



HEALTH & SAFETY

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Accident

An unplanned, uncontrolled event arising in the course of employment which, in the case of a person carrying out work, results in personal injury.

Personal injury includes –

- (a) any injury, disease, disability, occupational illness or any impairment of physical or mental condition, and
- (b) any death

that is attributable to work.

Accident Reporting

Under the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2016 all employers and self-employed persons are legally obliged to report the injury of an employee as a result of an accident while at work. Injuries must be reported if the employee is unable to carry out their normal work for more than three consecutive days, excluding the day of the accident i.e., on the fourth day. Such injuries must be formally reported to the Health & Safety Authority within 10 working days of the accident.

Asbestos

Asbestos has been recognised as a major cause of occupational ill-health from about 1950 onwards and is still the greatest single work-related killer. Asbestos is the name used for a range of natural minerals which are still mined from rocks in a few countries, including Canada, Brazil, Russia, Kazakhstan and Zimbabwe. There are three main types of asbestos:

Blue (crocidolite)

Brown (amosite)

White (chrysolite)

Asbestos has been used in a huge range of products for its thermal insulation, fire-retardant and strengthening properties. Many of these products have been used in buildings and are still there. All types of asbestos are classified as human carcinogens by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), which is part of the World Health Organisation.

Where there is a likelihood that workers may be exposed to asbestos, employers are required to reduce exposure to a minimum and below the exposure limit which is in excess of 0.1 fibres per cm³.

More details can be found by clicking the link below:

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/your_industry/chemicals/legislation_enforcement/asbestos/

Biological Agents

Biological agents are widely found in the natural environment and as a result found in many work sectors. They include bacteria, viruses, fungi (including yeasts and moulds) and internal human parasites (endoparasites). The majority of these agents are harmless, however some may have potential to cause ill-health.

As they are usually invisible, it is often difficult to appreciate the risks they present. As a worker you may be harmed by:

- being infected by a biological agent,
- being exposed to toxins produced by the biological agent, or
- having an allergic reaction to the biological agent or substances it produces, for example, enzymes.

Biological agents have the ability to replicate rapidly, require minimal resources to survive and can infect at very small doses.

Breaks

See [Rest Period](#)

Bullying

Workplace bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could be reasonably regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work. An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity at work but, as a one-off incident, it is not considered bullying.

Employers have a duty to manage and conduct their activities to prevent any improper conduct or behaviour which might affect the health and safety of employees. This has been supplemented by the HSA's Code of Practice from Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work

The code of practice can be downloaded from the link below:

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/publications_and_forms/publications/codes_of_practice/code_of_practice_foremployers_and_employees_onthe_prevention_and_resolution_ofbullying_at_work.pdf



Carcinogens

A carcinogen is a substance, organism or agent capable of causing cancer. Carcinogens may occur naturally in the environment (such as ultraviolet rays in sunlight and certain viruses) or may be generated by humans (such as automobile exhaust fumes and cigarette smoke). Other examples include asbestos and radon.

Changing Rooms

Where workers have to wear special work clothes, and if for reasons of health or propriety they cannot be expected to change in another area, the employer is required to provide changing rooms that are easily accessible and have adequate provision for drying wet or damp work clothes. Where changing rooms are required, the employer should provide separate changing rooms for men and women, or at least for the separate use of changing rooms.

If changing rooms are not required, every person at work should be provided with a place to lock away his or her own clothes and personal effects.

Cleaning

Workplaces should be kept clean, with waste being removed as frequently as necessary to maintain health and safety standards.

Chemical Hazards in the Workplace

Chemicals agents or chemicals are present in every workplace. For example, inks, toners, adhesives, paints, oils, lubricants, hair dye, laboratory reagents, welding fume, hazardous medicinal products and cleaning fluids are all examples of chemicals.

The term chemical agent means *any chemical* element or compound, on its own or admixed, as it occurs in the natural state or as produced, used or released, including release as waste, by any work activity, whether or not produced intentionally and whether or not placed on the market.

Chemical agents that have the potential to cause harm to human health or physical harm are referred to as hazardous chemical agents.

Competent Person

A person is deemed to be competent where, having regard to the task he or she is required to perform and taking account of the size or hazards (or both of them) of the undertaking or establishment in which he or she undertakes work, the person possess sufficient training, experience and knowledge appropriate to the nature of the work to be undertaken.

Confined Space

Confined Space refers to any place, including any vessel, tank, container, pit, bund, chamber, cellar or any other similar space which, by virtue of its enclosed nature, creates conditions



that give rise to a likelihood of an accident, harm or injury of such a nature as to require emergency action due to

- the presence or reasonable foreseeable presence of:
 - flammable or explosive atmospheres
 - harmful gas, fume or vapour
 - free flowing solid or an increasing level of liquid
 - excess of oxygen
 - excessively high temperature
- the lack or reasonably foreseeable lack of oxygen.

The hazards associated with confined spaces include toxic atmosphere, oxygen deficiency, oxygen enrichment, flammable or explosive atmosphere, flowing liquid or free flowing solids and excessive heats.

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Confined Spaces) Regulations 2001 cover all work in relation to confined spaces.

