



An introduction to health and safety



Health and safety in small businesses

hseni
CONTROLLING RISK TOGETHER

What you should know about – where to get more information

It's your business but we can help you look after it!



Competitive small businesses, (less than 50 employees), are vital to the Northern Ireland economy. Current statistics suggest that 98% of all businesses in Northern Ireland employ fewer than 50 people and 89% employ fewer than 10 people. One of the main risks to the success of the small business is failing to manage health and safety in the workplace.



The fatal accident rate in businesses with fewer than 50 workers is around twice that of larger companies and it is estimated that work-related injuries, ill-health and non-injury accidents cost the Northern Ireland economy £250 million per year.



Implementing health and safety measures doesn't have to be expensive, time consuming or complicated, in fact, safer and more efficient working practices can often save money but, more importantly, they can help to save lives.



This booklet shows you the kind of things which cause the more common accidents and harm to people's health. It lets you see what applies to your work activities, and tells you how you can get more help and information.



This is especially important if you are in charge of work activities, for example you are an employer, because you have legal responsibilities.

Eight questions and answers for everyone

What is health and safety all about?

Preventing people from being harmed by work or becoming ill by taking the right precautions - and providing a satisfactory working environment.

Why are there health and safety laws?

Because health and safety at work is so important, there are rules which require all of us not to put ourselves or others in danger. The law is also there to protect the public from workplace dangers.

Do health and safety laws apply to me?

Yes. To all businesses, however small; also to the self-employed and to employees.

Who enforces health and safety law?

Inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) or your local district council.

For example:

- HSENI at factories, farms and building sites;
- local district council in offices, shops, hotels and catering, and leisure activities.

What do inspectors actually do?

They visit workplaces to check that people are sticking to the rules. They investigate some accidents and complaints but mainly they help you to understand what you need to do. They enforce only when something is seriously wrong.

Do I need to have employers' liability compulsory insurance?

It's the law if you employ anyone – and you must display a valid copy of your certificate. See the free leaflet, *Employer's Liability (Defective Equipment and Compulsory Insurance) (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 - A guide for employers*, available for download at www.hseni.gov.uk

Do I need to display any posters?

Yes, if you employ anyone you need to display the "Health and Safety Law in Northern Ireland" poster. Alternatively you can provide your employees with individual copies of the same information in a leaflet called *Health and Safety Law: What you need to know*. These are available to buy from HSE Books. See page 3 for more details.

Do I have to report injuries at work?

Yes, and other incidents. For information on which ones and who should report them, see page 20.

It's your business – so look after it!

How to use this booklet— how each section works

List of topics

Managing health and safety

Slips, trips and falls

Asbestos

Hazardous substances

Falls from a height

Musculoskeletal disorders

Display screen equipment

Noise

Vibration

Electricity

Work equipment and
machinery

Maintenance and building
work

Workplace transport

Pressure systems

Fire and explosion

Radiation

Stress

First aid and accident
reporting

No matter where you work, this booklet summarises the key common areas of risk at work and tells you how you can find out more to ensure that work is made safe.

On each page, you will see the sections headed like this:

The main text gives you a brief introduction to the subject.

Does this concern me?

This section gives you some pointers to whether the subject is relevant to your business.

amended or revoked by subsequent rules. Before relying on them users should verify for themselves whether any changes have been made.

What law applies?

This section gives you the main rules which apply in addition to the general duties in the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978. It is important to note that these rules may be

How and where you can get more help

On the back cover you will find HSENI's telephone and textphone numbers and e-mail address which you can contact us at if you need more information.

The words 'hazard' and 'risk' are used throughout this booklet. **Hazard** means anything that can cause harm (eg chemicals, electricity, working from ladders, etc). **Risk** is the chance, high or low, that someone will be harmed by the hazard.

* HSE Books will accept orders for single copies of up to 25 assorted free publications. You should allow 10 working days for delivery.



Have you got health and safety under control?

Does this concern me?

Did you know all employers and self-employed people have to assess risks at work?

Did you know employers with five or more employees should have a written health and safety policy?

Did you know employers with five or more employees have to record the significant findings of their risk assessment?

Did you know employers have a duty to involve their employees or their employees' safety representatives on health and safety matters?

Did you know employers have to provide free health and safety training or protective equipment for employees where it is needed?

Managing health and safety is little different from managing any other aspect of 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.

A risk assessment is nothing more than a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people. Risk assessment should be a practical exercise, aimed at getting the right controls in place – keep it simple and put the results into practice. Pages 32-33 of this booklet gives you step-by-step guidance on how to assess health and safety risks with a minimum of fuss. Your health and safety policy clearly sets out how you

manage health and safety in your workplace by defining **who** does what; and **when** and **how** they do it. On pages 21-31 of this booklet is an example of a health and safety policy statement that you can fill in and keep at your workplace. Remember, keep it simple and actually put it into practice.

What law applies?

