

# ***JOB SEEKING SKILLS***

**Step 5:  
Working life**



**20: Health and safety in  
the workplace**

# Health and safety in the workplace



Starting a new job can be an exciting, and sometimes stressful time. You will spend most of your first day meeting your new colleagues, finding out about your new role, and learning workplace policies.

A key policy that must be covered as soon as you start work is health and safety (H&S).

All employers have a responsibility to ensure that employees have a safe working environment, but it is important to remember that, as an employee, you are also responsible for your own and others' safety.

You should receive an induction from your employer which should include a health and safety briefing.

## What is workplace health and safety?



- It's about protecting the health and safety of people at work, or those who may be affected by work – including customers and other visitors.
- The laws protect the rights of workers.
- The right to expect that all workers and visitors to their workplaces will co-operate with health and safety rules.

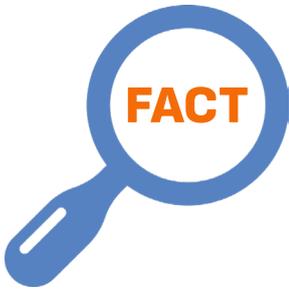


### You're important.

You have a right not to get hurt, at or by your work.

You also have a responsibility to look after yourself and those around you.

Health and safety is not just common sense, you need knowledge to be able to navigate your way safely through the workplace and we have the information you need right here!



The most common accident workplace injury in 2024/25 was slips, trips or falls on the same level, accounting for 30% of all injuries.

(Health and Safety Executive, [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk))

H S E



## Employer Responsibilities

**Health and safety law states that employers must ensure, as far as reasonably practical, the health and safety of all employees.**

**Their responsibilities are to:**

- ensure they follow the law and keep up to date with all legislation - the main legislation is the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)
- display the law and make it visible to employees either by displaying posters in the workplace or issuing leaflets to all staff (see <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/laweasyread.pdf>)
- have a health and safety policy and appoint a responsible person to manage this policy
- ensure that they have the correct insurance in place - most employers will need Employers' Liability Insurance and you can find out more about that here - <https://www.gov.uk/employers-liability-insurance>
- carry out risk assessments to identify hazards and put control measures in place to mitigate the risks
- provide information and training, and involve their workers in health and safety matters
- have the right workplace facilities such as toilets, washbasins and other welfare facilities
- carry out regular fire drills and provide employees with appropriate first aid
- record and report details of specified work-related injuries and incidents (a requirement by law).



# SAFETY FIRST

## THINK SAFE WORK SAFE



### Employee Responsibilities

Just as your employer has a duty to keep you safe, you are also responsible for:

- following any training you have received when using any equipment to ensure that tasks are carried out in a safe way
- taking reasonable care of your own and other people's health and safety
- co-operating with any workplace health and safety policies and procedures
- telling someone (your employer, supervisor, or health and safety representative) if you think the work or inadequate precautions are putting anyone's health and safety at serious risk.

#### What does taking reasonable care mean?

It means considering the following and behaving accordingly.

Your:

- level of experience and skills
- understanding of the job
- access to relevant information
- awareness of the possible consequences to health and safety if you don't do what you can to avoid risk.

# Health and safety – the basics

The area of health and safety has its own language and this section will cover some specific terms that are used.

The first thing to consider is hazards in the workplace.

**What is a hazard?** This is anything that could cause you harm. There are 6 main categories of hazard in the workplace:



**Biological** - including viruses, bacteria, insects, animals and other naturally occurring things that can have an adverse impact on your health. For example, mould, blood and other bodily fluids, harmful plants, sewage, dust and vermin.



**Chemical** - hazardous substances that can cause harm. These can result in both health and physical impacts, such as skin irritation, respiratory system irritation, blindness, corrosion and explosions.



**Physical** - environmental factors that can cause harm to an employee including heights, noise, radiation and pressure.



**Safety** - hazards that create unsafe working conditions. For example, exposed wires or a damaged carpet that might result in a tripping hazard.



**Ergonomic** - are a result of physical factors that can result in musculoskeletal injuries (such as a bad back). For example, a poor workstation setup in an office, poor posture and manual handling.



**Psychosocial** - these hazards include those that can have an adverse effect on an employee's mental health or wellbeing. For example, victimisation, stress and workplace demands.

Hazards exist everywhere and in themselves are not dangerous - it can depend on situations and conditions in the workplace and this is referred to as looking at the associated risks.



### What is a risk?

This is the chance, high or low, that any hazard will cause somebody harm.

