensure risks in your workplace are controlled efficiently. An investigation is not an end in itself, but the first step in preventing future adverse events that includes:

- accident: an event that results in injury or ill health;
- incident:
  - near miss: an event not causing harm, but which has the potential to cause injury or ill health (in this guidance, the term near miss will include dangerous occurrences);
  - undesired circumstance: a set of conditions or circumstances that have the potential to cause injury or ill health, eg untrained nurses handling heavy patients;
- dangerous occurrence: one of a number of specific, reportable adverse events, as defined in the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

Find out more

Investigating accidents and incidents HSG245 HSE Books 2004
Multi-occupancy workplaces

Where employers share workplaces (whether on a temporary or permanent basis), they need to co-operate with each other to comply with their respective health and safety obligations.

Each employer needs to take all reasonable steps to co-ordinate the measures they adopt to fulfil those obligations. They also need to tell the other employers about any risks their work activities could present to their employees, both on- and off-site.

These requirements apply to self-employed people where they share a workplace with other employers or where they share a workplace with other self-employed people.

Deciding who will help you with your duties

As an employer, you must appoint someone competent to help you meet your health and safety duties. A competent person is someone with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to manage health and safety. In many cases, you will know the risks in your own business best. This will mean that you are the competent person and can carry out the risk assessments yourself. You could appoint (one or a combination of):

- yourself;
- one or more of your workers;
- someone from outside your business.

Many businesses can develop the necessary expertise in-house and are well equipped to manage health and safety themselves. However, there are some things you may not be able to do for yourself and you may decide to get external help. Possible sources of advice include:

- trade associations;
- safety groups;
- trade unions;
- consultants registered on the Occupational Safety and Health Consultants Register (OSHCR) – see ‘Find out more’ below;
- local councils;
- health and safety training providers;
- health and safety equipment suppliers.

Identifying and deciding what help you need is very important. If you appoint someone to help you, you must ensure that they are competent to carry out the tasks you give them and that you provide them with adequate information and support. If you are not clear about what you want, you probably won’t get the help you need.
Some points to consider when using external help

- Make sure you clearly explain what you need and check that they understand you. Ask them to explain what they understand the work to be and what they will do, when they will do it, and what they will charge you.
- Check for evidence of relevant health and safety training/knowledge, such as formal qualifications or practical experience of providing advice in your industry/area of work.
- Can they explain why they are competent to advise you on your particular problem?
- Is the person a member of a professional body? If you are in doubt, you can check with the professional body on what training, knowledge or qualifications are relevant and whether the person is listed as a member.
- Shop around to find the right help at the right price. If you were buying equipment or another service, you wouldn't always accept the first offer, so do the same with health and safety advice. You should also check that the person you choose is adequately insured.
- Consider whether you have received the help you needed. Do you have a practical, sensible solution to your problem? Or have you ended up with something completely ‘over the top’ or a mountain of useless paperwork? If you are not happy with the solution, ask for an explanation and whether there may be a simpler alternative.
- You can find consultants through OSHCR, an independent online directory to help you find sensible health and safety advice. Registered members have met set standards within their professional bodies, and are bound by a code of practice. They give proportionate advice, specific to your business needs, by topic, industry or location.

Try to make sure that you get a good follow-up service and are able to get further advice on any issues that arise from implementing their recommendations.

Find out more

Occupational Safety and Health Consultants Register (OSHCR): www.hse.gov.uk/oshcr

If you need help with technical issues or very specific health and safety risks, you may need to consult external specialists. See HSE’s website (www.hse.gov.uk/business/competent-advice.htm).

Consulting your employees

Workplaces where employees are involved in taking decisions about health and safety are safer and healthier. Collaboration with your employees helps you to manage health and safety in a practical way by:

- helping you spot workplace risks;
- making sure health and safety controls are practical;
- increasing the level of commitment to working in a safe and healthy way;
- providing you with feedback on the effectiveness of your health and safety arrangements and control measures.

You must consult all your employees, in good time, on health and safety matters. In workplaces where a trade union is recognised, this will be through union health and safety representatives. In non-unionised workplaces, you can consult either directly or through other elected representatives.
Representatives’ main role is to talk to their employer about issues affecting the health and safety of employees they represent in the workplace. You should ensure that any representatives receive paid time off during normal working hours so they can carry out their duties. They should also receive suitable training and access to any facilities needed to help them in their role.

