

SAFETY IN SMALL SHOPS



**Safety, Health and Welfare in Small Retail Premises
Guidelines on Safety Statements and Risk Assessments**

£1
€1.27

Safety, Health and Welfare in Small Retail Premises Guidelines on Safety Statements and Risk Assessments

STEP 1

You Know Health and Safety is Important

Every year approximately 33,000 people are injured at work. Many of these injuries have resulted in pain and suffering to employees and serious economic losses to their employers. Refer to the Authority's latest Annual Report for details. Some of the injuries have resulted in employers being prosecuted. Investigation of accidents by the Health and Safety Authority has shown that most

accidents can be predicted and can usually be easily prevented.

This booklet aims to provide practical guidance on how to ensure a safe working environment in small retail premises. Following this advice will help you avoid accidents both to your employees and the public.

STEP 2

Know the law



To start managing health and safety you need to know about the workplace health and safety laws that affect you. As well as being legal minimum standards these laws provide general guidance on how to prevent workplace accidents.

Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989 (No. 7 of 1989)

Employers have a responsibility to look after their own and their employees' safety while at work by providing:-

- A safe place to work in
- A safe means of getting in and out of the premises
- Safe equipment
- Safe working procedures
- Information and training to employees
- Personal Protective Equipment to employees where required

The Act requires every employer to identify the hazards and assess the risks at his place of work and to prepare a **Safety Statement**. A Safety

Statement is an action programme outlining how health and safety is managed in the workplace.

Employees must co-operate with their employer on health and safety matters. They must report defects in plant and equipment, use chemicals and equipment safely and use protective clothing and equipment as is provided by their employer.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) 1993 (S.I. No. 44 of 1993)

This regulation requires that the risk assessment necessary to comply with Section 12(3) of the 1989 Act, as regards the Safety Statement must be in writing. It is the basis on which the employer can make positive decisions on protective measures and protective equipment, which may be necessary. For further information on risk assessment, please refer to guidance on Section 12 of the guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989 and the General Application Regulations 1993 (£10.00) and the detailed Guidelines on Safety Statements and Carrying out Risk Assessments (£2.00)

STEP
3

Prepare a Safety Statement

Action 1 Draw up a Health and Safety Policy

This policy should spell out your commitment to ensuring the health and safety of employees. The attached pre-formatted Statement has an example of a policy.

Preparing and implementing a Safety Statement and keeping it up to date is the most important step in managing health and safety in your business. The Safety Statement is based on the principle that safety can be managed because most accidents are foreseeable and can usually be prevented. A Safety Statement can be prepared by following six simple "actions" which are set out below. It need not take very long to prepare a Safety Statement for a small retail premises. You can use copies of the pre-formatted Safety Statement enclosed to help you prepare your Safety Statement.

Action 2 Identify the Hazards

A hazard means anything that can cause harm (for example: moving parts of machinery, chemicals, manual handling of loads, electricity). Walk around your premises and look at what could reasonably be expected to cause harm. Ignore the trivial and concentrate on those hazards that could cause serious harm or affect several people. Ask your employees what they think – they may have noticed things, which are not immediately obvious. Examples of common hazards in retailing are given on pages 3, 4 and 5 and could be used as a checklist. Write down the hazards you have found.

Action 3 Carry out a Risk Assessment

Risk is the likelihood, great or small, that someone will be harmed by the hazard together with the severity of harm suffered. Risk assessment is a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. Assess and decide what employees could be harmed and how.

Categorising the risks (e.g. high risk of falling, medium risk of burn or low risk of electrocution) allows you to decide the priority given to putting the safety measures into place. Write down your assessment for each hazard.

Action 4 Decide what Precautions are Needed

You probably already have some safety precautions in place. Your risk assessment will tell you whether these are adequate or more should be done. Where you have found a hazard that needs to be managed, ask yourself:-

- Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?
- If not, what safety precautions are necessary?

Health and safety laws provide guidance on the appropriate safeguards. For example, dangerous moving parts of slicers and mincers must be fitted with guards to prevent people from making physical contact with them.

Suppliers of machinery and chemicals must provide information on appropriate precautions. For example, suppliers of hazardous chemicals must provide you with a Material Safety Data Sheet. This outlines the dangers associated with the chemical and tells you what precautions you must take.

Write the precautions down.

