

# **Safety Resources**

## **Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare**

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 cover a wide range of basic health, safety and welfare issues and apply to most workplaces (except those involving construction work on construction sites, those in or on a ship, or those below ground at a mine).

A revised version of the Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) that accompanies the Regulations was published in November 2013. The Approved Code of Practice will help employers understand the regulatory requirements on issues such as ventilation, temperature, lighting, cleanliness, room dimensions, workstations and seating, floor conditions, falls or falling objects, transparent and translucent doors, gates and walls, windows, skylights and ventilators, traffic routes, escalators, sanitary conveniences and washing facilities.

Employers have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees at work. People in control of non-domestic premises have a duty towards people who are not their employees but use their premises.

Several of the regulations require things to be 'suitable' and the Regulations and the guidance make it clear that things should be suitable for anyone. This includes people with disabilities. Where necessary, parts of the workplace, particularly doors, passageways, stairs, showers, washbasins, toilets and workstations, should be made accessible for disabled people.

People other than employers also have duties under these Regulations if they have control, to any extent, of a workplace. For example, owners, landlords or managing agents of business premises should ensure that common parts, common facilities, common services and means of access within their control comply with the Regulations.

Some changes in the new edition of the ACoP relate to the guidance notes in the Document Library on: Workplace Health Issues; Workplace Safety Issues; and Workplace Welfare Issues and these notes should be read in conjunction with them.

## **Safety Issues**

Stability and solidity - Any building being used as a workplace should be capable of supporting all foreseeable loads imposed on it. Loading can arise from a variety of factors including environmental causes (for example wind or snow loads) and those created by the activities associated with the workplace, for example use of floors by people or vehicles.

The main causes of stability and solidity problems in buildings are related to the age of the structure and a lack of routine maintenance. Other causes are:

Environmental factors (water getting in, corrosive air, vibration, high winds); settlement; impact damage; overloading (or other damage caused by misuse of the building); and change of use.

An inspection and maintenance regime, appropriate to the building's type and use, should be in place to ensure that any defect which may cause an unacceptable safety risk is detected in good time, and appropriate remedial action taken.

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## **Health Issues**

Solar Radiation - Protection from the excessive effects of solar radiation in buildings can be achieved by introducing shading and using reflective materials. Examples of suitable measures include awnings; internal/ external blinds; anti-reflective glazing; use energy-efficient building materials which allow heat to be stored and released at cooler times of the day.

Do not restrict air movement as this is an important control measure when dealing with excessive heat in the workplace.

## **Welfare Issues**

Washing facilities - (man-made water systems) are a potential source for legionella bacteria growth and risks from this bacteria should be assessed and appropriately managed. (See Guidance Note "Legionnaires" for further information).

Preventing discomfort from tobacco smoke - Where smoking in any area of a workplace or rest area is not prohibited by law (e.g. care homes; prisons), non-smokers should be protected from experiencing discomfort from tobacco smoke. Staff who provide care or other services in residential rooms where users are permitted to smoke must be provided with separate smoke-free rest areas or rooms. Any area where smoking is permitted should be sited far enough away from work areas and non-smoking rest areas to prevent smoke getting in to them – taking in to account doors and windows that may open. (For further information refer to Guidance Notes "Smoke Free Workplaces" and "Smoke Free Policy").

Further details are available in:

L24 (Second Edition) Workplace health, safety and welfare. Approved Code of Practice and guidance.

Available to view or download on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l24.pdf>