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000
- Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996
- Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1979

How and where you can get more help

Five Steps to Risk Assessment

Download from
www.hseni.gov.uk

Consulting employees on health and safety: A guide to the law INDG232

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Health and Safety Law in Northern Ireland poster

Available from HSE Books Tel:
01787 881 165 or The Stationery
Office (TSO) Tel: 0333 202 5070

Also see "Health and safety policy statement" and "Your risk assessment" sections at the back of this booklet.



Does this concern me?

Do you have floors which are, or can become, slippery, eg when wet?

Does spillage or contamination occur and is it dealt with quickly?

Do people use unlit areas such as paths or yards in the dark?

Might temporary work such as maintenance or alterations take place? It could introduce slipping and tripping hazards such as trailing cables.

Do you use floor cleaning materials anywhere? Are the right methods and materials being used?

What are the chances of slipping or tripping at work?

The most common cause of injuries at work is the slip or trip. Resulting falls can be serious. They happen in all kinds of businesses, but sectors such as food and catering report higher than average numbers. It's a particularly important subject if members of the public use your premises. The estimated cost to employers of all these

injuries is over £500 million a year, and insurance only covers a small part of this. Effective solutions are often simple, cheap and lead to other benefits.

What law applies?

- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993



How and where you can get more help

Preventing slips and trips at work INDG225

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Workplace health, safety and welfare INDG244

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Slips and trips: Hazard spotting checklist CK4

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Preventing slips and trips in kitchens and food services CAIS6

Download from www.hse.gov.uk



Do you work with, or come into contact with, asbestos?

Does this concern me?

Do you know whether there is asbestos in your premises? It is often found in roofs and exterior walls, boilers, vessels and pipework, ceilings, interior walls and panels, flooring materials, air handling systems, domestic appliances, brake/clutch linings, fire blankets, etc.

Does your work involve maintenance and repair of premises? You might disturb asbestos while doing routine work.

Do you know what the rules are about removing asbestos? In most cases, you will need to use a contractor licensed by HSENI to work with asbestos.

Would you know how to find someone licensed to do this work?

Do you know whether there is asbestos in any of the materials you work with?

Asbestos is the largest single cause of work-related fatal disease and ill health in Great Britain. Almost all asbestos-related deaths and ill health are from exposures several decades ago, but if you work with asbestos, or come into contact with it during repair and maintenance work, you are at risk. You should avoid working with asbestos if possible, but if not you must do it safely.

Asbestos can be found in buildings built from 1950 to 1985 in many forms. It may also be found in some vehicle brake pads and clutch linings. More details about managing asbestos can be found at: www.hseni.gov.uk

What law applies?

- The Control of Asbestos Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012

How and where you can get more help

For guidance on matters relating to working with asbestos contact HSENI's Asbestos Advisory Service
Phone: 0800 0320 121
or e-mail:
mail@hseni.gov.uk

- Asbestos, the facts
- Asbestos toolkit
- Asbestos- Duty to manage
- Are you responsible for a hidden killer?
- Protect yourself against the hidden killer-working safely if asbestos is present

FREE and available from HSENI

Managing and working with Asbestos. Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. Approved Code of Practice and guidance L143

Available from www.hse.gov.uk

A short guide to managing asbestos in premises INDG 223
Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Asbestos essentials: A task manual for the building, maintenance and allied trades on non-licensed asbestos work HSG210
Available from www.hse.gov.uk

A comprehensive guide to managing asbestos in premises HSG227
Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Introduction to asbestos essentials: Comprehensive guidance on working with asbestos in the building maintenance and allied trades HSG213
Available from www.hse.gov.uk



Do you work with hazardous substances?

Does this concern me?

Do you use chemicals at work (including cleaning materials)?

Do you know suppliers of hazardous substances have to provide information to users, including safety data sheets and proper labelling?

Is there dust and fume present in your workplace?

Do you have any water systems which could be colonised by legionella?

Do you work with animals or their products? These may cause skin or respiratory sensitisation or be infected with bacteria or viruses.

Thousands of people are exposed to all kinds of hazardous substances at work. These can include chemicals that people make or work with directly, and also dust, fume and bacteria which can be present in the workplace. Exposure can happen by breathing them in, contact with the skin, splashing them into the eyes or swallowing them. If exposure is not prevented or properly controlled, it can cause serious illness, including cancer, asthma and dermatitis, and sometimes even death.

See also section on 'Fire and explosion' on page 17 and the 'safe handling and use of substances' section of the Health and Safety Policy on page 26.

What law applies?

- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003
- Control of Lead at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003

How and where you can get more help

HSENI can help identify publications relevant to you.

COSHH (NI). A brief guide to the Regulations

Download from www.hseni.gov.uk

COSHH essentials: Easy steps to control chemicals.

FREE internet version available at: www.coshh-essentials.org.uk

Preventing contact dermatitis at work INDG233

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Health risk management – a practical guide for managers in small and medium sized enterprises HSG137

Available from www.hse.gov.uk



Does this concern me?

Do you carry out simple maintenance or cleaning tasks that require working where you could hurt yourself if you fell?

Can you avoid the need to work at height? For example, could the work be done using long-handled tools or by bringing it down to ground level?

