CHRISTIAN LIFE CHURCH

133 Edgar Street
HR4 9JR

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Document Reviews and updated September 2022
Next review: March 2023

Health and Safety Policy

As a church we understand that we owe a duty of care to ensure the safety of those who visit or use our church, hall or carpark. We also know that, where we are an employer or control premises in certain circumstances, we have to meet the requirements of health and safety law.

We are required to have a written health and safety policy. As such, we have drafted this policy to meet our duty under Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

General statement of policy

Our policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that our activities are carried out safely and do not pose a risk to the health of our employees, volunteers, congregation, visitors and others who may use the church, churchyard or any other building we are responsible for. This will be in accordance with good practice and any relevant statutory provisions where they apply.

The trust accepts its overall responsibility for this. We will ensure that adequate resources are made available to achieve this objective. Any decisions we make will have due regard for it.

We will appoint a member of the trust to have specific responsibility for this policy and its implementation. We will keep health and safety matters under review annually. We will monitor the effectiveness of the policy, amending it where we believe it is no longer valid.

It is the duty of each employee and volunteer to exercise personal responsibility for their own safety and that of others. This policy will be brought to their attention. We will try to ensure that everyone involved with the church plays his or her part in its implementation.

Further detail about our organisation and arrangements for managing health and safety is set out in this document. A copy of it will be kept in the church and made available to others on request.

Organisation and Responsibilities

The trustees will be overall responsible for implementing our policy.

They will ensure that:

- The standards set out in this policy are implemented and maintained
- Where necessary, specialist health and safety assistance are obtained
- Any hazards reported to them are rectified immediately
- Only competent persons carry out repairs, modifications, inspections and tests
- Any accidents are investigated, recorded and reported if necessary
- Relevant health and safety documents and records are retained
- They keep up to date on health and safety matters relevant to the church
- Set a personal example on matters of health and safety.

The staff have day-to-day responsibility for implementing our policy.

They are:

Judy Pearce Daniel Elson Timothy Mitchell

They will ensure that:

- All employees and volunteers are aware of their health and safety responsibilities
- Adequate precautions are taken as set out in this policy and related risk assessments
- Adequate information and training are provided for those that need it
- Any hazards or complaints are investigated and dealt with as soon as possible
- Where defects cannot be corrected immediately, interim steps are taken to prevent danger
- All accidents are reported in-line with the requirements of this policy
- Advice is sought where clarification is necessary on the implementation of this policy
- Set a personal example on matters of health and safety.

All employees and volunteers have a responsibility to cooperate in the implementation of this policy and to take reasonable care of themselves and others while on church business or premises.

They will ensure that they:

- Read this policy and understand what is required of them
- Complete their work taking any necessary precautions to protect themselves and others
- Comply with any safety rules, operating instructions and other working procedures
- Report any hazard, defect or damage, so that this might be dealt with
- Warn any new employees or volunteers of known hazards
- Attend any training required to enable them to carry out their duties safely
- Do not undertake any repair or modification unless they are competent to do so
- Report any accident
- Do not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

Arrangements

This section sets out our general arrangements for managing health and safety and dealing with specific risks. We have removed any points that do not apply to our activities.

General Arrangements Competent Assistance

Where necessary, we will appoint someone who is competent to assist us in meeting our health and safety obligations. Where an appointment is made, we will record the details here.

Our person appointed to assist us is: Daniel Elson

Risk Assessment

We will complete risk assessments to identify what we need to do to comply with health and safety law. We will record our findings, implementing any necessary precautions. We will review and revise these where we suspect that they are no longer valid.

Information and Training

We will provide any necessary information and training for our employees and volunteers in a timely manner. We will keep a record of what is provided. We will also give relevant information to contractors and self-employed people who may need this to complete their work safely.

First Aid

We will provide adequate first aid facilities including – as a minimum – a suitably stocked first aid box and a person who will take charge of the first aid arrangements. We will also provide relevant information for employees and volunteers.

Our first aid box is located in:

Hereford:

Foyer

Kitchen

Outback

Ross: TBC

Leominster: TBC

Our person in charge of first aid arrangements is:

Judy Pearce

Accident Reporting

We will keep an accident book and record details therein. We will report to the enforcing authority and keep records of certain accidents to employees, volunteers and members of the public in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

Our Accident Book is kept in:

Hereford: Foyer First Aid Kit

Ross: TBC

Leominster: TBC

Monitoring

We will make periodic checks to ensure that our precautions remain effective and adequate. We will also ensure that any lifting, work or electrical equipment and church utilities are inspected as necessary to ensure that they remain safe. We will keep records of the checks we make.

Contractors

If we employ contractors, we make sure that they have their own health & safety policy and public and Employers Liability Insurance by asking to see copies of the relevant documents.

Record Keeping

Our Health and Safety Risk Assessments, records and other documents are kept in:

Specific Arrangements

Asbestos

We will take steps to identify the presence of asbestos in our buildings and, if so, assess any risk from it. We will then implement any plan to manage that risk. We will also provide relevant information to others who might need it (for example, building contractors). We will keep records of the checks, assessments and plans we have made. Risk Assessment is in the health and safety folder 'CLC Staff'.

Church Buildings

We will ensure that the fabric of our buildings is regularly inspected to make sure it is safe. Defects will be repaired as soon as is practicable bearing in mind that a faculty may be required. Where necessary, temporary measures will be taken to prevent danger until permanent repairs can be made. This will include glazing.

Church carpark and garden

We will ensure that boundary walls and gates are kept in good repair. We will have trees inspected by a competent person and have any necessary work carried out to make them safe.

Construction Work

Where maintenance, refurbishment and restoration work is planned for our church, we will identify what we need to do to ensure the safety of all those concerned before work starts. We will also determine if we have any responsibilities under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and comply with these if necessary.

Display Screen Equipment

Where our employees and volunteers regularly use computers daily, for continuous periods of an hour or more, we will analyse workstations to identify precautions, implementing these as necessary. We will also provide information, training, eye/eyesight tests (on request) and special spectacles if needed.

Please read the HSE display screen equipment guide at the end of this policy.

Electricity

We will ensure that any electrical system, fixed machine and portable appliances is maintained so as to prevent danger. Any defective equipment will not be used until it is repaired or replaced. We will keep records of the checks made where appropriate.

Events

Where we intend to hold large services and events, we will identify any additional precautions that are necessary and implement these.

Fire

We will complete a specific risk assessment to identify what steps are necessary to prevent, detect and take in the event of a fire. We will record our findings, implementing any necessary precautions. We will review and revise these where we suspect that they are no longer valid.

Heating Systems

We will ensure that any gas heating system is suitably maintained and checked annually by a competent person. Any defects found will be corrected immediately and we will keep records of the checks made.

Hazardous Substances

We only use domestic cleaning or horticultural products and petrol. We will ensure that these are stored, used and disposed of in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions taking, any necessary precautions that are specified.

Please read the HSE working with substances guide at the end of this policy.

Lifting Equipment

We will ensure that any lifting equipment is properly maintained and thoroughly examined periodically by a competent person.

Manual Handling

We will avoid the need for lifting or carrying heavy objects as far as is possible. Where this is not practical, we will make use of lifting aids (such as, trolleys) or other precautions including team lifting.

Please read the HSE manual handling guide at the end of this policy.

Preparation of Food

We will ensure that on those occasions when we prepare food, we use a clean and disinfected work surface, utensils and equipment. We will store food in such a way as to avoid contamination, provide hand-washing facilities and suitable arrangements for the disposal of waste.

Slips and Trips

We will implement suitable precautions to prevent slips or trips, taking account of any difficulty the frail, elderly or disabled may have in negotiating access. We will make periodic checks to ensure that floors, coverings, steps and pathways remain in good condition, free from obstruction and that any precautions (such as, hand rails or lighting) remain adequate. We will correct any defects identified, keeping records of the checks we make. We will have arrangements in place to manage pathways in winter weather.

Working at Height

Where possible we will try and avoid the need for work at height. Where this is not practicable, we will ensure that any work is properly planned to identify suitable precautions. We will make sure that these are implemented, including the provision of any training and checks to ensure the safety of any equipment used.

Please read our working at height checklist at the end of our policy

Work Equipment

Any work equipment (including any hand tools) we provide will be suitable, in good condition and properly maintained. Where necessary, some equipment (such as, ladders) will be regularly checked to make sure they are safe. We will keep records of any checks we make.

Working Alone

We will identify circumstances where our employees and volunteers work alone, and implement suitable precautions to ensure their safety. If you are in the building alone, you must text someone to let them know and text them when you are leaving the building.

Please read the HSE lone working guide at the end of this policy.

Working with display screen equipment (DSE)

A brief guide

This is a web-friendly version of leaflet INDG36(rev4), published 04/13

Introduction

This leaflet will help you to comply with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 and explains what you, as an employer, may need to do to protect your employees from any risks associated with Display Screen Equipment (DSE) (ie computers and laptops). It will also be useful to employees and their representatives.

These Regulations only apply to employers whose workers regularly use DSE as a significant part of their normal work (daily, for continuous periods of an hour or more). These workers are known as DSE users.