Regulation 5 states that:

- A person shall not carry out work in Confined Spaces if it is reasonably practical that it could be avoided.
- If the work must be carried out Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment must be carried out prior to the work commencing.
- A person shall not enter a confined space unless there is a system of work in place that has been planned, organised, performed and maintained so as to render that work safe and without risk to health.
- Anyone entering a confined space must be provided with appropriate information, training and instruction appropriate to the particular

Consultation with Workers on Health & Safety

Consultation must be made in advance and in good time so as to allow workers time to consider, discuss and give an opinion on matters before Management make a decision. It needs to take place at a time which will allow workers an opportunity to prepare a response and to be engaged in meaningful dialogue. If your employer makes a decision on health and safety and then informs you what they are doing, they are not engaged in consultation.

Control Measures

Control measures include actions that can be taken to reduce the potential of exposure to the hazard. The control measure could be to remove the hazard or to reduce the likelihood of the risk of the exposure to that hazard being realised.



Dangerous Occurrence Reporting

A dangerous occurrence means an occurrence arising from work activities in a place of work that causes or results in -

- (a) The collapse, overturning, failure, explosion, bursting, electrical short circuit discharge or overload or any malfunction of any work equipment,
- (b) The collapse or partial collapse of any building or structure under construction or in use as a place of work,
- (c) The uncontrolled or accidental release, the escape or the ignition of any substance,
- (d) A fire involving any substance, or
- (r) Any unintentional ignition or explosion of explosives

A dangerous occurrence should be formally reported to the Health and Safety Authority by the employer within 10 working days of the occurrence.

Defibrillators

The provision of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in workplaces to prevent sudden cardiac death should be considered. Ideally, wherever there is an occupational first-aider(s) in a workplace, provision of an AED should be considered. The training of other employees who are not occupational first-aiders in the use of AEDs is also encouraged.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE / VDU)

The definition of "display screen equipment" covers computer screens and microfiche readers and applies to both conventional cathode ray tube (CRT) display screens and other display processes such as liquid crystal displays.

Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work, (General Application) Regulations 2007, Chapter 5 of Part 2: Display Screen Equipment employers have a number of duties. Some of the key requirements are to

- carry out an analysis or risk assessment of employee workstations;
- provide training to employees in the use of workstations before commencing work with display screen equipment and whenever the organisation of the workstation is modified;
- perform a further analysis or risk assessment where an employee transfers to a new workstation or significant new work equipment, change of equipment or new technology is introduced at an individual's workstation;
- ensure that the provision of an appropriate eye and eyesight test is made available to every employee.

Full guidance which is available from the Health and Safety Authority can accessed at the link below:

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications/General_Application_Regulations/Display_Screen_Equipment_.html

See **Eye Tests** for DSE / VDU work

Drinking Water

There should be an adequate supply of drinking water provided in workplaces which should be conveniently accessible for employees. Suitable and adequate facilities for boiling water and taking meals in the workplace must be provided and maintained.

Driving for Work

The HSA defines driving for a living as driving on the road for work purposes. It excludes commuting, unless the worker's journey starts from home and the worker is travelling to a workplace that is not their normal place of work. Drivers of commercial vehicles such as lorries, vans and buses are clearly driving for work. Drivers in what is called the 'grey fleet' are also driving for work. These include commercial travellers, civil servants driving in connection with work, trade union officials/organisers driving to meetings, the electrician or plumber who uses his/her private car when going from job to job etc.

Driving for work involves a risk not only for drivers, but also for fellow workers and members of the public, such as pedestrians and other road users. Employers must, by law, manage the risks that may arise when workers drive for work. Employers should have systems in place to ensure that Driving for Work activities are road safety compliant. Employers cannot directly control roadway conditions, but they can promote and influence safe driving behaviour and actions by their employees.

Duties of Employers

Employers have extensive duties under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to manage work to ensure the safety, health and welfare of employees, assess risks and put a safety statement in place. They also must provide and maintain facilities for their workers, such as clean toilets and washing facilities.

The general duties of employers include:

- To ensure the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees;
- To manage and conduct work activities in such a way as to ensure the safety, health and welfare at work of all employees;
- To manage and conduct work activities in such a way as to prevent any improper conduct or behaviour likely to endanger employees.

- As regards the place of work concerned, the employer must ensure the design, provision and maintenance of:
 - a safe, risk-free place of work;
 - safe means access to and egress from it;
 - plant and machinery that are safe and without risk to health.
- To provide systems of work that are planned, organised, performed, maintained and revised as appropriate so as to be safe and risk-free.
- To provide and maintain facilities and arrangements for the welfare of employees at work.
- To provide information, instruction, training and supervision, where necessary.
- To implement the safety, health and welfare measures necessary for protection of employees, as identified through risk assessments and ensuring that these measures take account of changing circumstances and the general principles of prevention specified in Schedule 3.
- To provide protective clothing and equipment where risks cannot be eliminated or adequately controlled.
- To prepare and revise emergency plans and procedures.
- To report accidents and dangerous occurrences to the relevant authority .
- To obtain where necessary the services of a competent person for the purpose of ensuring safety and health at work.
- In addition, employers also have responsibilities in relation to how they carry out hazard identification and risk assessments and must prepare a Safety Statement based on the specific risks that apply in their workplace and consult with their workers in advance on this safety statement.