Do you have the most appropriate equipment for the job? It may often be safer to use a tower scaffold or mobile elevating work platform than a ladder.

Is the equipment you have well maintained and do your employees know how to use it safely?

Do you perform work at height and if so is it done safely?

Falls from height at work account for around 60 deaths and just under 4000 major injuries each year. One of the main causes is falls from ladders. To help prevent falls from height, make sure you consider the risks to all your workers, the work is planned, organised and carried out by competent people and you follow the hierarchy for managing risks. Make sure workers are properly trained and supervised, have the right equipment and know how to use it safely.

What law applies?

- The Work at Height Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999

How and where you can get more help

The Work at Height Regulations 2005: A brief guide INDG401
Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Safe use of ladders and stepladders: A brief guide INDG455
Download from www.hse.gov.uk





Does this concern me?

Does your work include strenuous lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, reaching or repetitive handling?

Do you have repetitive finger, hand or arm movements which are frequent, forceful or awkward?

Does your work involve twisting, squeezing, hammering or pounding?

Do you suffer from sprains, strains and pains?

Manual handling is transporting or supporting loads by hand or using bodily force. Many people hurt their back, arms, hands or feet lifting everyday loads, not just when the load is too heavy. 22% of all injuries reported to HSENI in 2008/09 were the result of manual handling. These can result in those injured taking an average of 11 working days off each year.

'Upper limbs' refers to the neck, shoulders, arms, wrists, hands and fingers. Upper limb disorders (sometimes called repetitive strain injury (RSI)) can happen in almost any workplace where people do repetitive, or forceful manual activities in awkward postures, for prolonged periods of time. These can cause muscular aches and

pains, which may initially be temporary, but if such work is not properly managed, and the early symptoms are not recognised and treated, can progress to a chronic and disabling disorder. Cumulative damage can build up over time causing pain and discomfort in people's backs, arms, hands and legs. Most cases can be avoided by providing suitable lifting equipment that is regularly maintained, together with relevant training on both manual handling and using the equipment safely (see page 13 'Work equipment and machinery').

What law applies?

- Manual Handling Operations Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000

How and where you can get more help

Managing upper limb disorders in the workplace
INDG171

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Manual handling assessment charts INDG383

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Upper limb disorders in the workplace HSG60

Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Manual handling at work: A brief guide INDG143

Download from www.hse.gov.uk



Does this concern me?

Is there regular use of display screens as a significant part of the work?

Does anyone use a keyboard, mouse or other input device?

Are people complaining of discomfort, aches and pains?

Do you use computers or other display screen equipment?

Using a computer or other kinds of display screen equipment (visual display units) can give rise to back problems, repetitive strain injury, or other musculo-skeletal disorders. These health problems may become serious if no action is taken. They can be caused by poor design of work-stations (and associated equipment such as chairs), insufficient space, lack of training or not taking breaks

from display screen work. Work with a screen does not cause eye damage, but many users experience temporary eye strain or stress. This can lead to reduced work efficiency or taking time off work.

What law applies?

- Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992



How and where you can get more help

The law on VDUs. An easy guide: Making sure your office complies with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 HSG90
Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Working with VDUs INDG36
Download from www.hse.gov.uk



Is your workplace noisy?

Does this concern me?

Are there times when the workplace is so noisy that people have to shout to each other at normal speaking distance to make themselves heard? If so, there is likely to be a danger to hearing.

Are noisy powered tools or machinery in use for at least part of the day?

Are there noisy bangs from hammering, explosive or impact tools, or guns?

Are there areas where noise could interfere with warning and danger signals?

High levels of noise at work can cause hearing damage. A little damage happens every time it is noisy, gradually adding up to serious harm. Young people can be damaged as easily as the old. Sufferers often first start to notice hearing loss when they cannot keep up with conversations in a

group, or when the rest of their family complains they have the television on too loud. Deafness can make people feel isolated from their family, friends and colleagues.

What law applies?

- The Control of Noise at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006



How and where you can get more help

Controlling noise at work. The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 L108

Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Noise at work: Guidance for employers on the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 INDG362

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Sound advice. Control of noise at work in music and entertainment HSG260

Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Protect your hearing or lose it! Pocket card INDG363

Download from www.hse.gov.uk



Does this concern me?

Does anyone work with hand-held and hand-guided tools and machines such as concrete breakers and vibrating compactor plates and workpieces such as castings which are held against powered machinery such as pedestal grinders?

Does anyone doing this work get tingling or numbness in the fingers or hands?

Does anyone often drive off-road machinery such as tractors, dumper trucks or excavators or unsuspended vehicles such as fork-lift trucks?

Are you exposed to vibration?

Vibration from work with powered hand-held tools, equipment or processes can damage the hands and arms of users causing 'hand-arm vibration syndrome'. This is a painful, irreversible condition which includes 'vibration white finger' and the effects can be impaired blood circulation, damage to the nerves and muscles, and loss of ability to grip properly. Back pain can be caused by or aggravated by vibration from a vehicle or machine

passing through the seat into the driver's body through the buttocks – known as whole-body vibration. Whole-body vibration can also be caused by standing on the platform of a vehicle or machine, so vibration passes into the operator through their feet.