Consultation involves employers not only giving information to employees but also listening to them and taking account of what they say before making decisions on health and safety. You have to give employees or their representatives information to allow full and effective participation in consultation. This should include:

- risks arising from their work;
- proposals to manage and/or control these risks;
- what to do if employees are exposed to a risk;
- the best ways of providing information and training.

**Find out more**

For more information on consulting with your employees, see HSE’s worker involvement website: www.hse.gov.uk/involvement


### The law

- Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (as amended)
- Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996

### Providing training and information

Everyone who works for you needs to know how to work safely and without risks to health. You must provide clear instructions, information and adequate training for your employees.

Don’t forget contractors and self-employed people who may be working for you and make sure everyone has information on:

- hazards and risks they may face;
- measures in place to deal with those hazards and risks;
- how to follow any emergency procedures.

Some employees may have particular training needs, for example:

- new recruits need basic induction training in how to work safely, including arrangements for first aid, fire and evacuation;
- people changing jobs or taking on extra responsibilities need to know about any new health and safety implications;
- young employees are particularly vulnerable to accidents and you need to pay particular attention to their needs, so their training should be a priority. It is also important that new, inexperienced or young employees are adequately supervised;
employee representatives or safety representatives will require training that
reflects their responsibilities;

some people’s skills may need updating by refresher training.

Your risk assessment should identify any further training needs associated with
specific risks. If you have identified danger areas in your workplace, you must ensure
that your employees receive adequate instruction and training on precautions they
must take before entering them.

You need to think about any legal requirements for specific job training, eg for
operating forklift trucks. Remember that if you introduce new equipment, technology
or changes to working practices/systems, your employees will need to know about
any new health and safety implications.

Employees also have responsibilities under health and safety law to:

■ take care of their own health and safety and that of others;
■ co-operate with you to help you comply with health and safety legislation;
■ follow any instructions or health and safety training you provide;
■ tell you about any work situations that present a serious and imminent risk;
■ let you know about any other failings they identify in your health and safety
arrangements.

Find out more

Health and safety training: A brief guide Leaflet INDG345(rev1) HSE Books 2012
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg345.htm

Providing supervision

You must provide an adequate and appropriate level of supervision for your workers:

■ Supervisors need to know what you expect from them in terms of health and
  safety. They need to understand your health and safety policy, where they fit in, and
  how you want health and safety managed.
■ Supervisors may need training in the specific hazards of your processes and how
  you expect the risks to be controlled.
■ New, inexperienced or young people, as well as those whose first language is not
  English, are very likely to need more supervision than others. Make sure workers
  know how to raise concerns and supervisors are familiar with the possible
  problems due to unfamiliarity, inexperience and communication difficulties.
■ Supervisors need to ensure that workers in their charge understand risks
  associated with the work environment and measures to control them.
■ Supervisors will need to make sure the control measures to protect against risk
  are up to date and are being properly used, maintained and monitored.
■ Make sure you have arrangements in place to check the work of contractors is
  being done as agreed.

Effective supervision can help you monitor the effectiveness of the training that
people have received, and whether employees have the necessary capacity and
competence to do the job.
Find out more

For advice on those new to the job see Chapter 3 and HSE’s website: www.hse.gov.uk/vulnerable-workers/new-to-the-job.htm

For advice on young people at work see Chapter 3 and HSE’s website: www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople

Young people and work experience: A brief guide to health and safety for employers

First aid

You need to assess your first-aid requirements to help you decide what equipment and facilities you need, and how many first-aid personnel you should provide. The minimum first-aid provision in any workplace is:

- a suitably stocked first-aid box;
- an appointed person to take charge of first-aid arrangements.

You also need to put up notices telling your employees where they can find:

- the first-aiders or appointed persons;
- the first-aid box.

Your assessment may also indicate that you should provide a first-aid room, particularly where your work involves certain hazards, including some of those found in chemical industries and on large construction sites.

If you are self-employed, you should have equipment to be able to provide first aid to yourself at work. You should make an assessment of the hazards and risks in your workplace and establish an appropriate level of first-aid provision.

