

# Working Together



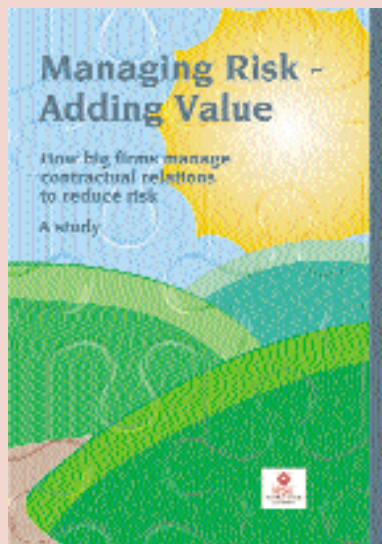
**Guidance on Health and Safety  
for Contractors and Suppliers**



# Guidance on Health and Safety for Contractors and Suppliers

*This leaflet contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory, but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.*

*To find out what some major companies expect of their contractors regarding health and safety, order this booklet's companion book:*



ISBN 0 7176 1536 7 Price £29.95

*An order form for this and other publications mentioned is at the back of this booklet*

# Working Together

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## What this leaflet will tell you

If you run a small firm — and you are a contractor, sub-contractor or supplier — then this leaflet is for you.

In this leaflet, a **contractor** is anyone who is called in to work for a company but who is not an employee of that company. A **supplier** is someone who supplies goods or services.

Working safely with large firms can help your business — not working safely can damage your business — and theirs. What is more, it could get you, and them, a bad name!

It's your job to manage health and safety, and this leaflet gives you basic information about your responsibilities, and tells you where to get more detailed guidance. It also tells you about the most common requirements that clients are likely to ask you about when assessing your competence in managing health and safety.

Many organisations depend on a number of others — often firms smaller than themselves — in order to produce their goods on time and to a reliable standard. Good communications on health and safety matters can make these relationships better for everyone.

*Incidents often happen because contractors do not know about the dangers on site*



### **Contractors**

Contracting of certain kinds of jobs for example, installation and maintenance of plant, waste disposal, cleaning of tanks, is common practice in large firms.

These jobs can be particularly risky because they have to be done on sites, and in situations, which are unfamiliar to contractors. Incidents often happen because contractors do not know about the dangers on site, and the client's employees do not know that contractors are working nearby. These can be avoided if the work is properly assessed and managed.

Firms want to ensure that they engage safe contractors. This involves close attention at all stages of the process beginning with a thorough assessment of competence at the pre-contract stage. It continues throughout the job via close co-operation of all parties and appropriate levels of supervision, and at the end of the contract by reviewing and recording the health and safety performance of contractors and any sub-contractors.

## Why managing health and safety is important to you

Large firms often have their own 'approved' lists of contractors and suppliers. Getting on to an 'approved' list will depend on a number of factors, one of which may be your health and safety performance. Of course, it is in your interests to work safely and without risk to health wherever you work, but if you want to work with other firms they will expect you to be able to explain how you manage health and safety.

### **Suppliers**

If you are a supplier then much of the information in this leaflet will be of interest to you. Just as important to firms are the suppliers of components, particularly those critical components which go directly on to an assembly line.

If you cannot meet your client's demands for supplying goods because there has been an accident, or a health and safety inspector has taken action against you, the knock-on effect may mean you lose the business. To avoid any foreseeable difficulties, clients may want to audit your business, and this may include an examination of your health and safety systems.

Health and safety law applies to all work activities and to just about everyone, including the self-employed, no matter how small the firm.

All parties to a contract have specific responsibilities under health and safety law, and these cannot be passed on to someone else:

- Employers are responsible for protecting people from harm caused by work activities. This includes the responsibility not to harm contractors and sub-contractors on site;
- Employees have to co-operate with their employer on health and safety matters, and not do anything that puts them or others at risk;
- Employees must be trained and clearly instructed in their duties;
- If you are self-employed you must not put yourself in danger, or others who may be affected by what you do;
- Suppliers of chemicals, machinery and equipment have to make sure their products or imports are safe, and provide information on this.

**NB: Asbestos contractors must be licensed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) [Asbestos (Licensing) Regulations 1983].**

All gas installation businesses, including the self-employed, should be a member of a class of persons approved for the time being by HSE. The body currently approved to operate a registration scheme for gas installation bodies is CORGI. Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.