What law applies?

- The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005

How and where you can get more help

Hand-arm vibration. The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005. Guidance on Regulations L140

Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Hand-arm vibration at work: INDG175

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Hand-arm vibration: Advice for employees Pocket card INDG296

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Control back-pain risks from whole-body vibration: Advice for employers on the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 INDG242

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Drive away bad backs: Advice for mobile machine operators and drivers Pocket card INDG404

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Whole-body vibration. The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005. Guidance on Regulations L141

Available from www.hse.gov.uk



Does this concern me?

Does anyone do electrical work in your business?

Only those with appropriate technical knowledge and experience should be allowed to do this.

Is your electrical equipment in good working order?

Do you choose equipment that is suitable for its working environment, eg waterproof or dustproof?

Do you dig in the street, pavement or near buildings? Knowing the proper precautions for avoiding underground cables is essential.

Do you work near or under overhead powerlines? There are essential safety precautions to follow.

How safe is electricity in your workplace?

Electricity can kill. Most deaths are caused by contact with overhead or underground power cables. Even non-fatal shocks can cause severe and permanent injury. Shocks from faulty equipment may lead to falls from ladders, scaffolds or other work platforms. Those using electricity may not be

the only ones at risk. Poor electrical installations and faulty electrical appliances can lead to fires which can also result in death or injury to others.

What law applies?

- Electricity at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1991



How and where you can get more help

Avoiding danger from overhead electric power lines GS6

Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Guidance on the Electricity at work Regulations 1989 HSR25

Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Electricity at work. Safe working practices HSG85

Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Avoiding danger from underground services HSG47

Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Electrical safety and you INDG231

Download from www.hse.gov.uk



Do you know how to select and use your work equipment?

Work equipment covers an enormous range spanning process machinery, machine tools, office machines, lifting equipment, hand tools, ladders and pressure washers. Important points include: selecting the right equipment for the job, making sure equipment is safe to use and keeping it safe through regular maintenance, inspection and, if appropriate, thorough examination, training employees to use equipment safely and following manufacturers' or suppliers' instructions. Accidents involving work equipment

happen all the time – many serious, some fatal. See 'safe plant and equipment' section of the Health and Safety Policy on page 25 of this booklet.

Does this concern me?

Do you use ladders or other equipment for working at heights? For example, it may often be safer to use an access tower or mobile elevating work platform than a ladder.

Do you have machinery of any kind? You need to guard the parts that could cause injury; have the right controls, especially for starting and stopping; clean, or clear blockages in a safe way; and carry out preventive checks, maintenance and inspection.

Are hand tools used in your workplace, eg screwdrivers, knives, hand saws, meat cleavers, hammers?

Do you have lifting equipment such as pulley blocks, cranes, and lift trucks? Most lifting equipment will require regular thorough examination by a competent person.

What law applies?

- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999
- The Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 2008

How and where you can get more help

Providing and using work equipment safely. A brief guide INDG291
Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Thorough examination of lifting equipment INDG422
Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Safe use of work equipment. Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 L22
Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Buying new machinery INDG271
Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Using work equipment safely INDG229
Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Safe use of ladders and stepladders: A brief guide INDG455
Download from www.hse.gov.uk



Does this concern me?

Did you know that if you are the person responsible for your business, you are also responsible for contractors, service engineers, etc who do work for you?

Does anyone ever have to work on the roof, at a height or on fragile materials?

Does anyone have to fault find and repair machinery or equipment when it breaks down?

Is there a tank, pit, silo or similar confined space into which someone might go – and would you know if they did?

Have you found out whether there is any asbestos* in your buildings or plant which could be disturbed during maintenance or alterations?

What maintenance and building work takes place?

It's easy to overlook these activities because they happen now and again, and it's often a contractor or service agency doing the work. Sometimes people are in places where no one normally goes, eg the roof or electrical switchboard. They may be fault finding, trying to repair something quickly – often outside the routine. Not surprisingly there are many accidents. Falls from heights, eg ladders, are the most common cause of serious injury.

What law applies?

- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999
- Confined Spaces Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999
- The Work at Height Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005

How and where you can get more help

Managing health & safety in construction: Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 L153

Available from www.hse.gov.uk

The absolutely essential health and safety toolkit for the smaller construction contractor

Free from HSENI or download from www.hseni.gov.uk

Health and safety in roof work HSG33

Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Managing contractors: A guide for employers HSG159

Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Health and safety in construction HSG150

Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Working at Height: A brief guide INDG401

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

**Also see page 5 on 'Asbestos'*



Does this concern me?

Do you have vehicles in operation at your workplace? If so, what kinds of vehicles are they?

Are pedestrians separated from vehicle movements as much as possible?

Are traffic routes suitable for the vehicles which have to use them? Are they clearly marked?

Do you know who is allowed to drive or operate the vehicles? They should be trained and competent.

Are loading and unloading operations carried out safely?

Do you actively control driving behaviour?

Are all vehicles properly maintained?

What are the risks from transport in your workplace?