If you carry out low-risk activities (eg clerical work) in your own home, you only need to provide first-aid equipment appropriate to your normal domestic needs. If your work involves driving long distances or you are continuously on the road, your assessment may identify the need to keep a personal first-aid kit in your vehicle.

Find out more

See HSE’s first aid site for more information: www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid


The law

Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981
Emergency procedures

Workplaces need a plan for emergencies that can have a wider impact. Special procedures are needed for emergencies such as serious injuries, explosion, flood, poisoning, electrocution, fire, release of radioactivity and chemical spills.

Quick and effective action may help to ease the situation and reduce the consequences. However, in emergencies people are more likely to respond reliably if they:

- are well trained and competent;
- take part in regular and realistic practice;
- have clearly agreed, recorded and rehearsed plans, actions and responsibilities.

Write an emergency plan if a major incident at your workplace could involve risks to the public, rescuing employees or co-ordinating emergency services.

Where you share your workplace with another employer, you should consider whether your emergency plans and procedures should be co-ordinated.

Points to include in emergency procedures

- Consider what might happen and how the alarm will be raised. Don’t forget night and shift working, weekends and times when the premises are closed, e.g. holidays.
- Plan what to do, including how to call the emergency services. Help them by clearly marking your premises from the road. Consider drawing up a simple plan showing the location of hazardous items.
- If you have 25 tonnes or more of dangerous substances, you must notify the fire and rescue service and put up warning signs.
- Decide where to go to reach a place of safety or to get rescue equipment. You must provide suitable forms of emergency lighting.
- You must make sure there are enough emergency exits for everyone to escape quickly, and keep emergency doors and escape routes unobstructed and clearly marked.
- Nominate competent people to take control (a competent person is someone with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to manage health and safety).
- Decide which other key people you need, such as a nominated incident controller, someone who is able to provide technical and other site-specific information if necessary, or first-aiders.
- Plan essential actions such as emergency plant shutdown, isolation or making processes safe. Clearly identify important items like shut-off valves and electrical isolators etc.
- You must train everyone in emergency procedures. Don’t forget the needs of people with disabilities and vulnerable workers.
- Work should not resume after an emergency if a serious danger remains. If you have any doubts ask for assistance from the emergency services.

The law

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 cover emergencies.

The Dangerous Substances (Notification and Marking of Sites) Regulations 1990 cover sites holding at least 25 tonnes of dangerous substances.
Reporting accidents, incidents and diseases

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) require employers, or in certain circumstances others who control or manage the premises, to report to the relevant enforcing authority and keep records of:

- work-related deaths;
- work-related accidents which cause certain specified serious injuries to workers, or which result in a worker being incapacitated for more than seven consecutive days (see www.hse.gov.uk/riddor);
- cases of those industrial diseases listed in RIDDOR;
- certain ‘dangerous occurrences’ (near-miss accidents);
- injuries to a person who is not at work, such as a member of the public, which are caused by an accident at work and which result in the person being taken to hospital from the site for treatment.

Reports to the enforcing authority of all of the above categories, except over-seven-day injuries, must be made immediately by the quickest practicable means and followed up by a written notification within ten days. Reports of over-seven-day injuries must be sent to the enforcing authority within 15 days.

In addition, records must be kept of all ‘over-three-day injuries’, which are those where a person who is injured at work is incapacitated for more than three consecutive days. Over-three-day injuries do not, however, have to be reported to the enforcing authority. If you are an employer who must keep an accident book under the Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1979, an entry about an over-three-day injury is a sufficient record for the purposes of RIDDOR.

A person is incapacitated if they are unable to carry out the activities they would reasonably be expected to do as part of their normal work. The period of time for an over-three-day injury or an over-seven-day injury does not include the day of the accident, but it does include any weekends or other rest days.

Why report and record?

Reporting and recording are legal requirements. The report tells the enforcing authorities for occupational health and safety (HSE and local authorities) about serious incidents and cases of disease. This means they can identify where and how risks arise and whether they need to be investigated. It also allows HSE and local authorities to target their work and provide advice on how to avoid work-related deaths, injuries, ill health and accidental loss.

Information on accidents, incidents and ill health can be used as an aid to risk assessment, helping to develop solutions to potential risks. Records also help to prevent injuries and ill health, and control costs from accidental loss.