# What everyone needs to know about health and safety

When you work with other firms, or individuals, the relationships can get quite complicated.

Therefore you need to share information and agree what has to be done, how it is going to be done, who is in charge, and who is responsible. Your employees and their health and safety representatives are central to this process.

## ***Communicate with clients, other contractors and employees***

- before you start the work;
- as you progress, and particularly if you find that you need to make significant changes in order to get the job done.

## ***Control and co-ordinate the work***

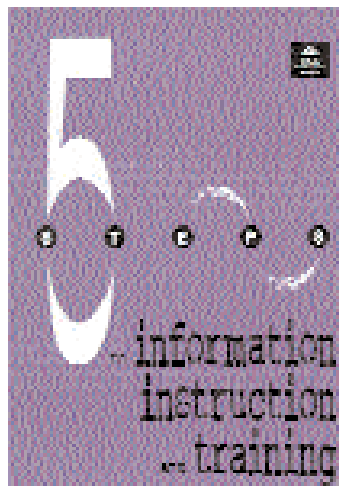
- make sure everyone knows who is in control and co-ordinating the work and the risks that might arise;
- ensure department heads, managers and supervisors understand their responsibilities;
- ensure employees know what they must do, how they will be supervised and how they will be held accountable.

## ***Co-operate with others***

- co-operate with others to ensure that one contractor's work does not adversely affect the work of others;
- agree responsibilities in advance of the work;
- consult your staff and their representatives and involve them in planning the work.

## ***Check out competence***

- make sure employees have the necessary skills, training and experience to carry out all tasks safely — double check this with people on especially dangerous work;
- provide employees with the relevant health and safety information, instruction and training for the job to be done;
- ask for advice and information where you need it.



Recommended leaflet: *Five steps to information, instruction and training* INDG213.

## Health and safety law

The two most important health and safety laws for employers and contractors are:

- *The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.*
- *The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.*

A number of other regulations relevant to contractual situations and requiring risk assessments are:

- *The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 1999;*
- *The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (Manual Handling Operations);*
- *The Noise at Work Regulations 1989 (Noise Regulations);*
- *The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 1987 (Asbestos Regulations)*
- *The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 (CDM);*
- *Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (PPE).*

## What you need to do to comply with the law

### Have your own health and safety policy statement

All employers must have their own health and safety policy statement. If you have five or more employees this must be in writing. [Section 2(3) of the *Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974*]

Everyone should think about health and safety at work, but if you employ five people or more you need to write down the way in which you will manage health and safety. This is your health and safety policy statement.

The policy should be specific to your business, and should be clear about the arrangements and organisation for health and safety at work, and in particular it should:

- state what you want to achieve to prevent accidents and ill health;
- give details of how you will implement it;
- say who has what responsibilities under the policy;
- be reviewed and updated, especially if changes to the business take place.

When you draw up or review your policy, you should:

- discuss it with your employees or their representatives for health and safety. They often have personal knowledge or experience of particular dangers and may offer practical, common-sense suggestions on what should be done to avoid accidents and minimise health risks.

- Involving your employees will gain their commitment and help you make your activities safe;
- Safety representatives appointed by their trade unions can also provide a valuable source of knowledge and experience in health and safety matters.

'Model' policies are at best only a guide as no two businesses are exactly the same, but you may find the following HSE publications helpful in putting together your own health and safety policy.

Recommended leaflets:

*Stating your business: Guidance in preparing a health and safety policy document for small firms* INDG324

