

HEALTH & SAFETY INFORMATION SHEET 5

The Workplace Regulations

The Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992 apply to most workplaces. Their requirements come into force immediately for new workplaces and on 1st January 1996 for existing workplaces. The new Regulations consolidate and expand many of the old requirements laid down in the Factories Act 1961 and Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963. The Approved Code of Practice on the Regulations lists their requirements in detail.

Basic Requirements of the Workplace Regulations

- **Maintenance:** The workplace equipment should be maintained in an efficient state and in good repair (for reasons of safety). There should be a system of maintenance for equipment and devices in use in the business where necessary. Examples of equipment would include emergency lighting, fences and anchorage points for safety harnesses.
- **Ventilation:** There should be a sufficient quantity of fresh or purified air to ventilate enclosed workplaces. Air from outside will normally be suitable unless it is contaminated. The rate of supply of air should not normally fall below 5 to 8 litres per second per occupant.
- **Temperature:** If a room is used for more than short periods of time, then a reasonable temperature (normally 16C/60.8F) should be maintained during working hours. Provision of thermometers is required for use by staff. Where uncomfortable conditions cannot be avoided, access to a rest room should be made available.
- **Lighting:** In all workplaces there should be suitable and sufficient natural lighting, where reasonably practicable. Emergency lighting should be provided where failure of normal lighting would cause danger. Lighting should be sufficient so that people can move around the building safely. In particular, staircases should be shadow free. Dazzling lights and glare should be avoided.
- **Cleanliness:** Workplaces (walls, floors, ceilings) and furnishings should be kept clean. The standard of cleanliness should be appropriate to what is going on in the room. Waste materials should be stored in receptacles.
- **Space:** There should be sufficient floor area, height and unoccupied space in a work room. This is usually taken to be a minimum of 11 cubic metres per person (any height above 3 metres is discounted). When there is furniture in the room there must still be enough space left for people to move around with ease.
- **Workstations:** These should be suitable for the worker and work. Suitable seats are required where necessary and there should be sufficient space around the workstation to enable the work to be carried out in a safe manner.
- **Floors:** These should be suitable for their environment especially if outside or in wet conditions. They should not be so uneven or slippery so as to present a risk. Arrangements should be made for the removal of spillage's and obstructions as soon as is possible.

- **Falls:** Protection from falls and falling objects should be provided where reasonably practicable. If there is a significant risk that a person could fall from height a secure fence should be provided.
- **Windows:** Windows and glazed doors should be of safety material where danger could occur i.e.. usually where the glazing is below shoulder level in doors and below waist level in windows. Large areas of glass which could be walked into should be marked. Provision should be made so that window cleaning can be carried out safely e.g.. tilt and turn windows, fixing points for harnesses. (BS 8213 Part 1 1991 Windows, Doors & Roof lights. ACOP for safety in use and during cleaning of windows).
- **Traffic Routes:** Safe routes should be organised for pedestrians and vehicles in workplaces. Traffic routes should be indicated as necessary and have sensible speed limits. Speed reducing road humps may be required.
- **Escalators (and moving roadways):** These must function safely. Safety devices and emergency stop controls should also be provided.
- **Sanitary Conveniences and Washing Facilities:** Toilets are to be ventilated and kept clean and be complete with washing facilities which should have hot and cold water. Showers may be needed in exceptional circumstances. The number of facilities which must be provided are given in the Approved Code of Practice.
- **Drinking Water:** A supply of wholesome drinking water with cups is required. Non-drinking water supplies should be so marked.
- **Clothing:** Clothing accommodation is required where wet outdoor clothing can dry out during the working day. Changing facilities should be provided where special clothing is worn.
- **Rest Facilities:** These should be suitable and sufficient to take a break and to eat meals, where meals are regularly eaten in the workplace. There should be separate facilities for non-smokers and smokers. Facilities are required for pregnant and nursing mothers to rest.

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