Duties of Employees

Employees also have responsibilities under Health and Safety legislation. It is not solely the responsibility of the employer. While the employer does have certain responsibilities and duties all workers are expected to:

- comply with relevant laws and protect their own safety and health, as well as the safety and health of anyone who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work;
- ensure that they are not under the influence of any intoxicant to the extent that they could be a danger to themselves or others while at work;
- cooperate with their employer with regard to safety, health and welfare at work;
- not engage in any improper conduct that could endanger their own safety or health or that of anyone else;



- participate in safety and health training offered by their employer;
- make proper use of all machinery, tools, substances, etc. and of all Personal Protective Equipment provided for use at work;
- report any defects in the place of work, equipment, etc. which might endanger safety and health.

Workers should also raise any concerns they have in relation to safety, health and welfare with their employer and be on the lookout for anything that could lead to an accident. If you feel that something is unsafe, it probably is, and you need to stand back and think about how you should deal with it.



Emergency Plans

Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 employers are required to prepare and revise as appropriate adequate plans and procedures to be followed and measures to be taken in the case of an emergency or serious and imminent danger. Workers should be provided with sufficient information, training and supervision to ensure their safety in the event of a fire. This training etc. must take account of any employees with specific needs.

Emergency Routes

All workplaces must have a clearly-identifiable means of escape in the event of a fire. All escape routes must be kept clear at all times to ensure that everyone can exit the workplace in the event of a fire or other emergency. The escape route should lead to a place of safety which would normally be outside and away from the building. Doors on escape routes must always be available for use without the use of a key.

Ergonomics

Ergonomics is the study of workers in their working environment. It refers to the process of organising a workplace, systems of work and workplace equipment in a way that makes it easier workers to use them in order to eliminate discomfort and the risk of injury at work.



Eye Tests for DSE / VDU work

Workers have the right to an eye and eyesight test before taking up work if it is habitual work with a DSE / VDU as well as at regular intervals. The employer must inform workers that they are entitled to be provided with this test, which should be carried out by a competent person. Where eye tests carried out by the doctor or optometrist reveal that particular lenses are required for VDU work, the costs of minimum requirement frames and lenses must be borne by the employer.



Fire

Employers must ensure workplaces are equipped with firefighting equipment and, as appropriate, fire detectors and an alarm system. Fire-fighting and detection equipment should be inspected, maintained and serviced as frequently as necessary by a competent person. Emergency procedures must also be in place and practiced to ensure safe evacuation in the event of a fire

A fire in the workplace should be detected quickly and a warning given so that people can escape safely. Early discovery and warning will increase the time available for escape and enable people to evacuate safely before the fire takes hold and blocks escape routes or makes escape difficult.

Employers are required to prepare plans and procedures to be followed in the event of emergency or serious and imminent danger. The plans and procedures should be revised as necessary in consultation with workers.

Fire Extinguishers – Types

Fires are classified as:

Class A - Fires involving solid materials such as wood, paper or textiles

Class B - Fires involving flammable materials

Class C - Fires involving gases

Class D - Fires involving metals for example aluminium, magnesium or sodium

Class E - Fires involving cooking oils.

The materials available for fire fighting have to be appropriate for the type of fire likely to be encountered. The table below is a general guide and specialist advice may be necessary for particular situations.

Class	Suitable Material
A	Water, foam, multi-purpose powder extinguishers
B	Foam
C	Dry powder, but seek specialist advice. In some instances it may be better to leave the fire burn until fuel supply can be cut off.
D	Specialist fire-fighting issue
F	Fire Blankets

First-Aid

First-aid means either the treatment in a life-threatening situation (e.g. heart stoppage or severe bleeding) pending medical help, or the treatment for minor injury (e.g. cuts or bruises). First-aid does not include the administration of drugs or medication.

Employers must provide first-aid equipment to all places of work where working conditions require it. Depending on the size or specific hazards (or both) of the place of work, trained occupational first aiders must also be provided.

First-Aider

An occupational first-aider refers to a person trained and qualified in occupational first-aid. In order to determine the amount of first-aiders there should be in the workplace a risk assessment should be carried out which should look at the numbers employed, the nature of the work, the degree of hazards, shift working and the distance from external medical services.

Full guidance which is available from the Health and Safety Authority can accessed at the link below:

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Topics/First_Aid/First_Aid_Regulations.pdf



Hazard

A hazard is a potential source of harm or adverse health effect on a person or persons. Employers are required to identify the hazards in the place of work and to assess the risks, including the risk to any worker who may be exposed to any unusual risks.

Health Hazards in the workplace

These can include noise, vibration, unsuitable light levels, harmful dusts or stress.

Health & Safety Authority (HSA)

The Health & Safety Authority was established in 1989 under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989 and reports to the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation. It is the national statutory body with responsibility for ensuring that over 2 million workers are protected from work-related injury and ill-health. It enforces occupational health and safety law, promoting accident prevention, and providing information and advice across all sectors. It is also the lead National Competent Authority for a number of chemicals regulations including REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) Regulation and Seveso II Directive. It is a key agency involved in market surveillance and ensuring the safety of products used in workplaces and consumer applications.

The Health and Safety Authority website can be accessed at the link below

<https://www.hsa.ie/eng/>

Health & Safety Inspectors

Health & Safety Authority Inspectors carry out inspections across all work sectors and work activities which come under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 (the 2005 Act) and the Chemicals Act 2008.