## Assess the risks associated with the work

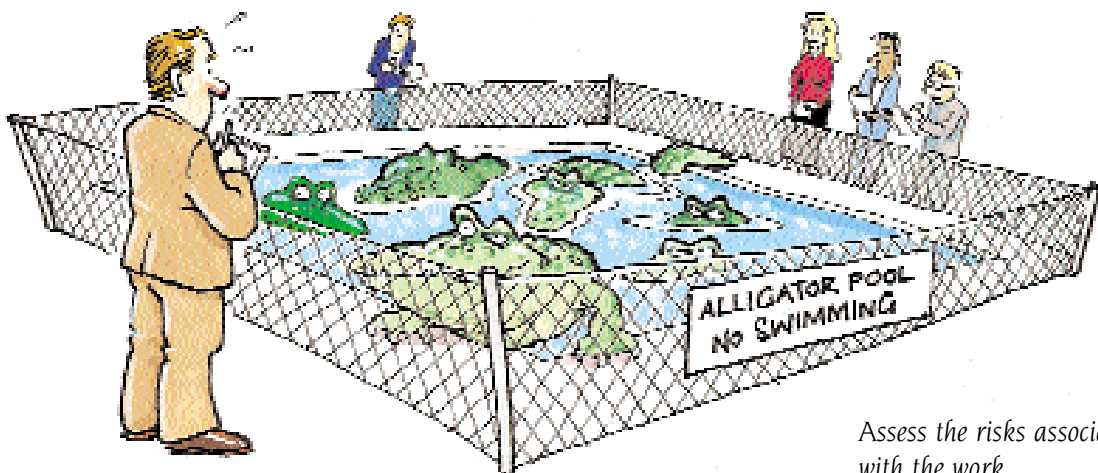
The law (Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 regulation 3) requires you to assess risks in the workplace.

Even if you are self-employed, and do not have employees, you still need to assess health and safety risks which may affect you and others — for example, other contractors, office staff, members of the public.

An assessment of risk is no more than 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. In most cases you will need to discuss the job with the client and any sub-contractors so that you have all the necessary information to do so.

This will help you to:

- identify hazards — those things which could cause harm. (Think about risks to people's health as well as their safety);
- assess risks arising from the hazards — how likely is it that someone could be harmed. (Who might be affected? How seriously?);
- eliminate the risks where possible, otherwise control them.



*Assess the risks associated with the work*



Eliminate risks  
where possible,  
otherwise control  
them



You should consult employees, consider their opinions or advice, and ensure they are informed of the significant findings of your assessment. Safety representatives, through their training and experience, are often well placed to help with risk assessments.

Recommended leaflet: *Five steps to risk assessment*, INDG163(rev).

You may need to assess specific risks in relation to jobs which pose a threat to health, for instance due to exposure to chemicals, asbestos, lead, working in noisy conditions, or jobs involving heavy lifting.

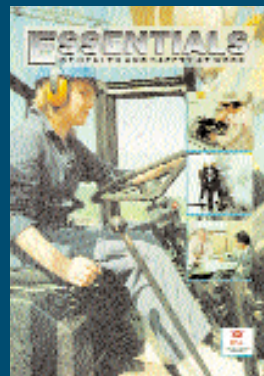
Recommended leaflet: *Guide to risk assessment requirements: Common provisions under health and safety law*, INDG218.

If you employ five or more people the law requires you to write down the significant findings of the risk assessment, but if your business is smaller than that it is still likely that clients will want to see a written assessment.

This should:

- name those hazards which could result in serious injury or ill health;
- say who is at risk from those hazards;
- say what you are doing to control those hazards; and
- say what more (if anything) you need to do.

This amounts to a 'method statement' which is referred to on page 13.



To order any of  
the publications  
mentioned  
in these pages  
phone:-

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or use the order form at  
the back of the booklet

## Give information, instruction and training on health and safety

To comply with the law you must provide information about health and safety to your employees and others who need to know for instance, the client and other contractors/sub-contractors.

You must also provide instruction and training to ensure the health and safety of employees. Instruction means telling people what they should and should not do. Training means helping them learn how to do it. People have training needs throughout their careers but at these times their training needs will be greater than at others:

- when they start working for you (induction training);
- when they are exposed to new or increased risks (consider extra training);
- when people need to bring their skills up to date (refresher training).

In addition, there are a number of Regulations dealing with particular hazards or industries which have specific duties. If those hazards are associated with your work, you must provide the information and training required by the regulations.

Recommended leaflet: *A guide to information, instruction and training: common provisions in health and safety law*, INDG235 explains how requirements in different regulations fit together, and summarises those most likely to apply to you.