These Regulations do **not** apply to workers who use DSE infrequently or for short periods of time. However, the controls described in 'How to control the risk' may still be useful for these workers.

If you have DSE users, you must:

- analyse workstations to assess and reduce risks;
- make sure controls are in place;
- provide information and training;
- provide eye and eyesight tests on request, and special spectacles if needed;
- review the assessment when the user or DSE changes.

For those who employ many users of DSE, this guidance also contains information that may help you manage your legal duties efficiently (see 'Using DSE assessors').

What is DSE?

DSE are devices or equipment that have an alphanumeric or graphic display screen and includes display screens, laptops, touch screens and other similar devices.

What are the health risks with DSE?

Some workers may experience fatigue, eye strain, upper limb problems and backache from overuse or improper use of DSE. These problems can also be experienced from poorly designed workstations or work environments. The causes may not always be obvious and can be due to a combination of factors.

Consulting your employees on DSE

Workplaces where employees are involved in taking decisions about health and safety are safer and healthier. Collaboration with your employees helps you to manage the potential health problems associated with DSE in a practical way by:

- helping spot the risks;
- making sure health and safety controls are practical;
- increasing the level of commitment to working in a healthy way.

You must consult all your employees, in good time, on health and safety matters. In workplaces where a trade union is recognised, this will be through union health and safety representatives. In non-unionised workplaces, you can consult either directly or through other elected representatives.

Consultation involves employers not only giving information to employees, but also listening to them and taking account of what they say before making health and safety decisions.

For further information on your legal duties, see the HSE leaflet *Consulting employees on health and safety: A brief guide to the law* (see 'Further information').

How to control the risk

As an employer, you need to assess the risks associated with using DSE equipment and any special needs of individual staff. You may find the *DSE workstation checklist* (see 'Further information') helpful. This gives practical guidance on workstation assessments and is designed to encourage users to take an active part. If users are suitably trained, they can fill in the checklist themselves.

You should use your assessment to decide what needs to be done and check that action is taken.

Make a record of your significant findings. Any record you produce should be simple and focused on controls. If you have fewer than five employees, you do not have to write anything down. But it is useful to do this, so you can review it at a later date, for example if something changes. If you have five or more employees, you are required by law to write it down.

Few workplaces stay the same, so it makes sense to review what you are doing on an ongoing basis.

The risks from DSE can be controlled using the following straightforward, low-cost controls.

Getting comfortable

The following may help users:

- Forearms should be approximately horizontal and the user's eyes should be the same height as the top of the screen.
- Make sure there is enough work space to accommodate all documents or other equipment. A document holder may help avoid awkward neck and eye movements.
- Arrange the desk and screen to avoid glare, or bright reflections. This is often easiest if the screen is not directly facing windows or bright lights.

- Adjust curtains or blinds to prevent intrusive light.
- Make sure there is space under the desk to move legs.
- Avoid excess pressure from the edge of seats on the backs of legs and knees. A footrest may be helpful, particularly for smaller users.

Well-designed workstations

Keyboards and keying in (typing)

- A space in front of the keyboard can help you rest your hands and wrists when not keying.
- Try to keep wrists straight when keying.
- Good keyboard technique is important – you can do this by keeping a soft touch on the keys and not overstretching the fingers.

Using a mouse

- Position the mouse within easy reach, so it can be used with a straight wrist.
- Sit upright and close to the desk to reduce working with the mouse arm stretched.
- Move the keyboard out of the way if it is not being used.
- Support the forearm on the desk, and don't grip the mouse too tightly.
- Rest fingers lightly on the buttons and do not press them hard.

Reading the screen

- Make sure individual characters on the screen are sharp, in focus and don't flicker or move. If they do, the DSE may need servicing or adjustment.
- Adjust the brightness and contrast controls on the screen to suit lighting conditions in the room.
- Make sure the screen surface is clean.
- When setting up software, choose text that is large enough to read easily on screen when sitting in a normal comfortable working position.
- Select colours that are easy on the eye (avoid red text on a blue background, or vice versa).

Changes in activity

Breaking up long spells of DSE work helps prevent fatigue, eye strain, upper limb problems and backache. As the employer you need to plan, so users can interrupt prolonged use of DSE with changes of activity. Organised or scheduled rest breaks may sometimes be a solution.

The following may help users:

- Stretch and change position.
- Look into the distance from time to time, and blink often.
- Change activity before users get tired, rather than to recover.
- Short, frequent breaks are better than longer, infrequent ones.

Timing and length of changes in activity or breaks for DSE use is not set down in law and arrangements will vary depending on a particular situation. Employers are not responsible for providing breaks for the self-employed.

Portable computers

These same controls will also reduce the DSE risks associated with portable computers. However, the following may also help reduce manual handling, fatigue and postural problems:

- Consider potential risks from manual handling if users have to carry heavy equipment and papers.

- Whenever possible, users should be encouraged to use a docking station or firm surface and a full-sized keyboard and mouse.
- The height and position of the portable's screen should be angled so that the user is sitting comfortably and reflection is minimised (raiser blocks are commonly used to help with screen height).
- More changes in activity may be needed if the user cannot minimise the risks of prolonged use and awkward postures to suitable levels.
- While portable systems not in prolonged use are excluded from the regulations some jobs will use such devices intermittently and to support the main tasks. The degree and intensity of use may vary. Any employer who provides such equipment still has to risk assess and take steps to reduce residual risks.

DSE user training

You must provide information, instruction and health and safety training to users to help them identify risks and safe work practices. When training users, consider explaining:

- the risks from DSE work and the controls you have put in place;
- how to adjust furniture;
- how to organise the workplace to avoid awkward or frequently repeated stretching movements;
- how to clean the screen and mouse;
- who to contact for help and to report problems or symptoms;
- how to use the *Display screen equipment (DSE) workstation checklist* (see 'Further information') if users are going to make their own assessment.

You may need to retrain users if you make significant changes to workstations.

Providing eye tests and any necessary spectacles for DSE work

There is no evidence to suggest that DSE work will cause permanent damage to eyes or eyesight. Eye tests are provided to ensure users can comfortably see the screen and work effectively without visual fatigue.

If a user or a potential user requests an eye test you are required to provide one. If the test shows that the user needs glasses specifically for DSE work, you must pay for a basic pair of frames and lenses. Eye tests are not an entitlement for the self-employed.

Users are entitled to further tests if DSE work is considered to cause them visual fatigue and at regular intervals after the first test.

The arrangements you make to provide eye and eyesight tests can vary. For example, some employers let users arrange tests for themselves (and give the employer the bill); others prefer to send all their staff to be tested by one optician. The following may help you when setting up your arrangements:

- contact a number of opticians to make sure you get a competitive rate;
- ask if they will come to you to carry out the eye tests;
- ask for standard information about each user test. This should say if the user needs glasses for DSE work, and when they should be retested;
- tell users what arrangements you have made;

- make sure users understand what you will and won't pay for.

You only need to provide glasses for the DSE work. If users' normal glasses are suitable for DSE work, you don't need to pay for them. You don't have to pay for expensive frames or lenses.

Review

DSE assessments need to be reviewed when:

- major changes are made to the equipment, furniture, work environment or software;
- users change workstations;
- the nature of work tasks change considerably;
- it is thought that the controls in place may be causing other problems.

Using DSE assessors

If you employ many users of DSE, it may help to appoint someone competent to act as an assessor. The assessor can help to:

- identify who is covered by the Regulations;
- assess workstation risks and put control measures in place;
- provide training.

Training assessors

Trained assessors can help you recognise risky workstation layouts, environments and practices. Make sure whoever you choose to become an assessor (it may be more than one person) knows what is expected of them. You will also need to make sure assessors have taken any necessary actions to tackle the problems that have been identified.

It is worth providing assessor training on the following:

- how to review user assessments or checklists to identify any additional controls;
- how to tackle problems the user is unable to solve;
- deciding when additional information and help is needed, and where to go for it;
- how to record significant findings.

Training products for assessors are available from many organisations and whatever training methods you use, you should check afterwards that assessors have understood the information and reached an adequate level of competence.

When analysing the completed checklists, it may be useful for assessors to consider the following:

- deal with the biggest problems first;
- investigate all reports of aches and pains from users;
- try to identify the causes of risk by looking at all potential causes. For example poor posture may be due to bad seating, **or** sitting awkwardly to avoid glare on the screen, **or** leaning forward to use the keyboard because the chair arm rests prevent it from being close enough to the workstation, **or** a poorly positioned mouse;

- remember to assess all the risks – look at things like task demands and changes in activity, as well as the physical aspects of the workstation;
- take account of individuals' special needs, such as users with a disability.

Further reading

Aching arms (or RSI) in small businesses: Is ill health due to upper limb disorders a problem in your workplace? Leaflet INDG171(rev1) HSE Books 2003 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg171.pdf

Consulting employees on health and safety: A brief guide to the law Leaflet INDG232(rev2) HSE Books 2013 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg232.htm

Display screen equipment (DSE) workstation checklist Leaflet CK1 HSE Books 2013 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck1.htm

Work with display screen equipment: Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002: Guidance on Regulations L26 (Second edition) HSE Books 2003 ISBN 978 0 7176 2582 6 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l26.htm

For businesses in office or retail premises, contact your local authority to speak to an Environmental Health Officer.