Health & Safety Legislation

There is an extensive body of statutory health and safety law in Ireland with 16 Acts and over 200 statutory instruments or regulations. The principal Act is the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. This is the Act under which the Health & Safety Authority operates and derives its powers. It imposes duties and obligations on employers and workers and also details workers' rights. It is based on the principles of hazard identification, risk assessment and putting in place control measures.

Apart from the above Act the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 are the most significant set of rules governing the management of the



workplace and work-related health and safety. It brings together in one statutory instrument the rules governing the workplace, work equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE), manual handling, display screen equipment (DSE / VDUs), electricity, work at height, noise, vibration, the protection of sensitive risk groups (children and young persons; pregnant and post-natal employees; and night workers and shift workers), safety signs, first-aid and explosive atmospheres.



Lighting in the Workplace

Lighting may be natural or artificial. It should be adequate to protect employees' safety and health and should be properly maintained. Emergency lighting should be fitted where special risks arise if the artificial light was to fail. While the provision of natural lighting takes precedence over artificial lighting both will be required.



Machinery

Employers are required to ensure that machinery is designed, provided and maintained so as to be safe and without risk to health. The use of any machinery should be covered by a risk assessment in accordance with Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

Manual Handling

Manual handling in the workplace should be eliminated where possible. If that is not possible then the risk should be reduced to the lowest point possible. Workers should not be required



to lift, carry or move a load that is likely to cause injury and employers should take measures to reduce the risk.

It is a statutory requirement that all employees attend manual handling training relevant to their role, work activities and work environment. Refresher training should be provided at intervals of not more than every three years or where there is a change in work practices resulting in the introduction of a new system of work related to manual handling or use of equipment to handle loads.

Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) in the Workplace

Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) are conditions affecting the musculoskeletal system and can present in the tendons, muscles, joints, blood vessels and/or nerves of the limbs and back. Symptoms may include pain, discomfort, numbness and tingling in the affected area and can differ in severity from mild and periodic to severe, chronic, and debilitating conditions. Employers should have a policy on the prevention and management of MSDs and should set out measures to reduce or eliminate the prevalence of MSDs in their workplace.



Night Work

Night work means work carried out during nighttime which is the period between midnight and 7am on the following time. The employer should carry out a risk-assessment to determine if night work involves special hazards or imposes a heavy physical or mental strain in the workers concerned.

Night Work Assessment

Before a worker starts night work and at regular intervals whilst working as a night worker, the employer must offer the worker an assessment by a registered medical practitioner, or a person under the medical practitioner's supervision, to determine any adverse effects of night working on the workers' health. This assessment must be provided free-of-charge to the employee.



Night Worker

A night worker is a worker who normally works at least 3 hours of his or her daily working time during night-time and whose annual number of hours worked at night equals or exceeds 50 per cent of their annual working time.

For night workers generally, the maximum night working time is 48 hours per week averaged over a 2-month period or a longer period specified in a collective agreement which must be approved by the Labour Court. For night workers whose work involves special hazards or heavy physical or mental strain, there is an absolute limit of 8 hours in a 24 hour period during which they perform night work.

Noise at Work

Noise means unwanted sound or loud discordant or disagreeable sound or sounds. Exposure to high levels of noise, either continuously or as a loud sudden 'bang' from equipment such as cartridge-operated tools or guns, can have a number of physiological and psychological effects on workers including stress, tinnitus and if exposed to high noise levels over long periods of time, permanent loss of hearing can occur. High noise levels can also interfere with communications in the workplace, leading to an increased risk of accidents.

Workers and their representatives must be informed:

- that the noise level is likely to exceed 85 dBA and of the potential risk of damage to hearing
- about the measurements taken of the noise levels and an explanation of the significance of the results
- about what is being done to reduce the noise levels.



Occupational Illness

Occupational Illness is defined as a condition that results from exposure in a workplace to a physical, chemical or biological agent to the extent that the normal physiological mechanisms are affected, and the health of the worker is impaired.

Penalisation

A key part of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 is the inclusion of Section 27 which protects employees from penalisation for acting in compliance with health and safety legislation. This includes exercising any duties or rights, making a complaint or representation, giving evidence in a court case against an employer (either a prosecution or civil claim) in relation to emergencies or serious or imminent danger or when acting as a Safety Representative. Penalisation under the Act is defined as any act or omission of an employer which affects a term or condition of employment of an employee to their detriment. Penalisation could include suspending, demoting, dismissing an employee or reducing their wages.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE means any device or appliance designed to be worn or held by an individual for protection against one or more health and safety hazards.

PPE should only be worn as a last resort. The safety and health of workers should be safeguarded by measures to eliminate workplace risks at source, through technical or organisational means or by providing protection on a collective basis. If these are not sufficient then PPE must be used to protect against the hazards that are unavoidable.

PPE must be made available to the worker, without charge, and must be maintained at all times in good working order, again at no cost to the worker. Once provided, workers must use it properly and whenever it is required.

Physical Hazards in the Workplace

Physical hazards can include manual handling, slip or trip hazards, poor housekeeping, fire, working at height, working in cold environments, driving for work or using poorly-maintained equipment.

Psychosocial Hazards in the Workplace

The term Psychosocial relates to the combined influence that psychological factors and the surrounding social environment can have on a person's physical and mental wellness and their ability to function. A good psychosocial environment enhances performance and wellbeing. Typical psychosocial hazards in the workplace can include bullying, conflicting demands and lack of role clarity, lack of support from management, poor communication, job insecurity and lone working.