Every year about 70 people are killed and about 2500 seriously injured in accidents involving vehicles at the workplace. Being struck or run over by moving vehicles, falling from vehicles, or

vehicles over-turning are the most common causes. Vehicles operating in the workplace include cars and vans, lift trucks, heavy goods vehicles, dumpers, specialised vehicles or plant. Often there is significantly more danger from vehicles in the workplace than on the public highway since the operating conditions are different.



What law applies?

- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999

How and where you can get more help

Workplace transport safety: An employers' guide
HSG136

Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Workplace transport safety: An overview INDG199

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Rider-operated lift trucks – Operator training and safe use L117

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Is your lift truck being used safely? HSENI

Free from HSENI or download from www.hseni.gov.uk



Do you know the risks associated with pressure systems?

Pressure cookers, boilers, steam heating systems, gas cylinders and air compressors are common examples of equipment and systems containing a fluid under pressure. They can cause death or injury to

people, and serious damage to property, if the contents are released unintentionally. There are about 150 incidents of this kind every year. They mainly happen when equipment fails through poor design, incorrect filling or maintenance or when the method of work is unsafe, or someone makes an operating mistake.

Does this concern me?

Do you have any pressure systems or equipment in your business that contain a fluid under pressure?

Do you know that most pressure systems have to be designed, installed, maintained and periodically examined so as to prevent danger?

Are you aware that as an employer or self-employed person, it's your job to choose a competent person to carry out examinations of the pressure systems?



What law applies?

- Pressure Systems Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004
- The Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010

How and where you can get more help

Pressure systems: A brief guide to safety INDG261

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Safety of pressure systems: Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000 L122

Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Written schemes of examination INDG178

Download from www.hse.gov.uk



Does this concern me?

Do you keep or use flammable substances?

Do you use or store gas in cylinders (eg propane)? A small amount of released gas can fill a large area with a potentially explosive mixture.

Do you work with flammable dusts? They can explode.

Do you work with plastic foams or polyester wadding? Some types will ignite easily, burn fiercely and give off dense black smoke.

Do you spray flammable paints? Vapours are heavier than air and collect at low level.

Do you know the dangers of putting flammable liquids on fires to make them burn more intensely?

Do you use oxygen, eg in cylinders, for welding?

Do you know how to prevent fire or explosion?

Each year many people suffer burns caused by the flammable materials they work with. The wide variety of flammable substances found in the workplace ranges from the obvious, eg heating fuel, petrol, paint thinners and welding gases to the less obvious, eg packaging materials, dusts from wood, flour and sugar. For a fire to

start, fuel, air and a source of ignition are needed. Controlling these can prevent fires.

If you would like information on fire exits, alarms, or extinguishers, contact the Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) at www.nifrs.org

What law applies?

- Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003
- Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006
- Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010



How and where you can get more help

Managing fire safety in the workplace

Download from www.hseni.gov.uk

Safe use of petrol in garages
INDG331

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Controlling fire and explosion risks in the workplace
INDG370

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Safe use and handling of flammable liquids HSG140
Available from www.hse.gov.uk



Does this concern me?

Do people in your business spend a lot of time working outdoors?

Do you have equipment which gives off ultra-violet radiation eg for curing plastics or inks?

Do you work with lasers?

Is your business in an area where levels of radon are higher than average?

Are any radioactive sources used in your business brought in by a specialist contractor, or do you transport them?

Is X-ray equipment used?

Do you know where harmful radiation occurs?

Various kinds of radiation, both ionising and non-ionising, may affect us.

Non-ionising radiation:

- UV radiation (eg from the sun) can damage the skin and lead to skin cancer;
- lasers can cause burns and damage the eye.

Ionising radiation:

- naturally occurring radon gas from the ground;
- radiography or thickness measuring gauges;

- medical equipment, eg X-ray sets.

Excess doses of ionising radiation can cause burns, sickness and can have other adverse health effects.

What law applies?

- Ionising Radiations Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000

How and where you can get more help

Keep your top on: Health risks from working in the sun INDG147

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Sun protection: Advice for employers of outdoor workers INDG337

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

The regulatory requirements for medical exposure to ionising radiation: An employers overview HSG223

Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Working safely with ionising radiation: Guidance for expectant and Breastfeeding mothers INDG334

Download from www.hse.gov.uk

Work with ionising radiation: Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999. Approved Code of Practice and Guidance L121

Available from www.hse.gov.uk



Does this concern me?

Do you have a high staff turnover, low productivity or low morale? Have you noticed bullying, changes in behaviour, staff working late or increased sickness absence?

Do your employees seem happy to come into work?

Are you aware that there are individual differences in vulnerability to stress and that situations outside work can also affect the ability to cope with excessive pressure at work?

Are you feeling stressed by your work?

Many people argue about the definition and sometimes even the existence of 'stress'. However, research has shown that whatever you choose to call it, there is a clear link between poor work organisation and subsequent ill health. HSE has chosen to use the word stress and define it as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them.'

