



STATING YOUR BUSINESS



Guidance on preparing a

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY DOCUMENT

for small firms

This guidance contains an outline health and safety policy statement, which you can complete and use as a way of complying with the law.

The outline statement is aimed at small firms but larger organisations could also use it within individual workplaces or departments.

Introduction

What is a health and safety policy statement?

Your health and safety policy statement sets out how you manage health and safety in **your** organisation. It is a unique document that shows **who** does **what**; and **when** and **how** they do it.

This is an example of a policy statement that you can use, fill in and keep in your workplace. However, you do not have to use this document or format. You are free to record and store the information in any form you choose. This format gives you an idea of the kind of information you need to record.

Why do I need a health and safety policy statement?

The health and safety policy statement is your starting point to managing health and safety in the workplace. By law, (Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 section 2(3)) if you employ five or more people you must have a written health and safety policy. This contains your statement of general policy on health and safety at work and the organisation and arrangements for putting that policy into practice.

Writing a health and safety policy statement is more than just a legal requirement – it is your commitment to planning and managing health and safety. It is the key to achieving acceptable standards, reducing accidents and cases of work-related ill health and it shows your employees that you care for their health and safety.

Who should do what?

With very few exceptions, the responsibility for health and safety rests on you as an employer. However, many day-to-day tasks may be delegated. Your statement should show clearly how these tasks are allocated, but remember, you will still have ultimate responsibility.

You should consult your employees (through safety representatives, if you have any) about the policy statement. Everyone should be able to see from the policy statement exactly who is responsible for different things, such as advice, reporting an accident, and first aid.

When and how should they do it?

Your policy statement should describe your arrangements, ie the systems and procedures you have in place for ensuring employees' health and safety.

You may wish to refer to other documents, eg works' rules, safety checklists, training programmes, emergency instructions, etc. All employees may not need to see all the other documents, but they must see the policy statement itself.

How often do I need to revise the policy statement?

It should be reviewed and possibly revised in the light of experience, or because of operational or organisational changes. It is useful to review the policy regularly (eg annually).

Do I have to do anything else?

Yes, you have other legal duties under other legislation. In particular, under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, you have to assess the risks arising from your work activities and record the significant findings (you can cross-refer to page 5 of this document). You also have to record your arrangements for health and safety (you can use this document to do that). Depending on your type of work, there may be other specific legislation that will apply.

REMEMBER: What you write in the policy has to be put into practice. The true test of a health and safety policy is the actual conditions in the workplace, not how well the statement is written.

How to use this guidance

This guidance is split into three parts. It contains a statement of general policy based on your legal duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. Then you can record your organisational responsibilities and your arrangements to ensure the health and safety of your employees. Notes are included alongside each section to help you. Some useful publications are listed in the notes and at the end of this guidance.

Health and Safety Policy Statement

Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

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

Note 1

Your name must be inserted here. As the employer (ie sole trader, senior partner or managing director) you have overall responsibility for health and safety.

Note 2

If you are not always there, or do not have time to manage on a day-to-day basis, you can delegate this role to someone else, eg director, manager or supervisor. You will need to ensure that they keep you fully informed of health and safety matters – it will still be your overall responsibility.

Note 3

You may delegate functions to people within your organisation, either by specific areas within the workplace or by topic.

You should include their specific responsibilities in their job description (if they have one).

You must also ensure that they are competent to undertake their health and safety responsibilities and have adequate resources to enable them to do their job properly.

It is important that responsibilities are clearly set out – this will make sure that if there are any health and safety concerns, they can be reported to the right person, so they can be dealt with.

You may wish to insert a diagram or chart showing your management structure/arrangements.

Note 4

Employees 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.

Equally, if employees have any concerns over health and safety issues, they should be clear about whom they should tell, so that the concerns can be addressed.

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).

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.

Note

You must assess risks to the health and safety of anyone who may be affected by your work activities, so that you can weigh up whether you have done enough or need to do more to comply with the law – see [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#).

You will find some examples of key areas that you should consider, at the end of this guidance.

You will need to involve a number of different people, including your safety representatives and employees, to do the risk assessments.

You need to record the significant findings of your risk assessments in a separate document. Your policy statement only records your arrangements for ensuring the assessments are done, and are kept up to date.