Reasonably Practicable

Reasonably Practicable means, in relation to the duties of an employer, that an employer has exercised all due care by putting in place the necessary protective and preventative measures, having identified the hazards and assessed the risks to safety and health likely to result in accidents or injury to health at the place of work and where the putting in place of any further measures is grossly disproportionate, having regard to the unusual, unforeseeable and exceptional nature of any circumstances or occurrence that may result in an accident at work or injury to health at that place of work.

Responsibility for Managing Health & Safety

Employers are required to manage the workplace to ensure, in so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees. Responsibility for safety and health management ultimately rests with the employer. This responsibility is normally delegated to executive directors, line managers, supervisors and employees. Managers and supervisors have direct responsibility for the safety and health of employees and activities under their control. Responsibilities and duties should be clearly defined and documented. Accidents, ill-health and incidents are seldom random events but generally arise from failures of control or organisational failings which are the responsibility of management.

Individual workers also have responsibility for ensuring their own safety as defined by the 2005 Act and other relevant safety and health legislation.

Workers should not be penalised, disciplined or threatened with discipline where they make a decision in good faith on a Health and Safety matter in circumstances where he/she believes that his/her safety could be compromised.

Rest Period

Workers are entitled to an 11-hour rest period in each 24-hour period during which they work for their employer. In addition, they are entitled to a further 24 hours' rest per week preceded by a daily rest period. During the working period, workers are entitled to a 15-minute break after four hours and to a 30-minute break during a six-hour work period which may include the first break.

These are the legal minimum requirements and in most union employments there are collective agreements that provide for break periods that exceed the minimum.

Reasonable Accommodation

Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at work Act employers must ensure a safe place for all workers. In addition, under the Employment Equality Acts employers are obliged to reasonably accommodate people with disabilities and take reasonable measures to meet the needs of

workers with disabilities. Employers are required to provide reasonable accommodations to allow people with disabilities access to employment.

Consulting with employees with disabilities is important to help identify potential risks and hazards that could prevent the safe evacuation of the workplace. The information obtained from these consultations should be included in a Personal Emergency Egress Plan. This plan should be reviewed, tested and updated regularly through evacuation drills.

Rest Rooms

Employers should provide a rest room where the type of work activity, the number of workers or the health and welfare of workers demands it. The HSA's guide to the Workplace Regulations advises that rest rooms should be provided where work involves arduous physical activity or takes place in a hostile environment, such as exposing employees to dust, fumes and/or excessive heat or cold. Rooms should be large enough for the numbers and equipped with tables and chairs with backs.

Risk

Risk is the likelihood that a person may be harmed or suffers adverse health effects if exposed to a hazard. The level of risk is often categorised by the potential harm or adverse health effect that the hazard may cause, the number of times persons are exposed, and the number of persons exposed. For example, exposure to airborne asbestos fibres will always be classified as high because a single exposure may cause potentially fatal lung disease, whereas the risk associated with using a display screen for a short period could be considered to be very low as the potential harm or adverse health effects are minimal.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is where the severity of a hazard and its potential outcomes are considered in conjunction with other factors including the level of exposure, the number of persons exposed, and the risk of the hazard being realised. It is a written document that records a three-step process to assessing risk in the workplace.

1. Identifying the hazards in the workplace;
2. Assessing the risks presented by these hazards;
3. Putting control measures in place to reduce the risk of these hazards causing harm;

Remote Working

Remote working refers to work activities undertaken away from the employer's normal work premises including in a domestic setting or a remote working hub. The responsibility for



safety and health at work rests with the employer regardless of whether an employee works remotely or at the employer's premises. Employers must provide a safe work environment and, in doing so, assess the risks and ensure appropriate controls are in place to safeguard employees at work.

If an employer offers remote working away from their normal work premises, they remain responsible for organising the work. If the employer provides work equipment such as computers, laptops, display screens, chairs or desks they are responsible for maintaining it. In providing a safe remote workplace, the workstation will need to be assessed along with other relevant safety and health hazards. Any measures taken by employers to ensure the safety, health and welfare at work should not involve financial cost to workers.

Further information in relation on the roles and responsibilities of the employer and worker and details on the remote working risk assessment process can be accessed at the link below:

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/remote_working/remote_working_guidance.pdf



Safe Pass

Safe Pass is a one-day safety awareness programme aimed at workers in the construction sector. Its aim is to raise the standard of safety awareness in the construction industry and to enable construction workers to contribute positively to the prevention of accidents and ill-health while working on site. It is operated and managed by Solas.

Generally, the employer pays for the Safe Pass course. The employer, under section 10,25 & 26 of Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 2005, is required to allow employees time off from their duties for awareness training, as may be reasonable, and having regard to their health and safety, without loss of remuneration.

Safety Alerts / Bulletins

Safety alerts are issued as needed to inform workers and other involved parties about current or emerging safety issues or concerns that require immediate action. Safety bulletins provide safety information that doesn't need to be conveyed with the same urgency as the information in a safety alert.



Safety and Health Policy

A safety and health policy is a written document which recognises that safety and health is an integral part of the organisation's business performance. It is a statement by the organisation of its intentions and approach in relation to its overall safety and health performance and provides a framework for action, and for the setting of its safety and health objectives and targets.

