

HEALTH & SAFETY INFORMATION SHEET 2

General Management Responsibilities

The guidance given in the subsequent Information Sheets relates to specific risks or legal requirements. However, there are certain statutory duties which apply to practically all businesses. These are based on the fact that employers and senior managers are the ones in control of the business. They have the ability to prevent most accidents. Likewise, acts and omissions at this level will be a likely cause of accidents.

There are a number of key responsibilities placed on employers and senior managers. They must:

1. Set Your Policy

- Develop a comprehensive safety strategy for your business.
- Plan out the areas you will have to consider. Use the guidance in Advice Sheet 4: Safety Policies to find out how to go about this.

2. Appoint Competent Persons

- The job of a competent person is to assist the employer in taking the necessary measures to comply with the relevant safety laws.
- Employers must appoint one or more competent persons if they do not possess the necessary competence themselves.
- A competent person is someone who has sufficient training, experience knowledge or other qualities to enable him/her properly to assist or undertake the protective and preventative measures. For example: a knowledge and understanding of the work involved; an understanding of risk assessment and prevention; a knowledge of current safety applications and a capacity to apply these precautions to the task required by the employer.

3. Provide Adequate Supervision

- The degree of supervision required for the task will depend on the type of work, hazard and degree of risk involved and level of training and expertise of staff involved.
- Young people should have named supervisors and named deputies who are able to recognize their inexperience and immaturity.
- Sufficient checks must be made to ensure rules are being followed and necessary precautions are being taken.
- It is not acceptable to issue health and safety instructions and allow somebody to disregard them without appropriate action being taken. Allowing what amounts to illegal activities to take place is the same as endorsing that activity in the first instance. Therefore individual managers may be personally liable for their own acts or omissions.

4. Provide Information, Instruction And Training

- Important information must be effectively disseminated to the relevant people. It is not only staff that need to be included - anyone affected by your undertaking may need to be told certain safety information (for example visitors, members of public and your contractors).
- Information to be provided includes: who is at risk and why; how to carry out specific tasks safely; correct operation of equipment; emergency action; accident and hazard reporting procedures and individual's specific safety responsibilities.
- If you employ only a few staff simple instructions and briefing sessions may suffice. For larger companies a formal in-house training programme should be drawn up. It may be necessary to arrange for training to be provided by external organisations if you do not possess the relevant expertise.
- Keep a record of who has been trained; in what; by whom; and when.
- Any safety signs or notices should comply with the Health & Safety (Safety Signs & Signals) Regulations 1996.

5. Monitor And Review Health And Safety Performance

An essential part of any control strategy is the ability to identify hazards before they result in accidents. There are certain established ways of doing this:

- **Hazard Reporting Procedures:** Either formal or informal procedures whereby staff are informed of the need to report workplace hazards and defects. Managers should also know the correct action to take if they receive such reports from employees.
- **Workplace Inspections:** Formal inspections carried out at predetermined intervals. Workplace inspections are intended to identify hazards which have not been dealt with by the normal control methods.
- **Accident Rates And Investigation:** Routinely investigating workplace accidents to establish the cause is essential if accidents are to be avoided in the future. Apart from looking at the frequency of accidents, checks should be made for reporting accuracy and the development of patterns.
- **Safety Policy Review:** The policy should be reviewed from time to time. If there have been significant changes to the organisation of the business or the responsibilities placed on people or the way in which work is carried out, the Policy should be revised.