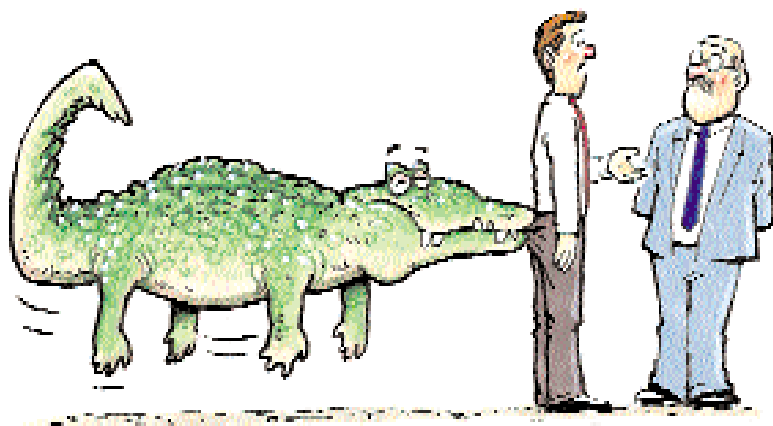
*Health and safety training: What you need to know* INDG345 explains the importance of health and safety training to owners and managers of businesses.

*Effective health and safety training: A trainer's resource pack* HSG222, a loose-leaf publication designed to help employers and trainer's improve health and safety performance by providing high-quality training.

## Report accidents to the Incident Contact Centre, HSE or the local authority

You may be asked to provide details of your accident record. The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) require employers and self-employed people to report some types of work-related accidents to the health and safety enforcing authorities (HSE or your local authority), and to keep records of these for three years.

From April 2001, HSE has made it easier to report RIDDOR incidents – the Incident Contact Centre now acts as a single point of contact for receiving reports of incidents in the UK.



Report incidents

You can report incidents by any of the following routes:

- Telephone: 0845 300 9923
- Internet: Complete the relevant form at <http://www.riddor.gov.uk/infocontent>
- Email: [riddor@natbrit.com](mailto:riddor@natbrit.com)
- Form: by completing the report form and sending by:
  - Fax: 0845 600 9924
  - Post: Incident Contact Centre, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG.

The Incident Contact Centre will forward details of any incidents to the relevant enforcing authority, either the Environmental Health Department of your local authority or the area office of the HSE.

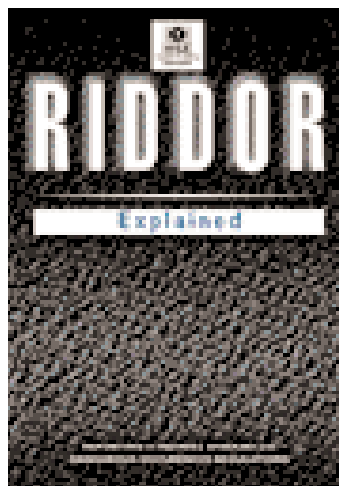
If more convenient, reports can still be made direct to HSE or your local authority, who will forward the details to the Contact Centre.

The Regulations describe the kinds of accidents, illnesses and dangerous occurrences which you need to report. The same procedure applies if accidents involve:

- your employees;
- self-employed people working on your premises;
- members of the public injured as a result of your work.

If you are self-employed you must report and keep a record of accidents to yourself and to members of the public if they happen on your premises. If you have an accident while working somewhere else, then the person in control of the premises must make the report.

It is very important to agree at the outset with all the parties involved who is 'the person in charge of the premises' so that accidents — should they happen — can be reported.



Recommended leaflet: RIDDOR *explained* HSE 31(rev), tells you what you need to report, when, and who to, and gives you a report form.

## Consider the necessary skill levels and training

Health and safety training are just as important as other aspects of job training.

Make sure you know what knowledge and experience you, and others, need to work safely. Consider the needs of all your workers — including young people, new recruits or part-time employees. You may need to demonstrate how skills levels of site personnel are determined for example, by National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), supervisor appraisal or by a less formal system.

Vocational Qualifications (VQs) are developed by industry and relate to specific jobs. Health and safety is an important part of practically all VQs. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the Scottish Vocational Educational Council (SCOTVEC) can provide further information.

Recommended leaflet: HSE's *Five steps to information, instruction and training* INDG213.

A brief guide called *NVQs and individuals* is available free from:  
Qualifications and Curriculum Authority  
Publications Unit, PO Box 99,  
Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2SN  
01787 884444

## Take out the required insurance cover

Employers must take out and maintain approved insurance policies with authorised insurers against liability for bodily injury or disease sustained by employees at work.