The safety and health policy must be appropriate to the hazards and risks of the organisation's work activities and include a commitment to protect, so far as is reasonably practicable, its employees and others, such as contractors and members of the public, from safety and health risks associated with its activities.

Safety Committee

The establishment of a Safety Committee in the workplace is a matter for agreement between employers and workers. Where agreement has been reached and a Safety Committee established, workers are entitled to select and appoint members from among their colleagues. Once a Safety Committee is established the majority of members should be selected by workers.

Employers and workers should agree on the facilities for holding meetings and on the frequency, duration (should not exceed an hour) and time of meetings. The employer must consult the Safety Committee on such arrangements. Meetings should be held during normal working hours. The quorum for a meeting should be not less than three but may be greater if the Committee so decides.

Safety Data Sheets (SDS)

Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are the primary means of communicating information on the hazards of chemicals and the risks they pose to human health and the environment, as well as on measures to control the risks. The SDS includes information such as the properties of each chemical; the physical, health, and environmental health hazards; protective measures; and safety precautions for handling, storing, and transporting the chemical.

Safety Representative

The Safety Representative is selected by their fellow workers to represent them in consultations with their employer on issues relating to Health & Safety. They can make representations to the employer on these issues and once representations are made the employer must consider them and act in them if necessary.

A Safety Representative does not have any duties, as opposed to functions, under the 2005 Act, other than those that apply to employees generally. Safety Representatives are not



Safety Managers or Safety Officers and they are not responsible for enforcing health and safety.

The Safety Representative can also:

- accompany an inspector carrying out an inspection
 - other than the investigation of an accident or dangerous occurrence (although this may be allowed at the discretion of the inspector);
 - at the discretion of the inspector, and when the employee concerned so requests, be present when the inspector interviews the employee about an accident or dangerous occurrence at a place of work;
 - make representations to the employer on safety, health and welfare at the place of work;
 - make verbal or written representations to inspectors, including about the investigation of accidents or dangerous occurrences;
 - receive advice and information from inspectors in relation to safety, health and welfare at the place of work;
 - consult and liaise with other Safety Representatives appointed in the same undertaking, whether or not they work in the same place of work, in different places of work under the control of the employer or at different times at the place of work (for example, safety representatives on different shifts).

Safety Representatives and Safety Committee members are entitled to time off for training, without loss of earnings, so that they can acquire the knowledge to discharge their functions. The employer must facilitate this training.

See link to [Selection of Safety Representatives](#)

Safety Statement

A Safety Statement is a written action programme for safeguarding the health and safety of those at work. It details how health and safety is managed in the workplace. It must be in writing and employees and Safety Representatives should be consulted in advance of its preparation. It should set out how the employer will ensure workers' health and safety. The Safety Statement must be made available to staff detailing the hazards that have been identified, the risks assessed and the controls in place to eliminate or control them.

Securing loads

The failure to secure loads can result in serious and indeed fatal accidents. Every year loading, unloading and load shift accidents injure hundreds of people and cost businesses millions in damaged goods, damaged vehicles and lost work time. When loading trucks, the HSA states that the following should be considered:



- Choose a suitable vehicle for the type and size of load.
- Position the load correctly to maintain adequate stability, steering and braking and not to overload tyres and axles.
- Use suitable restraint equipment, which is strong enough for the type of load being carried and is in good condition.
- Provide adequate load restraint to ensure that every load is restrained to prevent unacceptable movement during operation which should include emergency braking.
- Use appropriate driving methods which take account of the effects of the load on the vehicles driving mechanism and check the load and restraints during the journey.

Selection of Safety Representatives

The Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act 2005 entitles workers to decide on select and appoint a Safety Representative to represent them in consultations with their employer on matters relating to safety health and welfare at work. Employers do not select Safety Representatives.

Sign Lighting and Guarding

Working on roads carries a potential of high risk, often aggravated by the unexpected and unforeseen (e.g., drivers on roads may not expect to encounter people at work, standing or slow-moving vehicles, pedestrians, or cyclists). In addition, workers involved in construction work may have limited protection from moving traffic.

Part 13 of the Construction Regulations 2013 provide a legislative basis for ensuring the safety of road workers and road users during construction work affecting roads. These regulations requires that signing, lighting and guarding at the roadworks must be supervised by at least one competent person. This person must have completed the Signing, Lighting and Guarding at Roadworks Construction Skills Certification Course (SLG CSCS) and possess a valid and relevant registration card.

Slips Trips and Falls

Every working day 7 people are hurt in slips, trips, and falls in the workplace. They are the second highest single cause of workplace injuries. Factors that contribute to slips, trips, and falls include wet surfaces, stairs and steps, vehicles, ice, walkways, uneven surfaces, floor cleaning, entrances and exits. Slips, trips, and falls are a hazard in every potential hazard in every workplace and the key to prevention is to carry out a risk assessment. The starting point is to consider the risk in the workplace that could lead to slip or trip accident and to decide on the control measures required to eliminate or minimise the possibility of such accidents. The employer should do this in consultation with their workers and any Safety Representative in place.



Smoking

The Public Health (Tobacco) (Amendment) Act 2004 (No. 6 of 2004) placed a ban on smoking at all enclosed places of work from 29/03/04 to protect persons at work from exposure to environmental tobacco smoke. The purpose of the ban is to protect employees and the public from exposure to the harmful and toxic effects of tobacco smoke in the workplace.

