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Description automatically generated**Health and Safety**

Health and Safety legislation may seem daunting. However, specialist guidance and advice is freely available and often need only simple steps to ensure compliance. You are probably doing most of these steps already. So, compliance with health and safety legislation should not be  a cause for worry and as a benefit can save your business money by reducing time lost through accidents, ill health, damaged equipment and reputation damage.

Most of the solutions to your health and safety questions can be obtained by asking your local authority what you need to do and then simply doing it.

**Who is responsible for the enforcement of health and safety law?**

The enforcement of health and safety law is split between the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Local Authorities.

Local authorities are responsible for premises such as: shops, offices, hairdressers, cinemas, hotels, leisure activities, warehouses, tyre and exhaust centres, consumer services, e.g. launderettes, churches, banks, beauty parlours,  residential care homes.

The HSE cover the following workplaces nationwide: factories, building sites, car repair, garages, workshops, printers, hospitals, dentists, doctors’ surgeries, schools and universities, dry cleaners, fairgrounds, mines, quarries, farms, railways, chemical plants

**Important things you need to consider**

* Employers must ensure they look after the health, safety, and welfare of their employees. Business should be conducted in such a way not to risk the health & safety of others who are not in your employment, such as your customers.

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  Description automatically generatedIf you have 5 or more employees a written health and safety policy is required. A health and safety policy means writing down the health and safety arrangements for your business  such as the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring, and  review of preventative and protective measures. You should communicate this to any employees.
* If you employ someone you will need employers’ liability insurance and you should display the certificate
* Remember to also display the approved Health and Safety poster in an obvious place where it can be easily read, or give each employee an approved leaflet. Approved posters or leaflets can be acquired from the HSE.
* You need to assess the risks of the work you do and your working environment. This should assess risk to employees and others who may be affected by your work. If you have more than five employees, this assessment needs to be recorded. By risks we mean you should concentrate on what is likely or ‘probable’ to cause harm. Risks to look for might include falls from height, slips and trips, use of potentially dangerous equipment, use of hazardous substances, injury from lifting or carrying heavy items and even the potential for aggression or violence to you and your staff. See out separate check list for carrying out a risk assessment.
* Ensure that you have basic first aid supplies available in the form of a first aid box or a clearly labelled cupboard where you keep your supplies. Make sure this is kept fully stocked at all times. You will need to designate a person responsible for this and for calling the emergency services if required. If you have staff, you should also appoint a deputy in case you are off work.
* You should have a recording system to record all accidents and incidents that occur in your business. This way you can monitor and spot any occurring patterns. An accident that is more serious, such as a death, major injury, and dangerous occurrences such as accidental release of dangerous substance/product must be reported immediately to the HSE. They have a form on their website for you to complete. Really think about all the lifting, shifting and carrying you do. If handling tasks cannot be avoided a risk assessment needs carrying out and you should look to reduce the risk as far as possible. The solution may be simple – wearing heavy duty gloves to avoid cutting your hands on sharp edges and to give some slip protection or reducing the size or weight of the load might be solutions to the problem.

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* There are laws that look at the standard of workplace you operate in. They require you to consider conditions such as workplace temperature, provision of toilets, washing facilities, drinking water and rest areas and also how you intend to dispose of your rubbish.

These still apply if you work from home, although the chances are they are all already in place. Consider how and where you store your work things.   Can children/partners/pets come into contact with something that may harm them?

* How long your staff can work for and the number of breaks they should take is described in a law called ‘Working Time’. Excessive hours or unsuitable shift patterns are likely to lead to poor morale, ill health or accidents caused by fatigue. This also costs the business financially and may damage your reputation. The Working Time law does not apply to the genuinely self- employed (those who do not employ anyone) or to volunteers.

**The Legislation**

The primary legislation for Health and Safety law is the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 however there are also other important pieces of legislation such as the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR).

Health and Safety law is also supported by many, more specific regulations such as the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 and the Personal Protective Equipment at Work regulations 1992.

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Description automatically generated**Generic Health and Safety Advice:**

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

[HSE ‘Health and Safety Made Simple’ (The Basics for Business):](http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/index.htm) [www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/index.htm)

[HSE Guidance on Carrying Out Risk Assessments:](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf) [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf)

[HSE Guidance Page: www.hse.gov.uk/guidance/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/guidance/index.htm)

[HSE Library of leaflets on a broad range of Subjects (Listed](http://www.rospa.com/) [Alphabetically): www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/agindex.htm](http://www.rospa.com/)

[The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA):](http://www.rospa.com/) [www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)

[Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH):](https://www.iosh.com/) [www.iosh.com](http://www.iosh.com)