Further information

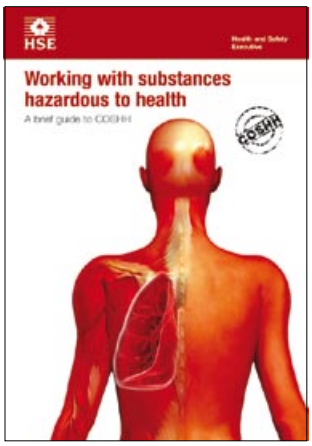
For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit www.hse.gov.uk. You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory, unless specifically stated, 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.

This leaflet is at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf.

Working with substances hazardous to health

A brief guide to COSHH



This is a web-friendly version of leaflet INDG136(rev5), revised 10/12

Introduction

This leaflet describes how to control hazardous substances at work, so they do not cause ill health. It will help you understand what you need to do to comply with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 (as amended) which apply to the way you work with these substances.

This leaflet provides measures that you, as an employer, may need to do to protect your employees from hazardous substances at work. It will also be useful to employees and their safety representatives.

Why do I need to read this leaflet?

Every year, thousands of workers are made ill by hazardous substances, contracting lung disease such as asthma, cancer and skin disease such as dermatitis. These diseases cost many millions of pounds each year to:

- industry, to replace the trained worker;
- society, in disability allowances and medicines; and
- individuals, who may lose their jobs.

You, as the employer, are responsible for taking effective measures to control exposure and protect health. These measures can also improve production or cut waste.

Myth 'Of course it's safe – we've always done it this way.'

Reality Some diseases take years to develop. If exposure is high because the task has always been done that way, maybe it's time for a change.

Looking after your business

Your aim in running your business is to make a profit. You know what you do, and how you are doing it. You know what 'processes' and 'tasks' are involved. You know the short cuts. Ensuring your workers remain healthy may also lead to healthy profits.

Which substances are harmful?

- Dusty or fume-laden air can cause lung diseases, eg in welders, quarry workers or woodworkers.
- Metalworking fluids can grow bacteria and fungi which cause dermatitis and asthma.
- Flowers, bulbs, fruit and vegetables can cause dermatitis.
- Wet working, eg catering and cleaning, can cause dermatitis.
- Prolonged contact with wet cement in construction can lead to chemical burns and/or dermatitis.
- Benzene in crude oil can cause leukaemia.

Many other products or substances used at work can be harmful, such as paint, ink, glue, lubricant, detergent and beauty products.

Myth 'It's natural so it can't be harmful.'

Reality Natural materials can be harmful. For example, henna can cause dermatitis and asthma, wood dust can cause asthma, stone or concrete dust can cause lung disease such as silicosis, and citrus oils can cause skin problems.

Ill health caused by these substances used at work is preventable. Many substances can harm health but, used properly, they almost never do.

Find out the dangers in your business – ask your supplier, your trade association, and check for your industry on HSE's website: www.hse.gov.uk.

Substances can also have other dangerous properties. They may be flammable, for example solvent-based products may give off flammable vapour. Clouds of dust from everyday materials, such as wood dust or flour, can explode if ignited. This leaflet does not deal with flammability or explosion hazards (see 'Find out more').

Look at each substance

Which substances are involved? In what way are they harmful? You can find out by:

- checking information that came with the product, eg a safety data sheet;
- asking the supplier, sales representative and your trade association;
- looking in the trade press for health and safety information;
- checking on the Internet, eg HSE's website pages for your trade.

Think about the task

If the substance is harmful, how might workers be exposed? By:

Myth 'I don't work with harmful substances.'

Reality Most businesses use substances that can be hazardous to health – even something as simple as flour can act as a substance hazardous to health.

- breathing in gases, fumes, mist or dust?
- contact with the skin?
- swallowing?
- contact with the eyes?
- skin puncture?

Bear these in mind when you look at the tasks.

Exposure by breathing in

Once breathed in, some substances can attack the nose, throat or lungs while others get into the body through the lungs and harm other parts of the body, eg the liver.

Exposure by skin contact

Some substances damage skin, while others pass through it and damage other parts of the body. Skin gets contaminated:

- by direct contact with the substance, eg if you touch it or dip your hands in it;
- by splashing;
- by substances landing on the skin, eg airborne dust;
- by contact with contaminated surfaces – this includes contact with contamination inside protective gloves.

Exposure by swallowing

People transfer chemicals from their hands to their mouths by eating, smoking etc without washing first.

Exposure to the eyes

Some vapours, gases and dusts are irritating to eyes. Caustic fluid splashes can damage eyesight permanently.

Exposure by skin puncture

Risks from skin puncture such as butchery or needlestick injuries are rare, but can involve infections or very harmful substances, eg drugs.

Safety data sheets

Products you use may be 'dangerous for supply'. If so, they will have a label that has one or more hazard symbols. Some examples are given here.

These products include common substances in everyday use such as paint, bleach, solvent or fillers. When a product is 'dangerous for supply', by law, the supplier must provide you with a safety data sheet. Note: medicines, pesticides and cosmetic products have different legislation and don't have a safety data sheet. Ask the supplier how the product can be used safely.

Safety data sheets can be hard to understand, with little information on measures for control. However, to find out about health risks and emergency situations, concentrate on:

- Sections 2 and 16 of the sheet, which tell you what the dangers are;
- Sections 4-8, which tell you about emergencies, storage and handling.

Since 2009, new international symbols have been gradually replacing the European symbols. Some of them are similar to the European symbols, but there is no single word describing the hazard. Read the hazard statement on the packaging and the safety data sheet from the supplier.

European symbols

New International symbols

Hazard checklist

- ☐ Does any product you use have a danger label?
- ☐ Does your process produce gas, fume, dust, mist or vapour?
- ☐ Is the substance harmful to breathe in?
- ☐ Can the substance harm your skin?
- ☐ Is it likely that harm could arise because of the way you use or produce it?
- ☐ What are you going to do about it?
  - Use something else?
  - Use it in another, safer way?
  - Control it to stop harm being caused?

Myth 'What do you expect – it's a dirty job!'

Reality Why does your job need to be dirty? Think about changing the way you work to produce cleaner processes.

Assessing risk

Risk assessment is not just a paper exercise. It's about taking sensible steps to prevent ill health. You need to know how workers are exposed, and to how much, before you can decide if you need to do anything to reduce their exposure. The COSHH Regulations require employers to assess the risk to their employees, and to prevent or adequately control those risks. Sometimes, it's easy to judge the amount of exposure to substances and decide what you can do about it.

When the task involves very small amounts of material, even if these are harmful, when there is little chance of it escaping, the risk is low. But the risk in a different task – such as cleaning up and disposal – will be higher because the harmful substance may be breathed in or get onto the skin.

When the task involves larger amounts of material, with obvious leaks, exposure is higher and so is the risk. Whether the substance is harmful or not, your need to control it is obvious. Decide what measures you need to take, and when.

If you have five or more employees, you must record your assessment but, even if you have fewer than five, it makes sense to write down what steps you have taken to identify the risks. And the really important part is making a list of the actions you are taking to control the risks to health. You can look at examples of risk assessments for different industries on www.hse.gov.uk/risk/casestudies.

HSE has developed a free internet tool for identifying good control practice: www.coshh-essentials.org.uk. It covers a wide range of processes and activities and also produces advice for products that have safety data sheets.

However, there may be no 'good practice' advice available for your process. Where this is small-scale with obvious control measures, you can do the assessment yourself. In other cases, or where you are not sure, ask your supplier, trade association or other reliable information sources. You may need professional advice such as from an occupational hygienist – see 'Getting help'.

What are exposure control measures?

Control measures are always a mixture of equipment and ways of working to reduce exposure. The right combination is crucial. No measures, however practical, can work unless they are used properly.

So any 'standard operating procedure' should combine the right equipment with the right way of working. This means instructing, training and supervising the workers doing the tasks.

You need control measures that work and continue to work – all day, every day.

Examples of control measures

Substance, process	Control equipment	Way of working	Managing
■ Cleaning with solvent on rag.	■ Use a rag holder. ■ Provide a small bin with a lid for used rags.	■ Avoid skin contact. ■ Reduce solvent vapour from used rags.	■ Check controls are used. ■ Safe disposal.
■ Dust and sparks from abrasive wheel.	■ Put an enclosure around the wheel and extract the air to a safe place.	■ Check the airflow indicator. ■ Make sure the extraction works.	■ Maintain controls. ■ Test controls as required by law.
■ Fume from cutting demolition scrap.	■ Ventilated welding helmet, gloves. ■ Washing facilities.	■ Work outdoors upwind of the fume wherever possible. ■ Allow the fume to clear before removing helmet.	■ Check if there is any lead paint on the scrap being cut. ■ Carry out health checks.
■ Cutting-fluid mist from a lathe. ■ Swarf.	■ Put an enclosure around the lathe and extract the air to a safe place. ■ Protective gloves.	■ Use skin-care products. ■ Make sure the extraction works. ■ Allow time for the mist to clear from the enclosure before opening it.	■ Train workers. ■ Check and maintain fluid quality. ■ Test controls as required by law. ■ Carry out health checks.
■ Dust from disc cutter on stone worktop.	■ Use an enclosure to extract air to a safe place. ■ High-efficiency vacuum cleaner.	■ Cut and polish worktops inside an enclosure. ■ Vacuum up dust.	■ Test and maintain controls. ■ Carry out health checks.