Employers and managers are expected to make all reasonable efforts to ensure that their staff, customers and visitors are aware of the smoking ban in the workplace and that no smoking takes place there.

Employers and managers must:

- have a smoke-free policy which is clearly communicated;
- display a "No Smoking" sign to alert staff, customers and visitors of the workplace smoking ban;
- provide external stubbing bins at entrances where appropriate.

Sun-Protection and Outdoor Workers

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Ireland with over 13,000 cases diagnosed annually. The annual rates of both melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancers are increasing. The main cause of skin cancer is ultraviolet (UV) rays in sunlight. Sun exposure is the best natural source of Vitamin D and is important for good general health. We can all enjoy the outdoors but we just need to think about how we protect our skin when outside. Outdoor workers are at higher risk than other workers.

Outdoor workers include construction workers, farmers, agricultural and horticultural workers, fishermen, gardeners, postal workers, council workers, refuse collectors, couriers and others.

Outdoor workers may be particularly at risk from high outdoor temperatures as well as from UV exposure. You need to keep hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids. You also need to protect your skin from the sun. The harmful effects from the sun, like sunburn and skin cancer, come from UV radiation (UVA and UVB). If you work outdoors, you might be exposed to 2-3 times more UV radiation from the sun than someone who works indoors, putting you at higher risk of skin cancer. If you spend all or part of the day regularly working outdoors, you can reduce your risk of skin cancer by protecting your skin from the sun's UV rays by being SunSmart.

Sun Smart

Outdoor workers have been identified as a high-risk group for the development of skin cancer as they spend long periods outdoors. Outdoor workers can protect their skin from the sun by following the Healthy Ireland SunSmart 5 S's

1. **Slip** on clothing that covers your skin, such as long sleeves, collared t-shirts.



- 2. **Slop** on sunscreen on exposed areas. Use sunscreen SPF minimum 30 or higher. Apply 20 minutes before going outside and re-apply every two hours – more often if perspiring.
- 3. **Slap** on a wide-brimmed hat.
- 4. **Seek shade** - especially if outdoors between 11am and 3pm when UV rays are at their strongest. If possible, schedule outdoor work before 11am or after 3pm.
- 5. **Slide** on wraparound sunglasses to protect your eyes.



Temperature

During working hours, temperature should be appropriate, having regard to the working methods being used and the physical demands on workers. For sedentary office work, the minimum temperature after one hour should be 17.5 degrees centigrade.

There is no maximum temperature specified in the regulations but this does not mean that any temperature is acceptable. Workers must have a means of measuring the temperature. In cases where it is difficult to maintain an adequate overall temperature, it may be necessary to provide effective local heating, protective clothing or cooling at individual workstations.

Toilet Facilities

Employers are required to provide adequate and suitable sanitary facilities, an adequate number of toilets and washbasins, and adequate and suitable showers. To be adequate and suitable, facilities for washing should include running hot and cold water as well as soap and clean towels. Separate facilities should be provided for men and women. Washing facilities should have adequate lighting, be sufficiently ventilated and appropriately maintained and kept clean.

Sanitary Facilities for Males and Females (if there are no urinals)

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AT WORK	NUMBER OF WATER CLOSETS	NUMBER OF WASHBASINS
1 to 5	1	1
6 to 15	2	2

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AT WORK	NUMBER OF WATER CLOSETS	NUMBER OF WASHBASINS
16 to 30	3	3
31-45	4	4
46-60	5	5
61-75	6	6
76-90	7	7
91-100	8	8
Above 100	8 + 1 WC and washbasin per 25 persons or fraction thereof	

Sanitary Facilities for Males Only (if urinals are provided)

NUMBER OF MEN AT WORK	NUMBER OF WATER CLOSETS	NUMBER OF URINALS	NUMBER OF WASHBASINS
1-15	1	1	1
16-30	2	1	2
31-45	2	2	2
46-60	3	2	3
61-75	3	3	3
76-90	4	3	4
91-100	4	4	4
Above 100	4+ 1 WC, urinal and washbasin per 50 males or fraction thereof		

Traffic Management

Every year people are killed or seriously injured in accidents involving workplace transport. At the route of these accidents is poor management control, involving a failure to provide or maintain a Safe Work Place, a Safe Vehicle, a Safe Driver and/or safe systems of work.

Traffic Management is about the management of the hazards and the risks associated with any vehicle or piece of mobile equipment that is used by an employer, employee, self-employed person or visitor in a fixed or temporary workplace. It should aim to reduce the risks associated with traffic movement .

It involves the segregation of pedestrians and vehicles, segregation of light vehicles and quarry plant, car parking for visitors and customers, instructions to vehicle operators to remain in their vehicles at all times, maintenance schemes for vehicles, design and maintenance of roads, provision of required reversing aids, one-way systems, adequate signage and speed restrictions, driver training and competence, design of edge protection along roads and risk assessment of working areas and the implementation of identified control measures.



Training

Employers are required to provide workers with the necessary instruction, training and supervision to enable the workers to carry out tasks safely. This training should be in a form, manner and language that the worker can understand. Workers should receive time off for such training without loss of remuneration and the worker should not have to pay the cost of this training.