Stress at work can be tackled in the same way as any other risk to health – by identifying the hazards, assessing who is at risk and the level of risk, deciding how to manage the risk and putting the plans into action. Hazards can include:

lack of control over the way you do your work, work overload (or underload), lack of support from your managers, conflicting or ambiguous roles, poor relationships with colleagues (including bullying), or poor management of organisational change.

Benefits to tackling stress in your organisation can include increased productivity and efficiency, lower staff turnover and sickness absence, and increased morale.

What law applies?

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000

How and where you can get more help

Managing the causes of work-related stress HSG218
Available from www.hse.gov.uk

Working together to reduce stress: A guide for employees INDG424

Download from www.hse.gov.uk



Does this concern me?

Do you have at least the minimum first-aid provision at your workplace? The minimum would be a suitably stocked first-aid box, a person appointed to take charge of first-aid arrangements and provide information to employees about first-aid arrangements.

Do you know whether you might need to provide more than the minimum?

Do you know which accidents and ill health cases to report, including who should do it, when and how? Employers, the self-employed and people in control of work premises all have duties.

Do you know what accidents cost – and that insurance policies do not cover all the costs?

What do you do if there's an accident at work?

This booklet has been all about prevention. But sometimes things do go wrong. If someone has been hurt or fallen ill at work it's important to take care of them straight away, and make any dangerous conditions safe.

First aid means treating minor injuries at work and giving immediate attention to more serious casualties until medical help is available. Through this initial management of injury or illness suffered at work, lives can be saved and minor injuries prevented from becoming major ones.

Reporting accidents and ill health at work is a legal requirement. The enforcing authorities use the information to see the big picture of where injuries, ill health and accidental losses are occurring, and to advise on preventive action.

Accidents should be reported to your enforcing authority within ten days of the incident. You should complete an NI2508 form (available from HSENI or can be downloaded from www.hseni.gov.uk) or if you are reporting to HSENI you can do this online at www.hseni.gov.uk. Fatalities or major injury accidents must be reported immediately (eg by telephone).

See 'accidents, first aid and work-related ill health' section of the Health and Safety Policy on page 29 of this booklet.

What law applies?

- Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1982
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997

How and where you can get more help

RIDDOR (NI) 97 HSENI

Download from
www.hseni.gov.uk

First aid at work – resources

Download from www.hseni.gov.uk

Health and safety policy statement

Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978

This is the Health and Safety Policy Statement of

(name of company)

Our statement of general policy is:

- to provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our work activities;
- to consult with our employees on matters affecting their health and safety;
- to provide and maintain safe plant and equipment;
- to ensure safe handling and use of substances;
- to provide information, instruction and supervision for employees;
- to ensure all employees are competent to do their tasks, and to give them adequate training;
- to prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health;
- to maintain safe and healthy working conditions; and
- to review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals.

Signed

(Employer)

Date

Review date



Responsibilities

- 1 As the employer you have overall responsibility for health and safety.
- 2 You can delegate responsibility for day-to-day tasks to someone else, eg a manager or supervisor. Make sure they keep you informed about health and safety matters: they are still your overall responsibility.
- 3 You can delegate specific tasks to individuals in your organisation, by workplace area or by topic. Responsibilities should be clearly set so that if there are any health and safety concerns, they can be reported to the right person
- 4 Employees also have legal responsibilities to take care of the health and safety of themselves and others, and to co-operate with you to help you comply with the law.

1 Overall and final responsibility for health and safety is that of

2 Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to

3 To ensure health and safety standards are maintained/ improved, the following people have responsibility in the following areas

Name *Responsibility*

- 4 All employees have to:
- co-operate with supervisors and managers on health and safety matters;
 - not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety;
 - take reasonable care of their own health and safety; and
 - report all health and safety concerns to an appropriate person (as detailed in this policy statement).



Write down your arrangements for doing your risk assessment here. You can use a photocopy of the blank risk assessment template on page 36 of this booklet to record the findings of your risk assessment or download the form from the HSENI website.

Health and safety risks arising from our work activities

- Risk assessments will be undertaken by

- The findings of the risk assessments will be reported to

- Action required to remove/control risks will be approved by



will be responsible for ensuring the action required is implemented.



will check that the implemented actions have removed/reduced the risks.

- Assessments will be reviewed every

or when the work activity changes, whichever is soonest.



You must consult your employees. If you recognise a union and there is a union-appointed safety representative, you must consult them on matters affecting the employees they represent. If you do not have trade unions, you must consult employees either directly or through an elected representative.

Consultation with employees

● Employee representative(s) are

● Consultation with employees is provided by



You will need to ensure that all plant and equipment that requires maintenance is identified, that the maintenance is done and that new or secondhand plant and equipment meets health and safety standards before you buy it.

Safe plant and equipment



will be responsible for identifying all equipment/plant needing maintenance.



will be responsible for ensuring effective maintenance procedures are drawn up.



will be responsible for ensuring that all identified maintenance is implemented.



Any problems found with plant/equipment should be reported to



will check that new plant and equipment meets health and safety standards before it is purchased.