Action 5 Record your Findings

You must write down the results of actions 1 to 4 in your Safety Statement. Give your employees and any other persons at your place of work, who may be effected by the activities being carried out, access to the Safety Statement. You should also explain to them what they must do in order to prevent injury.

Action 6 Review your Programme and Update

Review your Safety Statement at least once a year. Are you and your employees complying with the precautions you set down? Have new and significant hazards been introduced into the workplace and does the Safety Statement need to be amended to take them into account?

STEP
4

Examples of Hazards in Retailing and some Precautions

The following examples of hazards cover the major causes of accidents. There may be other hazards present in your workplace so do not confine your hazard identification to just those listed. Outline precautions are suggested but the

precautions needed will depend on the nature of the risk itself. For example, warning signs will not be an adequate precaution against slips if large areas of the floor are slippery and customers and employees cannot avoid those areas.



Fire

Slips, Trips and Falls

Both employees and customers are at risk. This is the single largest cause of accidents and it can generally be controlled by keeping the premises clean, tidy and uncluttered.

- Keep aisles, working areas and stairways clear and free of boxes, trailing cables or rubbish.
- Clean up spillages and vegetable off-cuts immediately.
- Place warning signs when the floor is slippery.
- Keep flooring in good repair.
- Minimise storage on upper floors or mezzanines unless a safe means of transporting goods between floors is available.

A fire can have devastating consequences.

Prevent a fire occurring by controlling sources of ignition and keeping combustibles to a minimum. Where a fire occurs employees must be able to raise the alarm and quickly make their escape.

- Restrict smoking to designated areas.
- Remove rubbish frequently.
- Keep escape routes clear and emergency exits unlocked, this is especially important at busy periods such as Christmas and Easter.
- Provide fire extinguishers.
- Have the electrical system periodically checked by a competent person.
- Instruct employees on precautions for emergencies and evacuation procedures.

Manual Handling

Injury can be caused by lifting or moving loads. Factors leading to injury may include: the weight or shape of the load, the fitness of the person lifting, the position the load is lifted to or from or whether there is twisting or carrying involved.

- Remove or reduce the need for manual handling by using hand trucks, trolleys or lifts.
- Arrange storage areas so that employees do not have to reach or twist when lifting loads.
- Do not store heavy or awkward items above shoulder height.
- Provide safety ladders and steps.
- Provide training to employees lifting heavy or awkward loads, e.g. gas cylinders, bags of coal, etc.,



Machinery

Slicing or mincing machines are a regular cause of serious injuries. Many injuries occur because inexperienced employees are allowed to operate these dangerous machines or because the guards are removed and not replaced. Compactors are increasingly common and can kill or maim. Ensure that they cannot be operated while a person has any part of their body inside the compactor.

- Ensure employees are instructed in the correct use of all machinery.
- Do not use slicers or mincers unless all the guards are in position.
- Unplug all equipment before cleaning or maintaining it.
- Check that the compactor safety interlocks are operating to prevent anyone gaining access to the compactor while it is operating. Secure it to prevent children hiding inside.
- Goods lifts should be thoroughly examined at 6 month intervals by a competent person.

Violence to Employees

Employees dealing with cash or high value goods are vulnerable to attack. The local crime prevention officer of the Gardai can provide advice on how to reduce the risk.

- Reduce the amount of available cash e.g. by using time-locked safes and display signs indicating this.
- Identify higher risk times and take extra precautions during such times.
- Instruct employees in the handling of disputes and in the use of security measures.
- Employees should not resist if theft is the obvious motive for the attack.
- Video surveillance equipment may help to deter attackers.
- Lone workers are vulnerable; extra measures, e.g. personal panic alarms may be required and should be tested regularly. Remember that isolation from colleagues may put employees at increased risk and may make them feel more vulnerable to violence.

Use of Chemicals

Some cleaning chemicals or items of stock can cause serious burns to skin or eyes or can cause dermatitis. Mixtures of cleaning agents can produce poisonous gases.