Myth 'They wouldn't sell it to us if it wasn't safe.'

Reality Just because something is available to buy, does not mean it is safe – you can buy cyanide for industrial use.

Choosing control measures

In order of priority:

1 Eliminate the use of a harmful product or substance and use a safer one.
2 Use a safer form of the product, eg paste rather than powder.
3 Change the process to emit less of the substance.
4 Enclose the process so that the product does not escape.
5 Extract emissions of the substance near the source.
6 Have as few workers in harm's way as possible.
7 Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, coveralls and a respirator. PPE must fit the wearer.

If your control measures include 5, 6 and 7, make sure they all work together.

Control equipment

Control equipment comes in many forms. It includes ventilation to extract dust, mist and fume; glove boxes and fume cupboards; spray booths and refuges (clean rooms in dirty work areas). It also includes using water to reduce dust, and systems for disinfecting cooling water.

For control equipment, your supplier should provide a 'user manual'. If you don't have one, ask for it. And if this is impossible, you may need professional help to write one. The user manual should set out schedules for checks, maintenance and parts replacement. For example it should include:

Myth 'I've given them all masks – problem solved!'

Reality This won't solve it. Control the source of exposure and then they might not need masks.

- a description of the system;
- the daily checks the worker or supervisor needs to carry out, eg the ventilation is turned on, the airflow indicator gives the right reading;
- the weekly or monthly checks the supervisor or owner needs to carry out, eg of equipment wear and tear, and that short cuts are not creating dangers;
- details of any thorough examination and test;
- signs of wear and control failure;
- a list of replaceable parts;
- a description of how operators should use the system so it works effectively.

Remedy defects in good time. It is pointless making checks if you take no action when something is wrong. And you are not managing health and safety properly if the 'thorough examination and test' produces a long list of 'actions needed'.

Keep simple records of your checks and actions, eg in a logbook, and keep these records for at least five years.

Staying in control: Checking and maintaining

Once you've got control, you need to keep it. As the employer, you must make sure that the control measures (equipment and the way of working) keep working properly.

You should name someone to be in charge of checking and maintaining control measures. It could be you, or someone you appoint, as long as they know what they need to do, and are able to do it. That is, they are 'competent' to:

- check that the process isn't emitting uncontrolled contaminants;
- check that the control equipment continues to work as it was designed;
- check that workers follow the right way of working.

Two of the most common control measures where maintenance is critical are local exhaust ventilation (LEV) and personal protective equipment (PPE).

Local exhaust ventilation (LEV)

If you use local exhaust ventilation to control exposure, it needs regular checking and thorough examination and testing at least once every 14 months or at more frequent intervals if you are using it with one of the processes listed in Schedule 4 of COSHH.

Many people, eg engineers or insurance companies can carry out thorough examination and testing of LEV. Whoever does the work must be competent – see 'Getting help'.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Personal protective equipment is often used as part of control measures. This also needs checking and maintenance because, if it fails, it no longer provides protection and exposes the wearer to danger. The users need to know exactly what they are doing, and so do the supervisors.

PPE suppliers and trade associations can tell you about training in how to use it properly. See 'Getting help' and 'Further information'.

Checklist for good control practice

- ☐ Do you design and run your processes to keep the spread of contaminants as low as possible?
- ☐ Do you think about all routes of exposure – breathing in, on skin or swallowing?
- ☐ Do you choose control measures according to the amount of substance, how it gets into the body and how much harm it will cause?
- ☐ Do you make sure that measures are effective, easy to use, and work properly?
- ☐ Do you also need to issue personal protective equipment (PPE)?
- ☐ Do you check regularly that measures continue to work, and keep simple records?
- ☐ Do you tell workers about the dangers and how to use control measures properly?
- ☐ Do you avoid increasing the overall health and safety risks when making changes?

Skills and experience

Competence

Ensure that whoever designs, installs, maintains and tests your control measures is competent – they have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience. You can assess the competence of equipment and service providers with questions such as:

- Have you done this sort of work before?
- What are your qualifications?
- Do you belong to a professional organisation?
- Can I speak to previous clients?

Ideally, you want someone who knows your industry, has a successful track record, and gives good value for money.

Worker involvement

Involve your workers in developing control measures to make sure they are suitable for the way they carry out the work. Encourage them to suggest improvements, and to report anything they think might be going wrong.

Training, instruction and information

Explain to your workers, and anyone else who needs to know, what the dangers are. It is poor practice just to hand them a page of written information.

- Show workers how to use control measures properly, and how to check that they are working.
- Carry out practice drills for cleaning up spills safely – do this before any spillages happen.
- If workers need to use respirators, they also need face fitting and training.
- If they need to use protective gloves, they need to know how to put them on and take them off without contaminating their skin. See ‘Find out more’.

Keeping workers healthy

Monitoring exposure

Monitoring normally means air sampling but it may also involve taking biological samples, eg breath or urine. Monitoring normally makes reference to 'Workplace Exposure Limits' (WELs) published by HSE. These limits should not be exceeded (see EH40 in 'Find out more').

It is wasteful to try monitoring before you have put any control measures in place (see COSHH essentials sheet G409 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/g409.pdf on air monitoring).

Health checks

If your trade press, HSE, or other information, shows there is a problem with health in your trade, such as asthma or dermatitis, your employees may need special health checks. The most common checks are for respiratory disease such as asthma and skin disease. See 'Find out more'.

REACH

REACH is a European Union regulation concerning the **R**egistration, **E**valuation, **A**uthorisation and restriction of **CH**emicals. It came into force on 1 June 2007 and replaces a number of European Directives and Regulations with a single system.

REACH will operate alongside COSHH and is designed so that better information on the hazards of chemicals and how to use them safely will be passed down the supply chain by chemical manufacturers and importers through improved safety data sheets.

Further information can be found on HSE's website: www.hse.gov.uk/reach/ and on the European Chemical Agency's website: www.echa.europa.eu/home_en.asp.

Getting help

What and who?	Trade association	HSE	Consultants/ service suppliers	Local health and safety groups
Good control	✓	✓	✓	✓
Testing LEV	✓	✓	✓	
Training	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monitoring		✓	✓	
Health checks		✓	✓	

This is not an inclusive list, but some useful sources of information and help are:

■ **The Occupational Safety and Health Consultants Register (OSHCR)** www.hse.gov.uk/oshcr/index.htm

OSHCR is a register of consultants who can offer general advice to UK businesses to help them manage health and safety risks.

■ **British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS)** 5/6 Melbourne Business Court, Millennium Way, Pride Park, Derby, DE24 8LZ. Tel: 01332 298101 www.bohs.org.

BOHS is the professional body for occupational hygienists, who understand how workplace hazards affect worker health and systems to control risks to health from work. The website has a list of consultants.

■ **Health & Safety Laboratory (HSL)** Business Development Group, Health & Safety Laboratory, Harpur Hill, Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 9JN. Tel: 01298 218000 www.hsl.gov.uk.

HSL's services include specialist advice and consultancy, risk assessment, and workplace monitoring (including biological monitoring).

■ **Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)** The Grange, Highfield Drive, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 1NN. Tel: 0116 2573100 www.iosh.co.uk.

IOSH is the association for health and safety professionals. The website allows you to search for consultants.

■ **United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS)** 21-47 High Street, Feltham, Middlesex TW13 4UN. Tel: 02089 178400 www.ukas.com.

The UKAS website has a search function to find accredited testing and inspection service providers.

■ **Trade associations** Health and safety information is often produced by trade associations and published in the trade press.

■ **Occupational health professionals (doctors or nurses)** Look in Yellow Pages or other trade indexes for occupational health under 'Health and Safety Consultants' or 'Health Authorities and Services', or visit www.nhsplus.nhs.uk.

■ **Safety Groups UK (SGUK)** Edgbaston Park, 353 Bristol Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B5 7ST Tel: 0121 248 2011 www.safetygroupsuk.org.uk

Find out more

HSE COSHH website: www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/index.htm

A short guide to the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 Leaflet INDG174(rev1) HSE Books 2005 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg174.pdf

Clearing the air: A simple guide to buying and using local exhaust ventilation (LEV) Leaflet INDG408 HSE Books 2008 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg408.pdf

EH40/2005 Workplace exposure limits: Containing the list of workplace exposure limits for use with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended) Environmental Hygiene Guidance Note EH40 (Second edition) HSE Books 2011 ISBN 978 0 7176 6446 7 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/eh40.htm

Fire and explosion: A brief guide to DSEAR in the workplace Leaflet INDG370(rev1) HSE Books 2012 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg370.pdf

Preventing contact dermatitis at work Leaflet INDG233(rev1) HSE Books 2007 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg233.pdf

Read the label: How to find out if chemicals are dangerous Leaflet INDG352(rev1) HSE Books 2010 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg352.pdf

Respiratory sensitisers and COSHH: Breathe freely – An employers' leaflet on preventing occupational asthma Leaflet INDG95(rev2) HSE Books 1995 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg95.pdf

Further information

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit www.hse.gov.uk/. You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory, unless specifically stated, 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.