Although you do not have to take out other kinds of insurance cover for example, for public liability or in case of damage to property, clients may expect you to have 'Contractor All Risks' insurance cover. Insurance arrangements should be made before work begins.

Recommended leaflets: *Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969* A Guide for

*Employers* HSE40; and *A Guide for Employees and their representatives* HSE39.

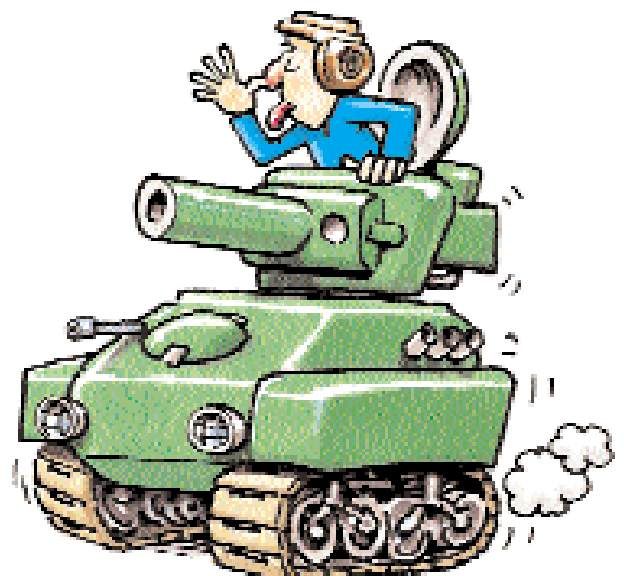
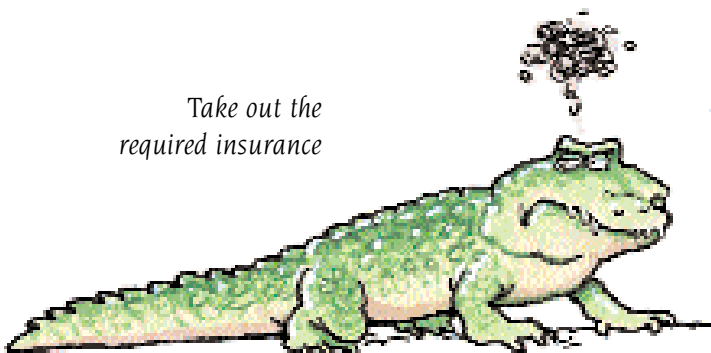
## Provide adequate supervision

Good supervision is essential to maintaining healthy and safe conditions. Clients are likely to ask you who will be responsible for supervision, and how that will be done. Supervisors should be clear about what they are expected to do, for instance, if changes arise during a job, and how they are expected to do it. The greater the risk, the greater the degree of control and supervision required.

Recommended leaflet: *Managing health and safety: Five steps to success* INDG275.



Take out the  
required insurance



## Monitor your health and safety performance

Clients may ask for evidence of your health and safety performance. Monitoring the job allows you to know whether what should be happening (according to the risk assessment or method statement) is actually happening. 'Active' monitoring means carrying out regular inspections, and making sure that targets are being met. 'Reactive' monitoring means investigating all injuries, cases of work-related ill health and 'near misses' to find out why they were not prevented.

Recommended leaflet: *Managing health and safety: Five steps to success* INDG275.

## Other considerations

### **Construction and maintenance jobs**

For many construction, refurbishment, maintenance and repair (including redecoration) works the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 (CDM) will apply.

As far as contractors are concerned, the CDM Regulations apply to all demolition and dismantling work. These Regulations place duties upon clients (those who let the contract), planning supervisors, designers and contractors to plan, co-ordinate and manage health and safety throughout all stages of a construction project.

The CDM Regulations will generally apply to construction work which is notifiable to HSE, ie lasts for more than 30 days or will involve more than 500 person days of work. It also

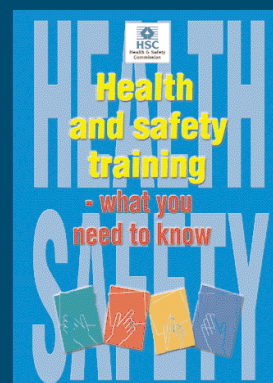
applies to non-notifiable work which involves five people or more on site at any one time.