You must assess the risks from all substances hazardous to health under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 (COSHH). These are your COSHH assessments. Write down your arrangements for doing your COSHH assessments here.

Safe handling and use of substances

will be responsible for identifying all substances which need a COSHH assessment.

will be responsible for undertaking COSHH assessments.

will be responsible for ensuring that all actions identified in the assessments are implemented.

will be responsible for ensuring that all relevant employees are informed about the COSHH assessments.

will check that new substances can be used safely before they are purchased.

Assessments will be reviewed every

or when the work activity changes, whichever is soonest.



Write down where you display the Health and Safety Law in NI poster, or where the leaflets are available from, where people can go for health and safety advice and what provision you make for training young workers or trainees.

Information, instruction and supervision

- The Health and Safety Law in NI poster is displayed at/ leaflets are issued by

- Health and safety advice is available from

- Supervision of young workers/trainees will be arranged/undertaken/monitored by



is responsible for ensuring that our employees working at locations under the control of other employers, are given relevant health and safety information.



All employees must be given health and safety induction training when they start work, which should cover basics such as first aid and fire safety. There should also be job specific health and safety training. You also have to provide training if risks change, and refresher training when skills are not frequently used. Write down your arrangements for training here, including arrangements for record keeping.

Competency for tasks and training

● Induction training will be provided for all employees by

● Job specific training will be provided by

● Specific jobs requiring special training are

● Training records are kept at/by

● Training will be identified, arranged and monitored by



Employees must receive specialist health surveillance for certain work. Your COSHH assessments will identify where this specialist health surveillance is needed. You should note down your first aid arrangements here.

Accidents, first aid and work-related ill health

- Health surveillance is required for employees doing the following jobs

- Health surveillance will be arranged by

- Health surveillance records will be kept by/at

- The first aid box(es) is/are kept at

- The appointed person(s)/first aider(s) is/are

- All accidents and cases of work-related ill health are to be recorded in the accident book. The book is kept by/at

-

is responsible for reporting accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the enforcing authority, (HSENI or your district council depending upon where you work).



You must be able to show that you are monitoring health and safety. You can monitor health and safety actively, eg doing spot check visits, or reactively, eg investigating any accidents or ill health. Record your procedures here.

Monitoring

● To check our working conditions, and ensure our safe working practices are being followed, we will

●

is responsible for investigating accidents.

●

is responsible for investigating work-related causes of sickness absences.

●

is responsible for acting on investigation findings to prevent a recurrence.



Record your emergency procedures, how often they are checked and who by.

If you have five or more employees, or require a licence or registration, you must record the significant findings of your fire risk assessment and any actions you have taken to remove or reduce the risk.

Emergency procedures – fire and evacuation

-

is responsible for ensuring the fire risk assessment is undertaken and implemented.

- Escape routes are checked by/every

- Fire extinguishers are maintained and checked by/every

- Alarms are tested by/every

- Emergency evacuation will be tested every

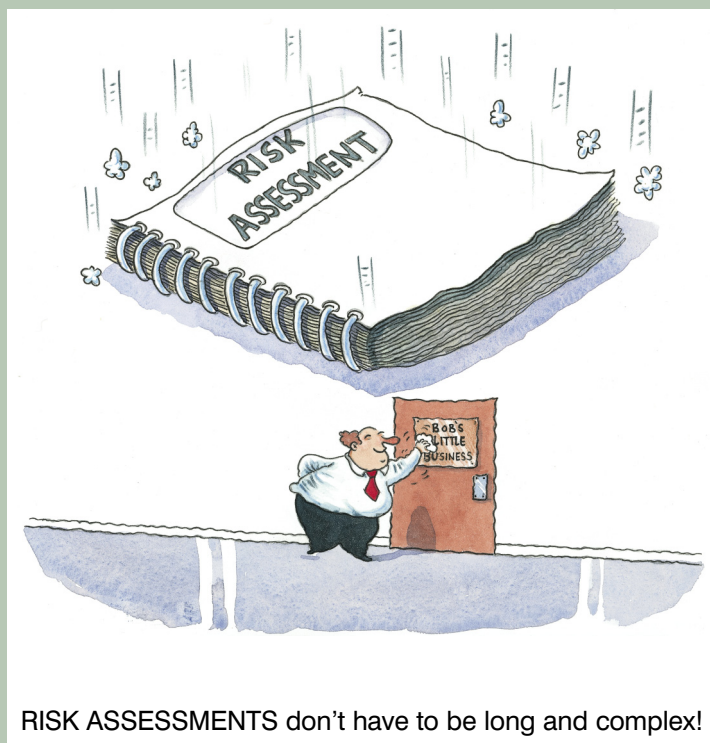
Your risk assessment

Carrying out a risk assessment can help you protect your workers and your business, as well as help you work within the law. It helps you focus on the risks that really matter - the ones that could possibly cause real harm.

A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what in your work could cause harm to people, so that you can decide whether you have taken enough precautions or if you should do more to prevent harm. The law does not expect you to get rid of all risk, but you must protect people as far as is reasonably possible.