This leaflet can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg136.htm

Manual handling at work

A brief guide

01/20 INDG143(rev4)

You can buy this leaflet at
https://books.hse.gov.uk/

This is a web version of the printed edition

TSO London

Introduction

As an employer, you must protect your workers from the risk of injury and ill health from hazardous manual handling tasks in the workplace. This leaflet will help you do that. It includes simple risk filters to help you identify which manual handling activities are hazardous.

Manual handling means transporting or supporting a load by hand or bodily force. It includes lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, moving or carrying a load. A load is a moveable object, such as a box or package, a person or an animal, or something being pushed or pulled, such as a roll cage or pallet truck.

What's the problem?

Manual handling injuries are part of a wider group of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). The term 'musculoskeletal disorders' includes injuries and conditions that can cause pain to the back, joints and limbs.

This leaflet focuses on manual handling, which is one of the main causes in the development of musculoskeletal disorders, particularly back pain. For the latest statistics, visit the HSE website.

Manual handling risks can be found across all kinds of workplaces – on farms and building sites, in factories, offices, warehouses, hospitals and while making deliveries. Heavy manual labour, repetitive handling, awkward postures and previous or existing injuries or conditions are all risk factors for developing MSDs. Work may also make worse an injury which was not caused at work, such as a sports injury. There is more advice on MSDs on the HSE website.[1]

Taking the action described here will help prevent injuries and ill health, but you can't prevent all MSDs. Encourage workers to report any signs and symptoms to you or their worker representative at an early stage, before they become more serious, so you can take steps to reduce the risk.

If your workers have developed symptoms, consider taking advice from an occupational health provider on a worker's fitness for work and any restrictions or adaptations to their work that may be required.

What does the law say?

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations[2] require you to assess the risks to the health and safety of your workers. Where this identifies hazardous manual handling of loads, you should also comply with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations (the Manual Handling Regulations).[3]

The Manual Handling Regulations set out a clear hierarchy of measures you must follow to prevent and manage the risks from hazardous manual handling:

- **avoid** hazardous manual handling operations, 'so far as reasonably practicable';*
- **assess** the risk of injury to workers from any hazardous manual handling that can't be avoided;
- **reduce** the risk of injury to workers from hazardous manual handling to as low as reasonably practicable.

Workers have duties too. They should:

- follow systems of work in place for their health and safety;
- use properly any equipment provided for their health and safety;
- cooperate with you on health and safety matters;
- inform you if things change or they identify hazardous handling activities;
- take care to make sure their activities do not put others at risk.

Consult and involve your workforce. Your workers and their representatives know first-hand what the risks in the workplace are and can often suggest practical solutions to control them.[4]

*This means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the real risk in terms of money, time or trouble. However, you do not need to take action if it would be grossly disproportionate to the level of risk.

Avoid hazardous manual handling

Eliminate handling the load

Can you eliminate hazardous manual handling by not moving loads, for example, by looking at whether the work could be done in a different way:

- Does the item really need to be moved, or can the activity be done safely where it already is by redesigning the task?
- Can products or materials be delivered directly to where they will be used?

Automation or mechanisation

If handling the load cannot be avoided, consider whether the operations can be automated or mechanised to eliminate the manual part of the handling. The best time to make decisions about this is when plant or systems of work are being designed.

- Can you use materials handling equipment or mechanical aids to eliminate or reduce the risks you identify in your risk assessment? Can you use, for example, a conveyor, a chute, an electric-powered pallet truck, an electric or hand-powered hoist, or a lift truck to reduce the risk of injury? See *Making the best use of lifting and handling aids* for more information.[5]
- Can you use robotics technology, for example, in production lines?
- When introducing automation or mechanisation, make sure you avoid introducing new risks (for example, when maintaining equipment or when things break down).
- Make sure your workers are trained to use any equipment you introduce, such as lift trucks.

Assess the risks

Where you identify risks from hazardous manual handling in your workplace that cannot be avoided, you must do a manual handling risk assessment to help you decide what you need to do to manage these risks. Make sure your workforce is fully involved in the risk assessment process.

Consider risks arising from:

- the task;
- the load;
- the working environment;
- individual capacity;
- any materials handling equipment or handling aids used;
- how you organise and allocate work;
- the pace, frequency and duration of the work.

Make sure you take account of the individual requirements of workers who may be especially at risk, for example:

- new or expectant mothers;
- people with disabilities, which may make it more difficult to do a particular task;
- those returning to work after a recent manual handling injury, who may be on a phased return to work;
- inexperienced new, young or temporary workers;
- older workers;
- contractors, homeworkers or lone workers;
- migrant workers who may not have English as their first language.

You also need to take account of psychosocial risk factors. These may affect workers' psychological responses to their work and workplace conditions. Examples are high workloads, tight deadlines and lack of control over the work and working methods, which may make people more likely to develop MSDs.

How detailed should my risk assessment be?

The amount of detail required by your manual handling risk assessments will depend on a number of factors, including the level of risk and complexity of the tasks being carried out. Using HSE's simple risk filter(s) as a first step can help you to initially identify low- and high-risk tasks. This will help you decide your priorities for more detailed assessments of your higher-risk tasks.

HSE's guidance on the Manual Handling Regulations (L23) *Manual handling*[3] contains in-depth advice on risk assessment. If you choose to use HSE's suggested approach, there are three levels of detail:

- **simple filters** to distinguish low-risk tasks from those which need a more detailed assessment;
- **HSE's risk assessment tools**, the *Manual handling assessment charts (the MAC tool)*[6] and *Risk assessment of pushing and pulling (RAPP) tool*[7] which help you identify high-risk handling operations and prioritise action to control the risks if the tasks fall outside the simple risk filters;
- **a full risk assessment**. There are online checklists[8] available if you need to carry out a full risk assessment for lifting and carrying or pushing and pulling.

Simple filters

Use the guideline filters for lifting and lowering in Figure 1 to help you identify low-risk tasks. The Manual Handling Regulations do not set specific weight limits, so the guidelines are **not** 'safe limits' for lifting and carrying. They use broad assumptions or generalisations where, if met, the risk of injury is considered to be low. But working outside the limits is likely to increase the risk of injury, which can lead to ill health. The guidelines are derived from lifting capacity data which show differences between men and women in the population (rather than individuals).

The filter for pushing and pulling in Figure 2 looks at the posture of your workers during pushing or pulling operations.

Where the handling task falls within the filter guidelines, you do not normally need to do any other form of risk assessment unless you have individual workers who may be at significant risk. If you are unsure, complete a more detailed assessment.

Lifting and lowering risk filter

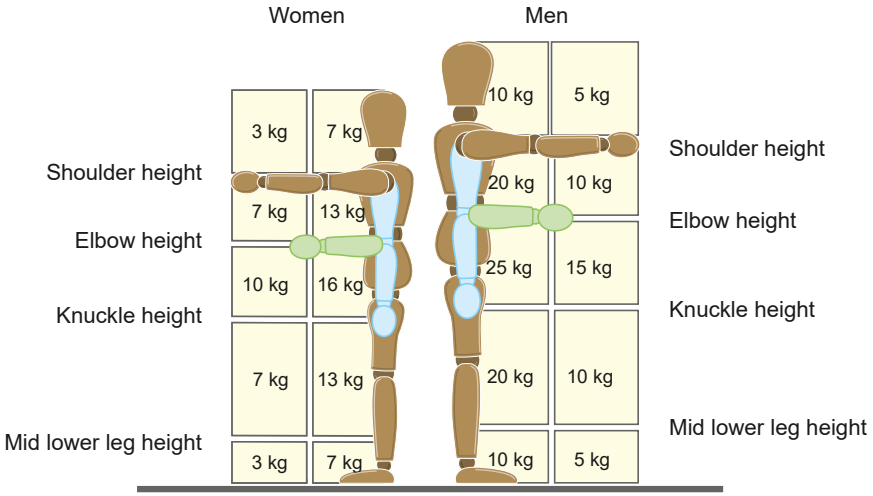


Figure 1 Lifting and lowering risk filter

- Figure 1 assumes that the load is easily grasped with both hands and is handled in reasonable working conditions, with the worker in a stable body position.
- Each box in Figure 1 contains a filter value for lifting and lowering in that zone. The filter values in the boxes are reduced if handling is done with arms extended, or at high or low levels, as that is where injuries are most likely to happen.
- Observe the work activity you are assessing and compare it to Figure 1. First, decide which zone or zones the worker's hands pass through when moving the load. Then assess the maximum weight being handled. If it is less than the value given in the matching box, it is within the guidelines.
- If the worker's hands enter more than one zone during the operation, use the smallest weight. Use an in-between weight if the hands are close to a boundary between zones.

Lifting and lowering: Do I need to make a more detailed assessment?