### **Providing a health and safety method statement**

You may be asked by a client to prepare a detailed method statement on how you intend to carry out the job — including all the control measures which will be applied.

Health and safety method statements are not required by law, but they have proved to be an effective and practical management tool, especially for higher risk work. They are commonly required for construction and demolition work.

The method statement should be based on your assessment of the risks to the health and safety of employees and others who could be affected by the work. The findings of risk assessments should be incorporated into the method statement.



To order any of the publications mentioned in these pages phone:-

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or use the order form at  
the back of the booklet

### **Estimating costs and preparing the programme of work**

When you calculate the costs of doing the work, consider any particular health and safety hazards and make sure suitable allowances have been made in the price.

The job will go better if hazards have been thought through, planned for and controlled from the outset. Stopping the job to deal with emergencies, and then starting again, wastes time and money.

### **Subcontracting work**

Client companies may ask how you appraise the performance of sub-contractors.

If you are considering subcontracting some of the work, find out about their health and safety performance, and discuss proposed working methods with them before giving them a contract. Find out how they are going to work, what equipment and facilities they are expecting to be provided and the equipment they will bring to the site.

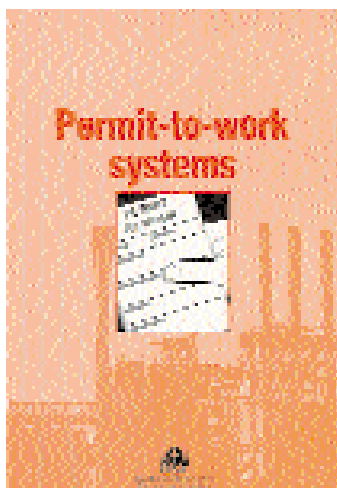
Identify any health or safety risks which their operations may create for others working at the site. Agree control measures.

The information in this leaflet should help you to assess the health and safety competence of sub-contractors.

### **Working with a permit-to-work system**

You may be expected to be familiar with a 'permit-to-work system'. This is a formal written system used to control certain types of work that are potentially hazardous.

Examples include entry into vessels, hot work and pipeline breaking. Permits-to-work form an essential part of safe systems of work for many maintenance activities, particularly in the chemical industry.



Recommended leaflet: *Permit-to-work systems* INDG98(rev).



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# Applying what you know to what you have to do...

This checklist should remind you about the topics you might need to discuss with the people you will be working with.

It is not intended to be exhaustive and not all questions will apply at any one time, but it should help you to get started.

## 1 Responsibilities

- What are the hazards of the job?
- Who is to assess particular risks?
- Who will co-ordinate action?
- Who will monitor progress?

## 2 The job

- Where is it to be done?
- Who with?
- Who is in charge?
- How is the job to be done?
- What other work will be going on at the same time?
- How long will it take?
- What time of day or night?
- Do you need any permit to do the work?

## 3 The hazards and risk assessments

### Site and location

Consider the means of getting into and out of the site and the particular place of work — are they safe; and

- Will any risks arise from environmental conditions?
- Will you be remote from facilities and assistance?
- What about physical/structural conditions?
- What arrangements are there for security?

### Substances

- What supplier's information is available?
- Is there likely to be any microbiological risk?
- What are the storage arrangements?
- What are the physical conditions at the point of use? Check ventilation, temperature, electrical installations etc;
- Will you encounter substances that are not supplied, but produced in the work, eg fumes from hot work during dismantling plant? Check how much, how often, for how long, method of work, etc.
- What are the control measures? For example, consider preventing exposure, providing engineering controls, using personal protection (in that order of choice);
- Is any monitoring required?
- Is health surveillance necessary, eg for work with sensitisers? (refer to health and safety data sheet).



*Consider the means of getting into and out of the site*

## **Plant and equipment**

- What are the supplier/hirer/manufacture's instructions?
- Are any certificates of examination and test needed?
- What arrangements have been made for inspection and maintenance?
- What arrangements are there for shared use?
- Are the electrics safe to use? Check the condition of power sockets, plugs, leads and equipment. (Don't use damaged items until they have been repaired.)
- What assessments have been made of noise levels?

## **4 People**

- Is information, instruction and training given, as appropriate?
- What are the supervision arrangements?
- Are members of the public/inexperienced people involved?
- Have any disabilities/medical conditions been considered?