Employers need to identify hazards and risks and they do this by completing a risk assessment.

### What is a risk assessment?

This is the process where the person responsible for health and safety identifies hazards and risk factors that could cause harm. They then must weigh up the benefits gained against the risk factors.

If the benefits gained by carrying out this activity outweigh the risk, they put necessary control measures in place to decrease or eliminate the hazard.

### What are control measures?

These are steps that are identified to control any risks by managing, limiting or removing hazards.

## Control measures



There are 5 different types of control measure to consider.

### 1. Elimination

**This should always be considered first when looking at control measures.**

Can the risk be removed entirely from the identified activity?



#### Examples of elimination:

- materials delivered cut to size to remove the use of blades
- cordless equipment to get rid of trailing cables.

## 2. Substitution

**Substitution is the second best control measure to be considered.**

Maybe the risk cannot be removed entirely, but could it be reduced by replacing the material, substance or process with something less dangerous?



### Examples of substitution:

- replacing ladders with tower scaffolds
- substituting a hazardous chemical with a safer alternative.

## 3. Engineering controls

**Third on the list, are engineering controls.** These are usually fixed, temporary or permanent controls.



### Examples of engineering controls:

- extraction machines to remove hazardous dust or fumes from the air
- enclosing dangerous items of machinery or moving parts
- installing guard rails to fall hazards.

## 4. Administrative controls

**Next is administrative controls.** These are rules and systems to carry out the work. What are the procedures that employees need to work safely?



### Examples of administrative controls:

- banning work at height and lifting operations in bad weather
- enforcing a one-way traffic system on site.

## 5. Personal protective clothing and equipment

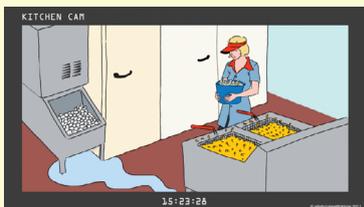
**Last, but not least on the list, is personal protective clothing and equipment (PPE).**

PPE is the last line of defence against a hazard and it can provide added protection for any remaining level of risk, or should other controls fail.



### Examples of PPE:

- use of ear defenders when using noisy equipment
- harnesses and shock-absorbing lanyards where the risk of falls cannot be eliminated completely
- hard hats where there may be risk of tools or materials falling from overhead.



## Staying safe at Work

Please watch this short film that will introduce you to health and safety training in the workplace.

A lot of information was covered in the video, with references to some things you've not heard of before.

To help you understand some of the terms and situations, here are some examples of them in the workplace.

### COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health)



**Working in a hair salon:** Hair colouring chemicals can cause skin irritations and burns if you haven't been trained how to use/mix them, so you shouldn't be asked to do this until you have received the appropriate training.

### PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)



**Working in a garage:** You need proper safety footwear for this workplace as tools can fall onto your feet or you could step on something that pierces through the sole, so trainers are not appropriate. You need to check with your employer if they supply the PPE or if you need to provide your own.

### Fire safety



**All workplaces:** When you start a new job you will get an induction, and as part of this you will be told about the fire safety procedures. This will include evacuation routes/muster points and how to raise the alarm if you spot anything. You may also receive some extra training on the use of fire fighting equipment (extinguishers and blankets).

### Electrical safety



**All workplaces:** All appliances in the workplace should be PAT tested to declare them safe to use, but if you spot something that doesn't look right, such as a bare wire, you should not use the appliance and tell your supervisor.

### Manual handling



**All workplaces:** Lifting and carrying things doesn't just apply to boxes. Make sure you have been properly trained in manual handling techniques and, if relevant, the use of lifting aids.

# Health and Safety Signs

RED means something is prohibited.



No forklift trucks



Do not drink

YELLOW signs give a warning.



Corrosive substances warning



High voltage

BLUE means mandatory.



Hard hat area



Wash your hands

GREEN means emergency.



We have now covered the basics of health and safety but you can find out more information here in your own time:



- [Health and Safety Executive](#) - this is the website of the HSE, who are the government agency responsible for regulations and enforcement of workplace health and safety.
- [ROSPA](#) - the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents website has lots of useful information about the prevention of accidents.



### Activity 1: Quiz

Have a go at the questions on the [Activity 1 worksheet](#) to reinforce some of the information you've read.



### Activity 2: Spot the hazards!

See if you can [find the hazards](#) lurking in this workplace!

Now you know more about health and safety in the workplace, you can move on to

[21: Understanding your pay](#)

Or [click here](#) to return to the main screen.