Once you have done your risk assessments, you must take the necessary action to remove or reduce the risk as far as is reasonably practicable.

You can find more guidance in HSE's free leaflets *Five steps to risk assessment* INDG163 (rev1) 1998 and *A guide to risk assessment requirements: Common provisions in health and safety law* INDG218 1996.

Consultation with employees

Note

You must consult your employees.

If you recognise a trade union and that trade union has appointed a safety representative, you must consult them on matters affecting the employees they represent – see Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1997.

If you do not have trade unions, you must consult employees, either directly or through an elected representative – see Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996.

You may wish to use your works committee or another meeting as a forum for consultation.

If you have a health and safety committee, you could list what it does, who is on it and how often it meets.

- Employee representative(s) are

- Consultation with employees is provided by

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.

Note

You will need to ensure that all plant and equipment (eg lift trucks, vehicles, gas appliances, machinery guarding, ladders, electrical equipment, lifting equipment, air receivers, ventilation plant) that requires maintenance (eg pre-shift checks, servicing, thorough examinations) is identified and that the maintenance is done.

It may be worthwhile using a logbook to record the maintenance checks.

When buying new or second-hand plant and equipment, you must check it meets health and safety standards before buying it.

You can find more guidance in the [Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998](#), [Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998](#) and HSE's *Buying new machinery* INDG271 1998.

Safe handling and use of substances

Note

You must assess the risks from all substances hazardous to health – see **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 1999**.

These are known as your **COSHH assessments**.

You should do assessments on substances you use (eg adhesives, paints, cleaning agent, solvents) and substances generated from work activities (eg dust, fume, vapour).

Your assessment should identify any health risks. If there is a risk you should take steps to remove or control the risk.

You can find more guidance in HSE's: *COSHH: A brief guide to the Regulations* INDG136 (rev1)1999 (free); *COSHH essentials: Easy steps to control chemicals* HSG193 1999 ISBN 0 7176 2421 8 and the *General COSHH ACOP*, *Carcinogens ACOP* and *Biological Agents ACOP* L5 1999 ISBN 0 7176 1670 3.



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.

Information, instruction and supervision

- The Health and Safety Law 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.

Note

The **Health and Safety Information for Employees Regulations 1989** require employers to display a poster (or to provide leaflets) telling employees what they need to know about health and safety.

You are required to have access to competent advice, either in-house or, if not available, external (eg employers' organisations, trade associations, trades unions, TECs, consultants).

If you have young workers and/or take on trainees or students on work experience, you will need to ensure that they are properly instructed and supervised.

You must also do specific risk assessments for young people – you need to take account of their inexperience, lack of awareness of risks and immaturity (see the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**).

If your employees go to work for another employer on your behalf (eg if you are a contractor) you will need to check that they are given relevant health and safety information for that location, by that employer/company.

Competency for tasks and training

Note

All employees must be given health and safety induction training when they start work.

This can be combined with other useful information (eg pay, leave, and hours of work). It needs to cover basic health and safety such as first aid and fire safety.

Employees will need job-specific training, which includes the health and safety aspects of the job.

You also have to provide health and safety training for people when risks change, or periodically, eg if skills do not get used regularly.

Some jobs will require additional special training (eg manual handling, driving, slinging techniques, confined space entry and asbestos removal).

You may wish to refer to your company training programme.

It is important to keep records of training (even training you have provided in-house) to show that employees have received training.

You should monitor the training records, so that refresher training is given when necessary.

- 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

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.

Note

Employees must receive health surveillance for certain work (eg work with flour, lead, chrome, asbestos, noise, isocyanates and some chemicals).

This will identify any health problems early on so that action can be taken before an employee's condition worsens.

Your COSHH assessments (see page 8) should identify all areas and the type of health surveillance needed.

Your records should contain details of the employees, the health surveillance procedures, dates and conclusions. The health care professional doing the surveillance will hold the actual medical records, as these are confidential.

You can find more information in HSE's *Health Surveillance at work* HSG61 1999; *Understanding health surveillance at work: An introduction for employers* INDG304 1999 (free) and in a number of free leaflets on specific substances.

Providing immediate first aid can prevent minor injuries becoming major ones.