Vehicle Movement in the Workplace

Workplaces should be organised so that pedestrians and vehicles can circulate safely. Pedestrian and traffic routes should be clearly identified for the protection of employees. Traffic routes should be designed to allow for safe and easy access, take account of the number of users and pedestrians and allow for sufficient clearance between vehicles and pedestrians.

Vehicles

Vehicles are defined as a place of work under Health & Safety Legislation. Therefore, the employer must ensure so far as reasonably practicable that vehicles are designed, provided and maintained in a condition that is safe and without risk to health.

Ventilation

Systems of ventilation for enclosed places of work shall ensure that there is sufficient fresh air, having regard to the working and physical demands on employees. A fixed ventilation system shall be maintained in working order and any defect likely to cause a danger to health shall be removed.

In most cases natural ventilation through windows and doors is adequate. However, in cases where for instance, there are high dust levels, high temperatures or where the workplace is isolated from the outside air, mechanical or forced ventilation may be necessary.



Victimisation

Victimisation occurs if an employer penalises a worker because they have:

- made a complaint or giving notice of intention to do so;
- been involved in any discrimination proceedings;
- helped a colleague to make a complaint.

This is irrespective of whether it was upheld or not. Victimisation is against the law and should be pursued through the employer's grievance procedures.



Washing Facilities

An employer must provide adequate and suitable washing facilities. To be adequate and suitable, facilities for washing should include running hot and cold, or warm water, as well as soap and clean towels (the single towel for use by many should be discouraged) or other suitable means of cleaning or drying. Washing facilities should be conveniently located, be near to the sanitary facilities and large enough to facilitate washing of face, hands and forearms.

Separate washing facilities and/or showers should be provided for men and women except when the facilities are provided in a room intended to be used by only one person, the door of which is capable of being secured from the inside.

Windows and Skylights

Windows, skylights and ventilators should be able to be opened and closed safely and be capable of being cleaned without risk to health and safety.

Workers' Memorial Day

Workers' Memorial Day takes place on the 28th April every year. It is an important date nationally and internationally when we remember people killed or injured at work. Every year the Irish Congress of Trade Unions organise a commemoration event and in addition use the day to highlight key health and safety messages.



Working at Height

Working at height can be dangerous. Every year fall-from-heights accidents are in the top five in the HSA's list of reported accidents. Many of those who fall from height are killed and many more suffer injuries from which they will never recover.

Working at height is work in any place, including a place at, above or below ground level, where a person could be injured if they fell from that place. Access and egress to a place of work can also be work at height.

Examples of work activities that are classified as working at height include:

- Working on trestles;
- Working on a flat roof;
- Erecting false work or formwork;
- Working on a ladder;
- Working at ground level adjacent to an excavation;
- Working on formwork within an excavation;
- Working near or adjacent to fragile materials.

Employers should carry out risk assessments for work at height activities and make sure that all work is planned, organised and carried out by a competent person. In addition, appropriate work equipment should be selected and used

Working Time

Working Time is defined in the Organisation of Working Time Act as '*any time that the employee is at his or her place of work or at his or her employer's disposal and carrying on or performing the activities or duties of the enterprise*'

It excludes break, meal and rest periods, whether paid or not. For workers who have no fixed or habitual workplace, time spent travelling to the first customer and travelling home from the last customer is Working Time. Under the Act the maximum average working week is 48 hours.

Workplace

Any building or area where people work. Such a place can range from a home office to a large office building or factory. *Vehicles* are defined as a *Place of Work* under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act.

Workplace Safety Inspections

Safety representatives, after giving reasonable notice to the employer, have the right to inspect the whole or part of a workplace that they represent at a frequency or on a schedule agreed between them and the employer, based on the nature and extent of the hazards.



A Safety Representative also has the right to inspect immediately where an accident or dangerous occurrence has taken place, or where there is an imminent danger or risk to the safety, health and welfare of any person.

Workplace Stress

Work-related stress has been identified generally both in Ireland and at international levels, as a significant concern for both employees and employers. Stress can potentially affect any workplace, small or large in any field of activity, and can affect any employee irrespective of what form the employment contract or relationship takes.

Work-related stress is stress caused or made worse by work. It refers to when a person perceives the work environment in such a way that his or her reaction involves an inability to cope. It may be caused by perceived / real pressures / deadlines / threats / anxieties within the working environment.

Potential causes of work-related stress can include:

- Excessive workloads (workloads in excess of the role capacity);
- Conflicting demands and lack of role clarity;
- Lack of involvement in making decisions that affect the worker and lack of influence over the way the job is done;
- Poorly-managed organisational change, job insecurity;
- Ineffective communication, lack of support from management or colleagues;
- Psychological and sexual harassment, third party violence.

Workstation

The definition of "workstation" includes DSEs/VDUs and all the individual pieces of equipment, chair, desk and work environment, which can constitute a workstation. Employers are required to evaluate health and safety at workstations with particular reference to eyesight, physical difficulties and mental stress. This includes if you are working remotely.

Workstation Assessment

Employers are required to carry out an analysis or risk assessment of employee workstations. They are also required to train employees in the use of workstations before commencing work with display screen equipment and whenever the organisation of the workstation is modified. There are four stages in the risk assessment i.e.,

- Initial consultation with the employee;
- Observation of the employee working at the computer workstation;
- Identification of the issues that need to be addressed ;
- Review of the implementation of the action plan.



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Friday 9:00am - 4:00pm

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