

Health and safety training

A brief guide



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This leaflet explains what you, as an employer, may need to do to ensure your employees receive appropriate health and safety training. It gives advice on who may need training, what form the training may take and how to organise it. The leaflet will also be useful to employees and their representatives.

What is training?

Training means helping people to learn how to do something, telling people what they should or should not do, or simply giving them information. Training isn't just about formal 'classroom' courses.

Why provide health and safety training?

Providing health and safety information and training helps you to:

- ensure that people who work for you know how to work safely and without risks to health;
- develop a positive health and safety culture, where safe and healthy working becomes second nature to everyone;
- meet your legal duty to protect the health and safety of your employees.

Effective training:

- will contribute towards making your employees competent in health and safety;
- can help your business avoid the distress that accidents and ill health cause;
- can help you avoid the financial costs of accidents and occupational ill health, such as damaged products, lost production and demotivated staff. Don't forget that your insurance might not cover all these costs. For information on business insurance, go to www.gov.uk.

The law

The **Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974** requires you to provide whatever information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of your employees.

This is expanded by the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**, which identify situations where health and safety training is particularly important, eg when people start work, on exposure to new or increased risks and where existing skills may have become rusty or need updating.

Like many employers, you may not be in a position to provide this training on your own, in which case you will need competent help. If possible, you should appoint

one or more of your employees. If you need further help, look at HSE's leaflet INDG420 *Getting specialist help with health and safety* for advice at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg420.pdf. Also, look at www.hse.gov.uk/business/competent-advice.htm which includes detailed advice on choosing and managing a health and safety consultant.

The **Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977** and the **Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996** require you to consult your employees, or their representatives, on health and safety issues. Representatives appointed under either of these sets of regulations are entitled to time off with pay for training in their duties. For more details on this see: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l146.htm

The **Health and Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1990** ensure that learners doing work experience are covered by health and safety law.

There are a number of other regulations that include specific health and safety training requirements, eg asbestos, diving and first aid.

What about self-employed people?

If a person working under your control and direction is treated as self-employed for tax and national insurance purposes, they may nevertheless be treated as your employee for health and safety purposes. You need, therefore, to take appropriate action to protect them.

For further guidance on working with contractors and self-employed people, see www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg368.pdf.

If you do not wish to employ workers on this basis, you should seek legal advice. Ultimately, each case can only be decided on its own merits by a court of law.

Who needs health and safety training?

You do! Whether you are an employer or self-employed, are you sure that you're up to date with how to identify the hazards and control the risks from your work? Do you know how to get help – from your trade association, your local Chamber of Commerce, or your health and safety enforcing authority? Do you know what you have to do about consulting your employees, or their representatives, on health and safety issues? If not, you would probably benefit from some training.

Your managers and supervisors do! If you employ managers or supervisors they need to know what you expect from them in terms of health and safety, and how you expect them to deliver. They need to understand your health and safety policy, where they fit in, and how you want health and safety managed. They may also need training in the specific hazards of your processes and how you expect the risks to be controlled.

Your employees do! Everyone who works for you, including self-employed people, needs to know how to work safely and without risks to health. Like your supervisors, they need to know about your health and safety policy, your arrangements for implementing it, and the part they play. They also need to know how they can raise any health and safety concerns with you.

Contractors and self-employed people who may be working for you do!

Remember, these people might not be familiar with your working environment and safety systems that you have put in place for regular employees.

You should:

- take into account the capabilities, training, knowledge and experience of workers; and
- ensure that the demands of the job do not exceed their ability to carry out their work without risk to themselves and others.

Some employees may have particular training needs, for example:

- new recruits need basic induction training into how to work safely, including arrangements for first aid, fire and evacuation;
- people changing jobs or taking on extra responsibilities need to know about any new health and safety implications;
- young employees are particularly vulnerable to accidents and you need to pay particular attention to their needs, so their training should be a priority. It is also important that new, inexperienced or young employees are adequately supervised;
- employee representatives or safety representatives will require training that reflects their responsibilities;
- some people's skills may need updating by refresher training.