## **5 Emergencies**

- What arrangements are there for warning systems in case of fire and other emergencies?
- What arrangements have been made for fire/emergency drills?
- What provision has been made for first aid and fire-fighting equipment?
- Do you know where your nearest fire exits are?
- What are the accident reporting arrangements?

- Are the necessary arrangements made for availability of rescue equipment and rescuers?

## **6 Welfare**

### **Who will provide:**

- shelter;
- food and drinks;
- washing facilities;
- toilets (male and female); and
- clothes changing/drying facilities?

You may be faced with other pressing requirements – but re-think health and safety as the work progresses.



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## Next steps...

The following publications are available by calling 01787 881165 or use the order form at the back of this book. HSE will give you more information (see overleaf).

*Stating your business: Guidance on preparing a health and safety policy document for small firms* Leaflet INDG324 HSE Books 2000 (single copy free or priced packs of 5 ISBN 0 7176 1799 8)

*Five steps to risk assessment* Leaflet INDG163(rev1) HSE Books 1998 (single copy free or priced packs of 10 ISBN 0 7176 1565 0)

*RIDDOR explained* HSE31(rev1) HSE Books 1999 (single copy free or priced packs of 10 ISBN 0 7176 2441 2)

This explains what you need to report, when and who to, and gives a report form.

*Five steps to information, instruction and training* Leaflet INDG213 HSE Books 1996 (single copy free or priced packs of 10 ISBN 0 7176 1235 X)

*Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969. A Guide for Employers* HSE 40; and *A Guide for Employees and their representatives* HSE39 Free

*Managing health and safety: Five steps to success* Free leaflet INDG275 HSE Books 1998

*A guide to risk assessment requirements: Common provisions in health and safety law* Leaflet INDG218 HSE Books 1996 (single copy free or priced packs of 5 ISBN 0 7176 1211 2)

*Permit-to-work systems* Leaflet INDG98(rev3) HSE Books 1997 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 0 7176 1331 3)

*An introduction to health and safety: Health and safety in small firms* Leaflet INDG259 HSE Books 1997 This free booklet provides basic information on health and safety at work.

*Essentials of health and safety at work* HSE Books 1994 ISBN 0 7176 0716 X

This general guidance aims to increase awareness of workplace hazards and how to avoid them.

*Successful health and safety management* HSG65 (Second edition) HSE Books 1997 ISBN 0 7176 1276 7

Authoritative guidance for directors and managers on a systematic approach to achieving good standards of health and safety.

*Dangerous maintenance: A study of maintenance accidents and how to prevent them* (Second edition) ISBN 0 11 886347 9

*Improving maintenance - a guide to reducing human error* HSE Books 2000 ISBN 0 7176 1818 8

*Health and safety in construction* HSG150 (Second edition) HSE Books 1996 ISBN 0 7176 2106 5 General guidance for the construction industry with a section on the Construction (Design and Management) 1994 Regulations.

*Protecting the public: Your next move* HSG151 HSE Books 1997 ISBN 0 7176 1148 5

Information for the construction industry on access to sites.

*Health and safety training: What you need to know* INDG345 HSE Books 2001 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 0 7176 2137 5)

*Effective health and safety: A trainer's resource pack* HSG222 HSE Books 2001 ISBN 0 7176 2109 X

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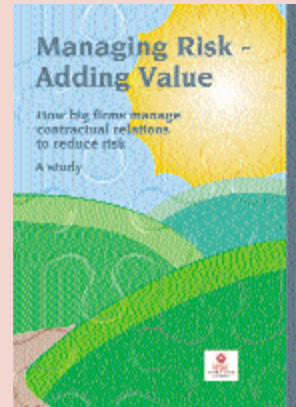
A network of local booksellers stock a selection of HSE's priced publications. HSE's computerised 'Bookfinder' information system is used in good bookshops and will help you choose books that are relevant to your business.

*To find out what some major companies expect of their contractors regarding health and safety, use the mail order contact (left) or the tear-off form opposite to order this booklet's companion book:*

**Managing Risk - Adding Value**  
**How big firms manage contractual relations to reduce risk.**

**A study.**

ISBN 0 7176 1536 7. Price £29.95





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