You will need to make a more detailed assessment using the MAC tool or full risk assessment checklists (or equivalent) if:

- the handling operation must take place with the hands outside the zones in Figure 1;
- the weight exceeds those in Figure 1;
- the handling involves torso twisting;
- the handling is more frequent than one lift every two minutes;
- the handling is done by a team;
- the handling operations are complex, for example, the weights vary significantly or there are several start and finish locations;
- the lift does not meet the conditions given for using the guidelines, for example, if the load is difficult to grasp or handle;
- the person lifting may be at significant risk, for example, new or expectant mothers, young workers, those new to the job, or those with a disability, significant health problem or recent injury.

Carrying risk filter

You can apply the filter weights for lifting and lowering in Figure 1 to carrying operations where the load:

- is held against the body;
- is carried no further than about 10 m without resting;
- does not prevent the person from walking normally;
- does not obstruct the view of the person carrying it;
- does not require the hands to be held below knuckle height or much above elbow height.

Where you can carry the load securely on the shoulder without lifting it first (for example, by sliding it onto your shoulder), you can apply the filter values up to 20 m.

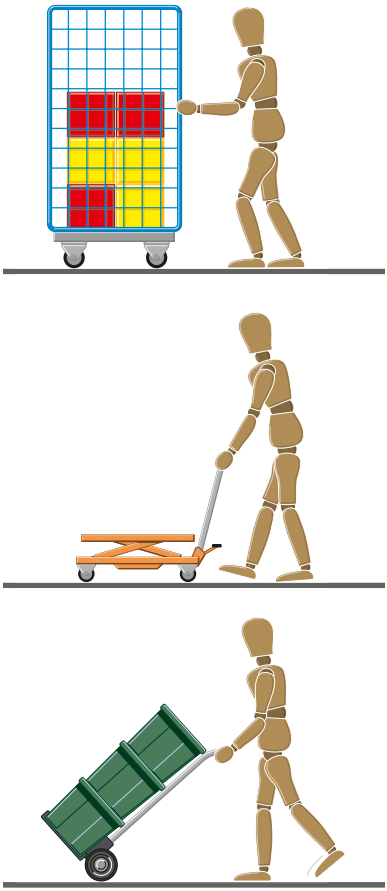


Figure 2 Acceptable push/pull postures

Pushing and pulling risk filter

In pushing and pulling operations, the load might be slid, rolled or moved on wheels. Observe the worker's general posture during the operation. Figure 2 shows some acceptable push/pull postures. The task is likely to be low risk if:

- the force is applied with the hands;
- the torso is largely upright and not twisted;
- the hands are between hip and shoulder height;
- the distance moved without a pause or break is no more than about 20 m.

Pushing and pulling: Do I need to make a more detailed assessment?

If the load can be moved and controlled very easily, for example with one hand, you do not need to do a more detailed assessment. You should make a more detailed assessment using, for example, the RAPP tool or full risk assessment checklists (or equivalent) if:

- the posture shows that the task requires significant forces, for example, leaning;
- there are extra risk factors like slopes, uneven floors, constricted spaces or trapping hazards.

Handling while seated

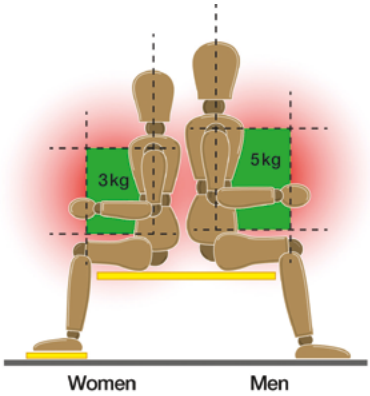


Figure 3 Handling while seated

The filter values for handling operations carried out while seated, as shown in Figure 3, are **Men: 5 kg** and **Women: 3 kg**. These values only apply for two-handed lifting and when the hands are within the green zone shown. If handling beyond the green zone is unavoidable, you should make a full assessment.

Record and review

Make a record of your significant findings – the hazards, how people might be harmed by them and what you have in place to control the risks. Any record should be simple and focused on controls. If you have fewer than five employees you do not have to write anything down, but it is useful to do this so you can review it later, for example, if something changes.

Regularly review your work activities to make sure the risks are being adequately controlled and that your risk assessment remains relevant – few workplaces stay the same because production processes or workers may change.

What about manual handling training?

Providing information and training alone will not ensure safe manual handling.[9] The first objective should always be to design the handling operations to be as safe as reasonably practicable. Manual handling training is important to further manage the risk of injury if the task cannot be avoided and you have already taken action to reduce the risk. However, on its own, it can't overcome:

- a lack of mechanical aids;
- badly designed tasks;
- unsuitable loads;
- an unsuitable working environment.

The information covered by manual handling training should be specific to the job and should include:

- manual handling risk factors and how injuries can happen;
- appropriate systems of work for the individual's tasks and environment;
- use of mechanical aids;
- how to carry out safe manual handling, including good handling techniques;[1]
- practical work relevant to the job to allow the trainer to identify and put right anything the trainee is not doing safely;
- how to report symptoms and injuries.

Risks and controls

Table 1 includes some practical advice on what to look for when making an assessment and suggests ways to control the risks.

Table 1 Risks and how to control them

Risks to look for when making an assessment	Ways of reducing the risk of injury
The tasks Do they involve: ■ holding loads away from the body? ■ twisting, stooping or reaching upwards? ■ large vertical movement? ■ long carrying distances? ■ strenuous pushing or pulling? ■ repetitive handling? ■ risk of sudden movement of loads? ■ insufficient rest or recovery time? ■ a work rate imposed by a process?	Can you: ■ use a lifting aid? ■ change workplace layout to improve efficiency? ■ reduce the amount of twisting and stooping? ■ avoid lifting from floor level or above shoulder height, especially heavy loads? ■ reduce carrying distances? ■ use powered handling devices to eliminate pushing and pulling? ■ avoid repetitive handling? ■ take steps to reduce fatigue? ■ vary the work, allowing one set of muscles to rest while another is used?
The loads Are they: ■ heavy or bulky? ■ difficult to grasp? ■ unstable or likely to move unpredictably? ■ harmful, eg sharp or hot? ■ awkwardly stacked? ■ too large for the handler to see over?	Can you make the load: ■ lighter or less bulky? ■ easier to grasp? ■ more stable? ■ less harmful? ■ evenly stacked? If the load comes in from elsewhere, have you asked the supplier to help, eg by providing handles or smaller packages?

Risks to look for when making an assessment	Ways of reducing the risk of injury
The working environment Are there: ■ restrictions on posture? ■ bumpy, obstructed or slippery floors? ■ variations in floor levels? ■ hot/cold/humid conditions? ■ gusts of wind or other strong air movements? ■ poor lighting conditions? ■ restrictions on movements from clothes or personal protective equipment (PPE)?	Can you: ■ remove obstructions to free movement? ■ provide better flooring and/or slip-resistant footwear? ■ avoid steps and steep ramps? ■ prevent extremes of hot and cold? ■ improve ventilation? ■ improve lighting? ■ provide suitable protective clothing or PPE that is less restrictive?
Individual capacity Does the job: ■ require unusual capability, eg above average strength or agility? ■ pose a risk to those with a health problem or learning/physical disability? ■ pose a risk to new or expectant mothers? ■ pose a risk to new or young workers? ■ call for special information or training?	Can you: ■ consider the design of the task? ■ pay particular attention to those who have a physical weakness? ■ take extra care of, eg new or expectant mothers and new/young workers? ■ give your workers more information, eg about the range of tasks? ■ provide more training? ■ get advice from an occupational health advisor if you need to?

Risks to look for when making an assessment	Ways of reducing the risk of injury
Handling aids and equipment Consider: ■ is the device the correct type for the job? ■ is it well maintained? ■ are the wheels on the device suited to the floor surface? ■ do the wheels run freely? ■ is the handle height between the waist and shoulders? ■ are the handle grips in good condition and comfortable? ■ are there any brakes? If so, do they work?	Can you: ■ provide equipment that is more suitable for the task? ■ carry out planned preventive maintenance to prevent problems? ■ change the wheels, tyres and/or flooring so that equipment moves easily? ■ provide better handles and handle grips? ■ make the brakes easier to use, reliable and effective?
Work organisation factors Consider: ■ is the work repetitive? ■ is the work machine or system-paced? ■ do workers feel the demands of the work are excessive? ■ do workers have little control of the work and working methods? ■ is there poor communication between managers and workers?	Can you: ■ change tasks to increase variety? ■ adjust the work rate? ■ make more use of workers' skills? ■ make workloads and deadlines more achievable? ■ involve workers in decisions? ■ encourage good communication and teamwork? ■ provide better training and information?

Find out more

1 HSE's website on musculoskeletal disorders:
www.hse.gov.uk/msd

2 *Risk assessment: A brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace* Leaflet INDG163(rev4) HSE 2014
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf

3 *Manual handling. Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992. Guidance on Regulations* L23 (Fourth edition) HSE 2016
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l23.htm

4 *Consulting employees on health and safety: A brief guide to the law* Leaflet INDG232(rev2) HSE 2013
http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg232.pdf

5 *Making the best use of lifting and handling aids* Leaflet INDG398(rev1) HSE 2013
http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg398.pdf

6 *Manual handling assessment charts (the MAC tool)* Leaflet INDG383(rev3) HSE 2018
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg383.htm

7 *Risk assessment of pushing and pulling (RAPP) tool* Leaflet INDG478 HSE 2016
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg478.htm

8 *Full manual handling risk assessment: Examples of assessment checklists*
http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck5.pdf

9 For help seeking the right type of manual handling advice, see 'Getting help with manual handling risks in your business'
http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/external-help.htm

Further information

For information about health and safety visit https://books.hse.gov.uk or http://www.hse.gov.uk.