When thinking about your risk assessment, remember:

- a **hazard** is anything that may cause harm, such as chemicals, electricity, working from ladders, an open drawer;
- the **risk** is the chance, high or low, that somebody could be harmed by these and other hazards, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be.



RISK ASSESSMENTS don't have to be long and complex!

When you are carrying out your risk assessment, it may be helpful to divide your business into different activities or areas and deal with each of these separately. This will be less daunting than trying to carry out a risk assessment for the whole business. Follow the five steps on the next page.

Step 1

What are the hazards?

First you need to work out how people could be harmed. When you work in a place everyday, it is easy to overlook some hazards. The risk assessment template on pages 34-35 includes tips on how to spot the hazards that matter.

Step 2

Decide who might be harmed and how

Identify groups of people who might be harmed and how they might be harmed, for example shelf stackers may injure their back as they are repeatedly lifting boxes.

Step 3

Evaluate the risks and decide what precautions to take

Once you have spotted the hazards, you then have to decide what to do about them. By law you must do everything that is reasonable to protect people from harm. You need to answer the following questions:

a: What are you already doing?

Start by looking at what you are already doing and compare this with what is accepted as good practice.

b: What further action do you need to take?

If you have decided that there is more you could do to bring yourself up to standard, list the extra precautions you need to take. When you are controlling risks, consider each of the following principles in order and introduce all that apply:

- Try a less risky option.
- Prevent access to the hazard.
- Organise work to reduce exposure to the hazard.
- Provide safe systems of work and written procedures.
- Provide training and supervision.
- Issue personal protective equipment.

Step 4

Record your findings and take action

If you have five or more employees, you are required by law to record the findings of your risk assessment. You can use a photocopy of the blank risk assessment template on page 36 to do this. You can also download a version of the template from the HSENI website. Regardless of the size of your business, it is good practice to record the findings of your risk assessment and share them with your employees. If, like many businesses, you

find that there are quite a lot of improvements that you could make, don't try to do everything at once. Make a plan of action to deal with the most important things first.

a: Who needs to carry out the action?

You should make it clear who in the company is responsible for taking the lead on each action.

b: When is the action needed by?

Make sure that you set a date by which the necessary work is to be finished.

c: Done

As you carry out each action tick it off as 'done' on the risk assessment.

Step 5

Review your risk assessment and update when needed

Very few workplaces stay the same, so it makes sense to review what you are doing regularly. Every year or so, review where you are to make sure you are still improving, or at least not sliding back. Set a date for your review and put it in your diary so you don't forget it.

On pages 34-35 there are more helpful tips for carrying out a risk assessment.

Company name:

Assessment carried out by:

Activity or area	Step 1 What are the hazards?	Step 2 Who might be harmed and how?	Step 3a What are you already doing?
	<p>Spot hazards by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ walking around your workplace;■ asking your employees what they think;■ visiting the <i>Your industry</i> areas of the HSE website■ checking manufacturers' instructions;■ contacting your trade association. <p>Don't forget long-term health hazards.</p>	<p>Identify groups of people. Remember:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ young people, new mothers and women who are pregnant;■ some workers have particular needs;■ people who may not be in the workplace all the time;■ members of the public;■ if you share your workplace think about how your work affects others present. <p>Say how the hazard could cause harm.</p>	<p>List what is already in place to reduce the likelihood of harm or make any harm less serious.</p>

Step 5 Review Date:

- Review your assessment to make sure you are still improving, or at least not sliding back.
- If there is a significant change, don't wait. Check your risk assessment, and amend it when needed.

Date assessment was carried out:

Date of next review:

	Step 3b What further action do you need to take?	Step 4a Who needs to carry out the action?	Step 4b When is the action needed by?	Step 4c Done
	<p>You need to make sure that you have reduced risks 'so far as is reasonably practicable'. An easy way of doing this is to compare what you are already doing with good practice. If there is a difference, list what needs to be done.</p> <p>Remember to prioritise. Deal with those hazards that are high-risk and have serious consequences first.</p>	Clarify who is responsible for taking the lead on each action.	Make sure that a date has been set for completing the necessary work.	Remember to tick off each action when it has been completed.

Company name:.....

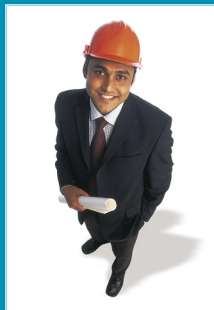
Assessment carried out by:.....

Title

Date assessment was carried out:.....

Date of next review:.....

Activity or area	What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action do you need to take?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done



Further information

HSENI free publications are available from
HSENI, 83 Ladas Drive, Belfast BT6 9FR
Phone: **0800 0320 121** Textphone: **028 9054 6896**
Fax: **028 9023 5383** E mail: **mail@hse ni.gov.uk**
or download from web: **www.hse ni.gov.uk**

HSE priced and free publications are available by mail order from **HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA**
Phone: **01787 881165** Fax: **01787 313995**
Website: **www.hsebooks.co.uk**

This leaflet contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.



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This publication is also available on our website at www.hse ni.gov.uk

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