As a minimum you must have a first aid box and an appointed person to take charge of first aid requirements. You can find more information in HSE's free leaflets *First aid at work – your questions answered* INDG214 1997 and *Basic advice on first aid at work* INDG215(rev) 1997.

Recording accidents (even minor ones) means you can see whether you have a problem in a particular area.

You must report certain types of accidents and ill health at work, using Form 2508 or Form 2508A – see the [Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations \(RIDDOR\) 1995](#).

Monitoring

Note

You must be able to show that you are checking working conditions and systems of work, ie that you are monitoring health and safety.

You can do this both actively and reactively, ie before and after something goes wrong.

ACTIVELY:

you or any other appointed person can carry out inspections, have reports submitted to you by managers, do spot check visits, safety representative inspections, etc.

Trade union safety reps have the right to carry out inspections and investigate accidents.

REACTIVELY:

you can investigate any accidents or sickness absences that occur.

Investigating accidents is a useful way of reviewing your safety systems – ask yourself why the accident really happened and what you can do to stop it happening again.

Similarly, if you have a number of employees absent because of similar ailments, this might mean there is a problem with their jobs causing ill health.

When you find out what went wrong – put it right.

● 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.

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

Note

You must carry out fire risk assessments, in the same way as you do for health and safety risk assessments.

Your local fire service can tell you your obligations.

For escape routes, extinguishers and alarms, you should state who checks, how often and also where they are based.

You need a routine in case of fire or any other emergency evacuation. You should test your alarms and emergency evacuation procedures regularly.

You can find more information on fire safety in HSE's *Fire safety – an employer's guide* 1999 ISBN 0 11 341229 0.

Some key areas of risk

- Asbestos
- Chemicals
- Confined spaces
- Display screen equipment (VDUs)
- Electricity
- Excavation
- Falling objects/
collapsing structures
- Fire and explosion
- Machinery (including
guarding)
- Manual handling
- Noise
- Pressure systems
- Radiation
- Slips, trips and falls
- Stress
- Substances hazardous
to health (including
dust, fume, etc)
- Temperatures
- Transport (including
carrying dangerous
substances, and
pedestrians in the
workplace)
- Vibration
- Violence to staff
- Work equipment
- Work-related upper limb
disorders
- Working alone
- Working at heights
- Working environment

These are just some examples of key areas; this is not an exhaustive list. Look around your workplace to identify other risk areas. If any risks apply to your work activities, you will need to do risk assessments to check that you have removed or reduced the risk.

You can find more information on risk assessments and the key areas of risk in HSE's:

- *Essentials of health and safety at work;*
- *Health and safety in small firms: An introduction to health and safety;*
- *Good Health is Good Business: Employers' guide;* and
- *Five steps to risk assessment.*

See 'Where can I get more information?' for details of these publications.

Where can I get more information?

If you still need advice on specific points, check first in the guidance referred to in the notes or listed below.

HSE priced publications

Essentials of health and safety at work
HSE Books 1994 ISBN 0 7176 0716 X

Health risk management – A practical guide for managers in small and medium-sized enterprises
HSG137 HSE Books 1995 ISBN 0 7176 0905 7

Management of health and safety at work: Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 Approved Code of Practice and guidance L21 (Second edition)
HSE Books 2000 ISBN 0 7176 2488 9

HSE free leaflets

An introduction to health and safety: Health and safety in small firms
INDG259 HSE Books 1998

Good Health is Good Business: Employers' guide
MISC 136 HSE Books 1999

Managing health and safety: five steps to success
INDG275 HSE Books 1998

Consulting employees on health and safety: A guide to the law
INDG232 HSE Books 1996

RIDDOR explained. Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995
HSE 31(rev1) HSE Books 1999
Also available in priced packs; ISBN 0 7176 2441 2

Five steps to information, instruction and training
INDG213 HSE Books 1996
Also available in priced packs; ISBN 0 7176 1235 X

Five steps to risk assessment
INDG163(rev1) HSE Books 1998
Also available in priced packs; ISBN 0 7176 1565 0

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the references listed in this publication, their future availability cannot be guaranteed.

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Sheffield S3 7HQ.
Website: www.hse.gov.uk

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance as illustrating good practice.

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