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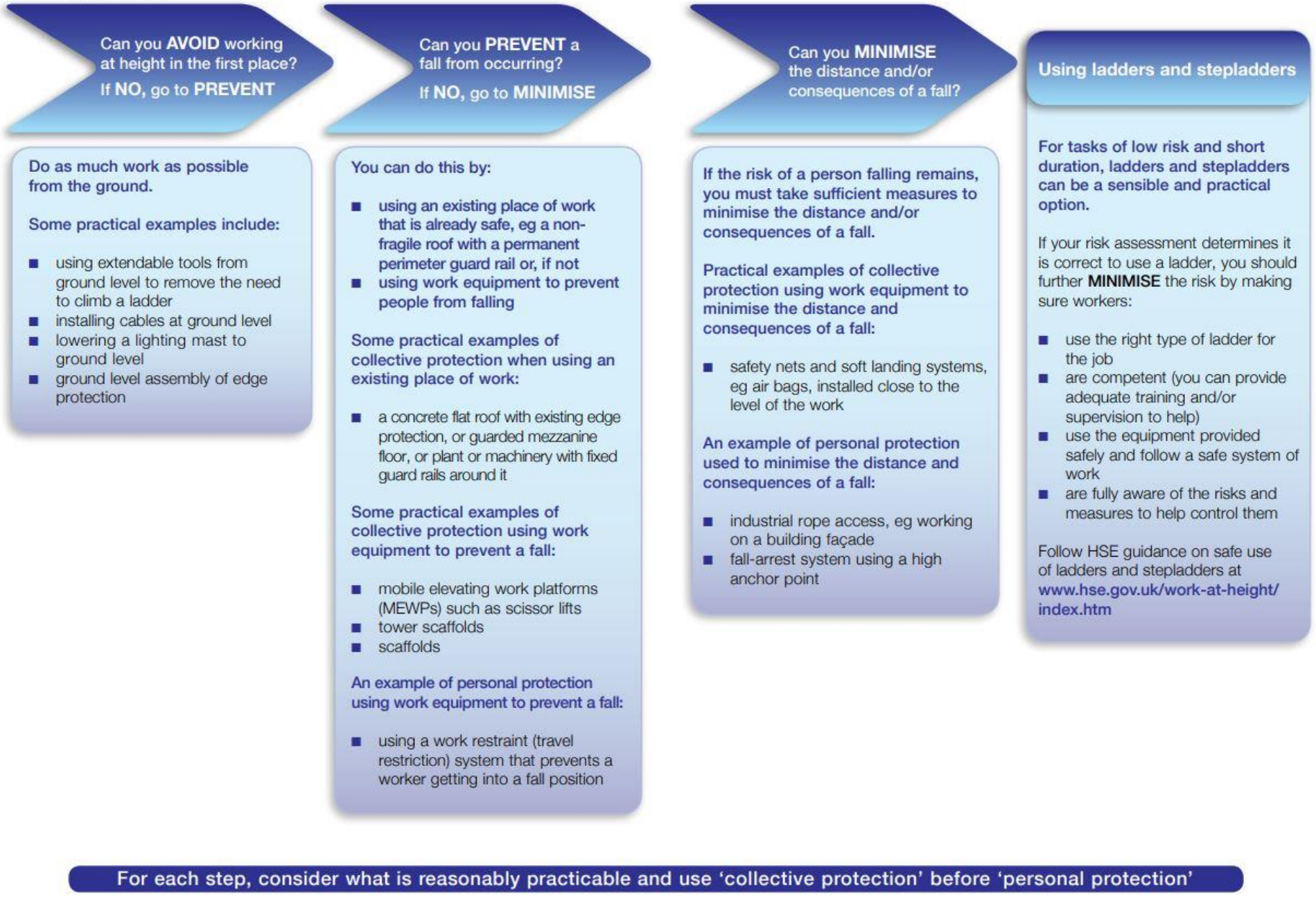
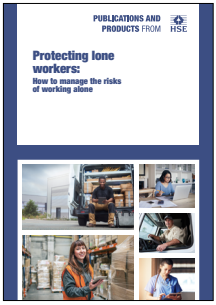
Figure 1 Step-by-step diagram



Protecting lone workers

How to manage the risks of working alone



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TSO London

This guidance explains how to keep lone workers healthy and safe. It is for anyone who employs lone workers, or engages them as contractors etc, including self-employed people or those who work alone.

Lone workers face the same hazards at work as anyone else, but there is a greater risk of these hazards causing harm as they may not have anyone to help or support them if things go wrong.

As an employer, you should provide training, supervision, monitoring and support for lone workers.

Who are lone workers and what jobs do they do?

A lone worker is 'someone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision'. They exist in all sectors and include those who:

- work alone at a fixed base, for example in shops, petrol stations, factories, warehouses or leisure centres;
- work separately from other people on the same premises or outside normal working hours, for example security staff, cleaners, maintenance and repair staff;
- work at home;
- work away from a fixed base, such as:
  - health, medical and social care workers visiting people's homes etc;
  - workers involved in construction, maintenance and repair including engineers, plant installation and cleaning workers;
  - engineers, assessors and delivery drivers of equipment and supplies who attend construction projects;
  - service workers, including postal staff, taxi drivers, engineers, estate agents, and sales or service representatives visiting domestic and commercial premises;
  - delivery drivers including HGV drivers, van driver/couriers and car/bike-based couriers;
  - agricultural and forestry workers;

- are volunteers carrying out work on their own, for charities or voluntary organisations (fundraising, litter-picking etc). More information is available at: www.hse.gov.uk/voluntary/

Changing ways of working

Ways of working are changing with automation and greater use of technology. Types of workers are also changing, for example people are working until they are older. This means employers need to think differently when considering how to keep them healthy and safe.

The gig economy is also increasing and features short-term, informal working relationships where work is generally:

- on-demand;
- obtained through an online platform;
- delivered on a task-by-task basis.

These workers are usually independent contractors, freelancers or self-employed. Many are lone workers, working to deadlines and exposed to specific road risks for work-related journeys.

Equally, lone HGV drivers are likely to experience long, unsociable hours, high physical and mental demands, and often long periods of sedentary work. Employers should monitor drivers' health regularly and adapt their work to accommodate any individual health needs.

All of these factors can have adverse health consequences for workers, such as musculoskeletal disorders, stress, tiredness and fatigue, as well as issues associated with poor or irregular eating habits.

Health and safety law

The guidance in this leaflet will help you, as an employer, understand what you should do to comply with your legal duties towards all lone workers under:

- the Health and Safety at Work etc Act;
- the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

Is it legal to work alone and is it safe?

You are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of all your workers, and this applies to any contractors, volunteers or self-employed people. These responsibilities cannot be transferred to any other person, including to those people who work alone.

It will often be safe to work alone. However, the law requires you to think about and deal with any health and safety risks **before** people are allowed to do so.

Establishing a healthy and safe working environment for lone workers can be different from organising the health and safety of other workers. Some things to consider in ensuring lone workers are not put at risk include:

- assessing areas of risk including violence, manual handling, the medical suitability of the individual to work alone and whether the workplace itself presents a risk to them;
- requirements for training, levels of experience and how best to monitor and supervise them;
- having systems in place to keep in touch with them and respond to any incident.

Employees and some self-employed workers also have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work activities and to co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations. See the ‘Responsibilities of workers’ section towards the end of this leaflet.

Managing the risks

The law says that employers must assess and control the risks in their workplace.

You must think about what might cause harm to people and decide whether you are doing enough to prevent that harm. If you employ five or more workers, you must write down what you’ve found.

That record should include:

- the hazards (things that may cause harm);
- how they may harm people;
- what you are already doing to control the risks.

You must review and update this record, for example if anything changes.

There is no legal requirement to conduct a specific, separate risk assessment for lone workers. However, you have a duty to include risks to lone workers in your general risk assessment and take steps to avoid or control risks where necessary. This must include:

- involving workers when considering potential risks and measures to control them;
- taking steps to ensure risks are removed where possible, or putting in place control measures, for example by carefully selecting work equipment to ensure the worker can perform what is required safely;
- instruction, training and supervision;
- reviewing risk assessments periodically and updating them after any significant changes, such as new staff, processes or equipment;
- when the lone worker is working at another employer's workplace, consulting with that employer to identify any risks and required control measures.

Risk assessment should help you decide on the right level of supervision for lone workers. There are some high-risk activities where at least one other person may need to be present. Examples include working:

- in a confined space, where a supervisor may need to be present, along with someone dedicated to the rescue role;
- near exposed live electricity conductors;
- in diving operations, vehicles carrying explosives or fumigation.

You should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies such as fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. Consider how to control the risks by thinking about who will be involved, where the work will happen and what triggers might be more of an impact for lone workers.

