

GETTING STARTED

The aim of health and safety is to prevent people from being harmed or becoming ill through work. Health and safety law states that we must not put ourselves, other workers or members of the public in danger.

Health and safety law applies to all businesses, whatever the size. It covers **all** employees, whether full or part time, permanent or temporary, work experience, apprentices and charity workers.

What You Must Do

The following information covers the key things that you must do.

- ***Carry out a risk assessment.*** This is a decision about what could cause harm to people through your work and how to take precautions. If you have 5 or more employees you must record the main findings of your assessment.
Our risk assessment section will help you create and record your risk assessment.
- ***Create a health and safety policy.*** This is a decision on how you are going to manage health and safety in your business. Again, if you have 5 or more employees this must be written down.
Our health and safety policy section will help you create your policy.
- ***Obtain Employers Liability Insurance.*** If you employ anyone you are legally required to have employer's liability insurance and you must display the certificate in your workplace.

Since 1 October 2008 you have been allowed to display your certificate electronically. Employers choosing this method need to ensure their employees know how and where to find the certificate and have reasonable access to it.

Since 1 October 2008 there has been no legal requirement for employers to keep copies of out-of-date certificates. However, employers are strongly advised to keep, as far as is possible, a complete record of their employers' liability insurance. This is because some diseases can appear decades after exposure to their cause and former or current employees may decide to make a claim against their employer for the period they were exposed to the cause of their illness.

Employers that fail to hold the necessary insurance details risk having to meet the costs of such claims themselves.

- ***Provide health and safety training.*** You must ensure that employees receive adequate, free health and safety training to enable them to carry out their work safely. It should cover the hazards and risks they may face in the workplace and how to deal with these.

- **Display the Health and Safety Law Poster.** If you have any employees you must display this poster or provide employees with a copy of the law leaflet. The law poster (and leaflet) is available from good book shops or from HSE Books on 01787 881165.
A new version of the Law poster became available on 6th April 2009, however the old style of the poster can continue to be displayed until 2014.
- **Register your business.** Since 6 April 2009, most new businesses no longer need to register with HSE.

However, if you work with hazardous substances, such as asbestos or explosives, or in a hazardous industry, such as construction or diving, you may need to apply for a licence; or notify HSE or your local authority.

- **Consult employees.** You must consult employees on health and safety matters.
- **Have competent advice.** You must have competent advice to help you to meet your health and safety duties. This can be from your own employees or from external consultants.
- **Provide adequate welfare facilities.** Toilets, washing facilities and drinking water must be provided for your employees.
- **Report certain workplace accidents.** By law you must report some work-related accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences.

Other General Duties

There are also general duties to:

- Set up emergency procedures;
- Provide adequate first aid facilities;
- Ensure work equipment is suitable for its use and is properly maintained;
- Avoid hazardous manual handling operations. Where this is not possible, reduce the risk of injury;
- Provide protective clothing or equipment free of charge where risks cannot be controlled by other means;
- Co-operate on health and safety with other employers sharing the same building;
- Provide health surveillance as appropriate.

Employee's Duties

Employees also have legal duties to:

- Take care of their own health and safety and that of others;
- Co-operate with employers on health and safety;
- Correctly use work equipment as directed by employer, including personal protective equipment;
- Not interfere with or misuse anything provided for their health, safety or welfare.