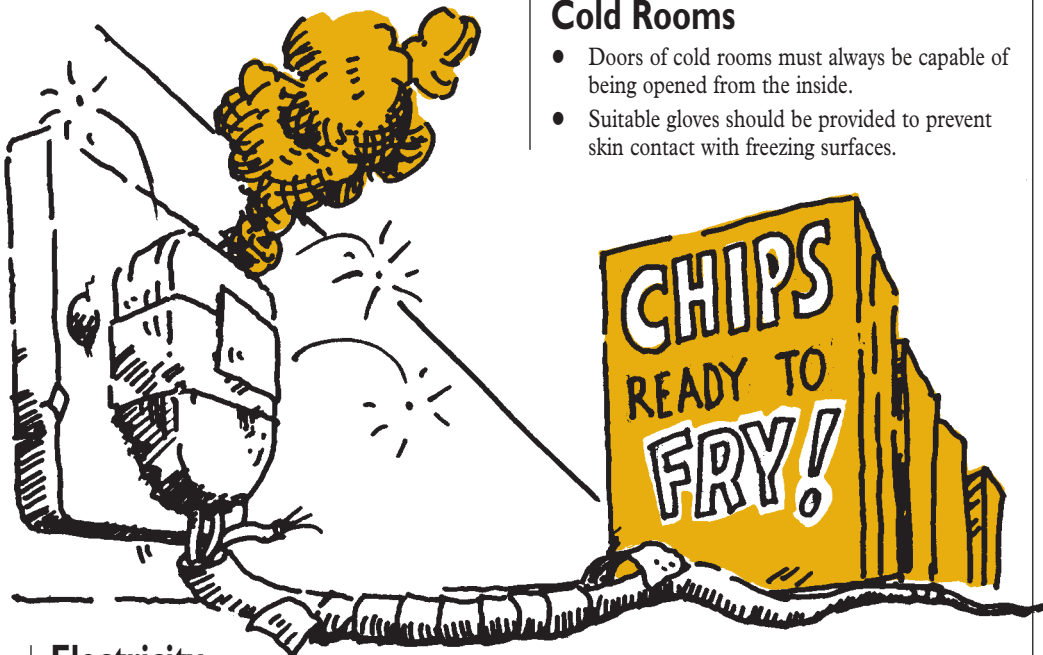
- Read labels and follows instructions for use; obtain Material Safety Data Sheets from suppliers.
- Provide employees with adequate protection such as gloves or eye protection; ensure they are used.
- Do not mix chlorine bleaches with other cleaning agents.

Welfare Facilities

- A comfortable temperature should be maintained, e.g. a minimum of 16C for light work.
- Eating facilities, including a means for boiling water, should be provided or be reasonably accessible to employees.
- Provide clean toilets and washing facilities with hot and cold running water.
- Provide seating where employees have opportunities to sit without detriment to their work.

Cold Rooms

- Doors of cold rooms must always be capable of being opened from the inside.
- Suitable gloves should be provided to prevent skin contact with freezing surfaces.



Electricity

Defective plugs and sockets are the main cause of electrical accidents.

- Regularly check leads and sockets to check for wear or fraying.
- Ensure that all socket outlets are protected by a residual current device (RCD). This is a

sensitive trip switch with a test-button, usually installed on the electrical panel.

- Test the RCD by pushing the test button at least every 6 months.
- Any equipment which intermittently stops or which blows fuses or trip switches should be checked.

STEP
5

Further Information Sources

Legislation

- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Applications) Regulations, 1993
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Miscellaneous Welfare Provisions) Regulations, 1995

Health & Safety Authority Guidelines

The following guidelines are available from the Health and Safety Authority at 10 Hogan Place, Dublin 2, Phone (01) 6147000 or your local Health and Safety Authority Office list on the back.

- *Safe Company* - Price £10.00
- *Guidelines on Preparing your Safety Statement* - Price £2.00
- *Handle with Care – Safe Manual Handling*. - Price £2.00
- *Pregnant at Work* – a guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Pregnant Employees etc.) Regulations, 1994. - Price £3.00
- *Safe to Work* – Price £1.00
- *Short Guide to Health & Safety Law* – Price £2.00
- *Violence at Work*
- *Accident Report Form IR1*

Health and Safety Authority Information Line – “Info-Tel”

The Health and Safety Authority operates a health and safety information line, “Info-Tel” during normal working hours, phone (01) 6147010.

IBEC

- Information pack *Retail and Distribution Sectors*, health and safety at work.
Contact:
Irish Business and Employers Confederation
84 Lower Baggot Street
Dublin 2
Phone: (01) 660 1011

SAFETY IN SMALL SHOPS



HEALTH AND SAFETY
AUTHORITY

HSA OFFICES

HEADQUARTERS:

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01-614 70 10
safety questions answered



website

You can also find us
on the internet –
our website is at
<http://www.hsa.ie>