

HEALTH & SAFETY INFORMATION SHEET 4

Safety Policies

If you employ more than 4 people, by law you must present a written Safety Policy (The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, Section 2 (3)).

A Safety Policy is simply a document which describes what steps a company takes to ensure that it meets its health and safety duties. More importantly, drawing up a Safety Policy will help you organise how you manage health and safety at work and consequently comply with the law.

How To Structure The Policy

The basic structure of the Safety Policy is laid down in the Health and Safety At Work Act. It consists of 3 main parts:

- General Statement of Intent.
- Organisation.
- Arrangements.

1. General Statement of Intent

- This is where an employer makes their broad commitment to health and safety. A small firm whose activities are not especially hazardous would not need a very long statement.
- The person(s) in overall charge of the company should accept ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters.
- The statement should be signed and dated by the person accepting responsibility for the company.
- Wording of the general statement is up to you, since it's your commitment and your company.

2. Organisation

- Essentially this amounts to a list of health and safety responsibilities held by people in the company (i.e. people and their duties).
- This section contains details of who is responsible to whom and for what.
- Most health and safety responsibilities will be assigned when the next part of the Policy (Arrangements) is written.
- Where appropriate, provide instructions on how to meet specific responsibilities. These instructions could be detailed in the Arrangements section of the Policy.

3. Arrangements

- This part details the systems and procedures in place which will enable the company to meet its

stated aims and objectives. In other words, what the company needs to do on an operational basis to comply with the law and stop being injured by the company's activities.

In short, they will tend to revolve around three main areas:

- **Legal Requirements:** The specific health and safety laws and regulations which apply to your premises and line of work.
- **Hazards and Risks:** Details of the hazards associated with your business activity and the risks of injury connected with those hazards.
- **Control Methods:** In practical terms, how do you go about eliminating or reducing those risks to acceptable levels. This is where you state what steps are being taken to achieve day-to-day control over health and safety.

Some Key Points

The most important thing is that the Safety Policy is an operational document. In particular:

- It should set out what practical steps the company is taking to effectively control health and safety.
- Managers and Staff should be able to refer to the Safety Policy and find out what health and safety responsibilities they hold and exactly how they are expected to meet those responsibilities.
- If other documents contain specific details on any relevant area of the Safety Policy they should be accurately referred to and readily available.
- Relevant sections of Safety Policy (or documents specifically referred to) should be used as part of staff training so that the right information is being told to the right people. DO NOT just give the Safety Policy to employees and expect them to read and understand it.
- Use the advice sheets in this pack as a starting point and record the actual steps you are taking to tackle these issues.
- Review the Policy whenever appropriate and every revision must be brought to you employee's attention.

For more detailed free information visit www.hse.gov.uk