You must keep a record of:

- any reportable death, injury, occupational disease or dangerous occurrence;
- all work-related injuries that result in a worker being away from work or unable to do their full range of normal duties for more than three consecutive days (not counting the day of the accident but including any weekends or other rest days).
Find out more

There is more about RIDDOR (including reporting gas incidents) on HSE’s website: www.hse.gov.uk/riddor

RIDDOR applies to all work activities but not all incidents are reportable. HSE’s website has a full list of the types of injuries, dangerous occurrences, gas incidents and occupational diseases that must be reported under RIDDOR: www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/reportable-incidents.htm


The law

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

The health and safety law poster

If you employ anyone, you must display the health and safety law poster, or provide each worker with a copy of the approved leaflet or equivalent pocket card. You must display the poster where your workers can easily read it.

The poster outlines British health and safety laws and includes a straightforward list that tells workers what they and their employers need to do. You can also add details of any employee safety representatives or health and safety contacts if you wish to do so.

The poster was updated in 2009 and all employers must display this new version, or provide each worker with a copy of the equivalent leaflet or pocket card, by no later than 5 April 2014.

Employers can use the older poster or leaflet until then. You can download free copies of the leaflet and pocket card (www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/lawposter.htm), where you can also buy them in priced packs, or buy the law poster itself.

| The law |
| Health and Safety Information for Employees Regulations 1989 |

Safety signs

Employers must provide safety signs if there is a significant risk that can’t be avoided or controlled in any other way, such as through safe systems of work or engineering controls.

There is no need to provide safety signs if they don’t help reduce the risk or if the risk isn’t significant. This applies to all places and activities where people are employed.
Employers must, where necessary:

- use road traffic signs in workplaces to regulate road traffic;
- maintain the safety signs they provide;
- explain unfamiliar signs to their employees and tell them what they need to do when they see safety signs.

Find out more


Insurance

If your business has employees you are likely to be required by law to have employers’ liability insurance.

If an employee is injured or becomes ill as a result of the work they do for you, they may claim compensation from you. Complying with health and safety legislation does not have to be difficult. As long as you have taken reasonable steps to prevent accidents or harm to your employees (and the injury or illness was caused after 1 October 2013), you should not have to pay compensation. However, if you are held to be liable, employers’ liability insurance will enable you to meet the cost of any compensation for your employees’ injuries or illness.

Only a few businesses are not required to have employers’ liability insurance. If you have no employees, or are a family business and all employees are closely related to you, you may not need it. You can find more details in HSE’s leaflet Employers’ Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969: A brief guide for employers (see ‘Find out more’ below).

How do you get employers’ liability insurance?

You can buy employers’ liability insurance through insurers or intermediaries, like brokers or trade associations. You may find that it often comes as part of an insurance package designed to cover a range of business needs.

Your policy must be with an authorised insurer and the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has a list of these. You can check their register on the FCA website (www.fca.org.uk).

Find out more

Inspectors and the law

Health and safety laws applying to your business are enforced by HSE inspectors or by officers from your local authority.

An inspector’s role is to:

- investigate (when accidents have happened or a complaint is made) whether people are at risk, to find out if something has gone wrong;
- require you to take action to control risks properly if you are not already complying with the law;
- take appropriate enforcement action in relation to any non-compliance, ranging from advice on stopping dangerous work activities to potentially taking prosecutions where people are put at serious risk;
- provide advice and guidance to help you comply with the law and avoid injuries and ill health at work.

Inspectors have the right of entry to your premises as well as the right to talk to employees and safety representatives, and exercise powers to help them fulfil their role.

HSE operates a Fee for Intervention (FFI) cost recovery scheme. If you are breaking health and safety laws, HSE may recover its costs from you by charging a fee for the time and effort it spends on helping you to put the matter right, such as investigating and taking enforcement action.

If an HSE inspector visits your premises and you want to confirm their identity, they all carry identification and you can ask to see this.

Inspectors and local authority officers prioritise the highest risks and those businesses which fail to manage health and safety properly.

Find out more

How HSE enforces health and safety law: www.hse.gov.uk/enforce

Fee for Intervention: www.hse.gov.uk/fee-for-intervention

What to expect when a health and safety inspector calls: A brief guide for businesses, employees and their representatives. Leaflet HSC14(rev1)