More advice on managing risks is available at: www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/

The lone worker and other people

You should consider the lone worker, the people they may come into contact with, the work they are carrying out, and how this may impact on the risk:

- How experienced is the worker in their role and in working alone?
- Has the worker received relevant training?
- Are there any reasons why the worker might be more vulnerable, for example are they young, pregnant, disabled or a trainee?

Environment and equipment

Consider the environment the worker is in and the equipment they are using:

- Does the workplace present a specific risk to the worker, such as operating equipment alone or lifting objects too large for one person?
- Is the work in a rural or isolated area?
- Is the worker going into someone else's home or premises?
- Is there a safe way in or out for one person working outside normal hours?
- Does the worker have adequate and reliable means of communication and a way to call for help?

How could the work trigger an incident?

Consider the activity being carried out by a lone worker and how it might trigger an incident:

- Is the work a security role, for example having authority over customers and enforcing rules?
- Does the work involve handling cash, asking for payment or removing goods or property?

Stress, mental health and wellbeing

Lone working can negatively impact on employees' work-related stress levels and their mental health.

For example, the Stress Management Standards include factors such as relationships with, and support from, other workers and managers. If these are not managed properly, they can lead to work-related stress. Being away from managers and colleagues could mean good support is more difficult to achieve.

Putting procedures in place that allow direct contact between the lone worker and their manager can help. Managing work-related stress relies on understanding what is 'normal behaviour' for an employee and recognising abnormal behaviour or symptoms at an early point (www.hse.gov.uk/stress/signs.htm).

If contact is poor, employees may feel disconnected, isolated or abandoned, which can affect their performance and potentially their stress levels or mental health.

Keeping contact with lone workers

You should:

- agree how to keep in touch with lone workers through regular meetings, or provide other opportunities to share concerns;
- include lone workers in social events and work or team updates;

- ensure lone workers are included in any consultation on changes – they may have unique implications for them;
- make sure lone workers are included in any training that is required.

You can find advice on consulting workers at: www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/consult

Providing support on mental health

Work can also aggravate pre-existing conditions, and problems at work can bring on symptoms or make their effects worse. Whether work is causing the health issue or aggravating it, you have a legal responsibility to help your employees.

Work-related mental health issues must be assessed to measure the levels of risk to staff. Where a risk is identified, you must take steps to remove it or reduce it as far as reasonably practicable.

If a lone worker has a pre-existing mental health condition, you may need to make reasonable adjustments to their work or workplace and this may require additional interventions, including those required by the Equality Act 2010: https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/multipage-guide/employment-workplace-adjustments

You can find work-related mental health advice on HSE's website at http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/mental-health.htm

Work-related violence

Any form of violence against workers is unacceptable and may affect their psychological as well as their physical health.

Lone working does not automatically imply a higher risk of violence, but it does make workers more vulnerable. The lack of nearby support from a colleague means that lone workers may be less able to prevent an incident from occurring.

Some of the key violence risks in the workplace can include:

- working in locations where there is a known high risk of violence;
- late evening or early morning work when there are fewer workers around;
- when workers, such as security staff, hold positions of authority over customers or clients;
- alcohol and drug use by clients or members of the public lone workers have contact with;
- carrying money and/or valuable equipment.

Training in personal safety, which may include conflict resolution, can help a worker recognise situations where they may be at risk and to take appropriate steps to avoid or manage the risk.

Other measures to consider include modification or design of the work environment, if appropriate, to avoid workers being isolated and providing work equipment such as devices designed to raise the alarm in an emergency which can be operated manually or automatically, eg phones or radios.

Employers should have measures in place to support any worker who has been subject to an abusive or violent incident – workers should also play an important part in identifying and reporting incidents.

The consequences of violence to lone workers can impact on businesses in several ways including staff turnover, low productivity and damage to business reputation.

The impact of violence on a lone worker can lead to work-related stress, which may have serious and long-term effects on their psychological, physical and mental health.

HSE's work-related violence website includes advice and case studies on preventing violence towards lone workers: www.hse.gov.uk/violence/

What if a lone worker's first language is not English?

If a lone worker's first language is not English, you should ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to provide clear communications, especially in an emergency.

Workers from outside the UK may encounter unfamiliar risks in the jobs that they do and in a working environment with a workplace culture that may be very different from that of their country of origin.

You must ensure workers have received and understood the information, instruction and training they need to work safely.

There is more information at: www.hse.gov.uk/migrantworkers/about.htm

Can someone work alone if they have a medical condition?

You should seek medical advice if necessary. Consider both routine work and foreseeable emergencies that may put additional physical and mental burdens on an individual.

What if a person becomes ill, has an accident, or there is an emergency?

Your assessment of the risks should identify foreseeable events. Emergency procedures should be established, put in place and employees should be trained in them.

Regular and realistic practice should take place to allow quick and effective action to ease the situation and reduce the consequences.

Your risk assessment may indicate that some lone workers should carry first aid equipment and/or may need first aid training (including how to administer first aid to themselves). They should also have access to adequate first aid facilities.

Emergency procedures should also include appropriate guidance on how and when lone workers can contact their employer.

More information on first aid is available at: www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/firstaid/

What if a lone worker is working from home?

You have the same responsibility for the safety and health of employees who work from home as for any other employees.

This means providing supervision, education and training, as well as implementing enough control measures to protect the homeworker. You should accept liability for accident or injury of a homeworker as for any other employee.

Training

Training is important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help in uncertain situations. It may also be crucial in enabling people to cope in unexpected circumstances and with potential exposure to violence and aggression.

Lone workers are usually unable to ask more experienced colleagues for help, so extra training may be appropriate. They need to be sufficiently experienced and fully understand the risks and precautions involved in their work and the location that they work in. Training should be relevant to the work activity.

You should set the limits to what can and cannot be done while working alone. Ensure workers are:

- competent to deal with the requirements of the job;
- suitably trained in the use of any technical solutions provided;
- able to recognise when to seek advice from elsewhere.

Supervision

The extent of supervision required depends on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle health and safety issues.

The level of supervision needed is a management decision, which should be based on the findings of a risk assessment – the higher the risk, the greater the level of supervision required.

Lone workers may need to be accompanied at first where they are:

- new to a job;
- undergoing training;
- doing a job that presents specific risks;
- dealing with new situations.

Monitoring and keeping in touch

Technology advances mean there is a wide range of systems and devices available to employers to monitor lone workers.

Any monitoring system needs to be embedded into an organisation so it is well understood by workers. You must put clear procedures in place because effective means of communication are essential. These may include:

- supervisors periodically visiting and observing people working alone;
- pre-agreed intervals of regular contact between the lone worker and employer, using phones, radios, email etc, bearing in mind the worker's understanding of English;
- other devices designed to raise the alarm in an emergency which can be operated manually or automatically;
- implementing a robust system to ensure a lone worker has returned to their base or home once their work is completed.

You should regularly test technical solutions and all emergency procedures to ensure lone workers can be reached or contacted if a problem or emergency is identified.

Responsibilities of workers

Workers have a duty to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions at work. They must co-operate with employers and co-workers to help everyone meet their legal requirements.

If workers have specific queries or concerns relating to health and safety in their workplace, they should talk to their employer, manager/supervisor or a health and safety representative.

Some employers use dynamic risk assessments for lone working situations. This is where workers themselves make operational decisions based on risks which cannot necessarily be foreseen. This is not a substitute for a comprehensive risk assessment.

When a risk assessment identifies circumstances where a lone worker may have to undertake a dynamic risk assessment, they must:

- receive training on how to make that assessment;
- consider the range of possible control measures and what action to take;
- get support for their decisions.

If they're self-employed

Health and safety law may not apply to them but they will need to check at http://www.hse.gov.uk/self-employed/what-the-law-says.htm

As their employer (for example, if you have contracted them to work on your premises) you will still be responsible for their health and safety.

Find out more

Homeworkers: Guidance for employers on health and safety Leaflet INDG226(rev1) HSE 2011 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg226.pdf

Manual handling. Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended). Guidance on Regulations L23 (Third edition) HSE 2004 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l23.htm

Violence at work: A guide for employers Leaflet INDG69(rev) HSE 1996 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg69.pdf

Driving at work: Managing work-related road safety Leaflet INDG382(rev1) www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg382.pdf

Managing work-related violence in licensed and retail premises Leaflet INDG423 HSE 2008 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg423.pdf

Stress at work – Mental health conditions: www.hse.gov.uk/stress/

Working in confined spaces: www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/confined.htm

Working with substances hazardous to health: A brief guide to COSHH Leaflet INDG136(rev5) HSE 2012 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg136.htm

Working at height: www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/height.htm and *Working at height: A brief guide* Leaflet INDG401(rev2) www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg401.htm

Advice for self-employed workers: http://www.hse.gov.uk/self-employed/what-the-law-says.htm

Other sources of advice

You may find more information from trade associations or employers' organisations, or from trade unions and some charities, eg the Suzy Lamplugh Trust at www.suzylamplugh.org

Age, Health and Professional Drivers' Network – a network promoting best practice in the transport industry: https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/ahpd/

Further information

For information about health and safety visit https://books.hse.gov.uk or http://www.hse.gov.uk. You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

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