Your risk assessment should identify any further training needs associated with specific risks.

How can I do it?

Firstly, you should show your commitment so the people being trained recognise that the training is important. You should consult your employees or their representatives on the planning and organisation of the training. You should make sure that you properly prioritise and plan the training needs for your business. You may have appointed somebody to give you 'competent assistance' (see 'The law') and they should be able to help. Try the following five-step approach:

STEP 1 Decide what training your organisation needs

- Identify the skills and knowledge needed for people to do their job in a safe and healthy way. Compare these against people's current skills and knowledge and identify the gaps.
- Review your experience of injuries, near misses or cases of ill health.
- Look at your risk assessments to see where information and/or training have been identified as factors in controlling risks.
- Consider awareness training needs for everyone, including directors, managers and supervisors, including:
 - how you manage health and safety;
 - who is responsible for what;
 - the cost to the business if things go wrong;
 - how to identify hazards and evaluate risks; and
 - the hazards encountered and measures for controlling them.

If you offer work experience to young people, look at www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/index.htm.

STEP 2 Decide your training priorities

- Does the law require you to carry out specific training (eg first-aid training)?
See 'The law' for more details.
- Priorities should include:
 - those where lack of information and/or training might result in serious harm;
 - those that benefit the largest numbers of staff;
 - new recruits or those new to the working environment;
 - people changing jobs, working practices or taking on new responsibilities;
 - people using new equipment.
- Consult employees or their representatives for their views.
- You must provide training during working hours and not at the expense of your employees. Special arrangements may be needed for part-timers or shift workers.

STEP 3 Choose your training methods and resources

Don't forget that though there are many external trainers who can help you, much effective training can be done 'in-house'.

- Choose your methods, for example:
 - giving information or instruction;
 - coaching or on-the-job training;
 - training in the 'classroom';
 - open and distance learning;
 - in groups or individually; and
 - computer-based or interactive learning.

You should make sure that you meet the training needs of all of your workforce, including migrant workers who might not have good English, see www.hse.gov.uk/migrantworkers/index.htm, also people with poor literacy skills or those with disabilities, such as of sight or hearing.

- Consider who can help by providing you with information, materials, training courses etc. You could try for example:
 - National Occupational Standards (www.ukstandards.co.uk);
 - trade unions or trade associations;
 - further education colleges;
 - private training organisations;
 - independent health and safety consultants;
 - employer bodies (eg Chambers of Commerce); and
 - qualification awarding bodies.
- Look at www.gov.uk to find detailed information and advice on skills and training, including:
 - the impact of training on business performance;
 - identifying training needs;
 - training methods;
 - how to set up in-house training;
 - how to evaluate your training;
 - how to find a training provider or course; and
 - learning through networking with others.

If you decide that you need further help from an external source, you can find a consultant by visiting www.oshcr.org.

STEP 4 Deliver the training

- Make sure the information is easy to understand and try to use a variety of training methods to deliver your message.
- Make sure the trainer has enough time to prepare themselves, their resources and the venue – preparation is particularly important for people who are not experienced trainers.

STEP 5 Check that the training has worked

- Do your employees understand what you require of them?
- Do they now have the knowledge and skills needed to work safely and without risk to health?
- Are they actually working as they have been trained to?
- Has there been any improvement in your organisation's health and safety performance?
- What feedback are you getting from line managers and the people who have been trained?
- Is further information and/or training needed?
- Was the most suitable training method used?
- What improvements can be made?
- Has there been a change in behaviour and practice?
- It can help you manage training if you keep records, even if it is in-house training.
- You should monitor training records so that refresher training can be given when needed.

How else can HSE help?

To help you decide on training needs for your business, a good start is to visit www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/, which includes simple guidance on assessing and managing health and safety risks.

Useful websites

- www.learndirect.co.uk will help you find health and safety training courses (Tel: 0800 101 901).
- www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk can help you find a training course in Scotland (Tel: 0808 100 9000).
- www.gov.uk.
- www.ukces.org.uk UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES).

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 available at: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg345.htm.

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