



Wilkins Safety Group

H & S Guidance - Management of Health and Safety

INTRODUCTION

Accidents at work and occupational ill-health are costly to workers and their families and to employers. Management control of health and safety is therefore essential, particularly in smaller firms where fatal and major injury rates tend to be higher. Losses from a major incident could ruin a company. Directors and managers can be held **personally** responsible for failures to control health and safety.

Employers need to know and understand the work involved, the principles of risk assessment and prevention, and current legislation and health and safety standards.

An employer is not able to pass liability onto employees or persons appointed to give competent advice, where there has been a contravention of health and safety.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR) require every employer to have arrangements in place to cover health and safety.

A successful health and safety management system will include the elements of planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review.

The manner and extent of a health and safety management system will vary with the size of the enterprise, the nature of its activities, the hazards and the conditions in which it operates. Successful organisations develop systems that are relevant/ appropriate, cost effective, aim to reduce financial losses and to protect and enhance both physical and human resources. The following step-by-step approach is tried and tested. It has strong similarities to systems for total quality management used by many successful companies. It can help you protect people and control loss.

The HSE has produced comprehensive advice on such an approach in HS(G)65 - 'Successful health and safety management' from which the following summarised key points are taken.



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STEP

1. An **INITIAL REVIEW** of existing health and safety arrangements will provide useful information regarding the scope, adequacy and implementation of the current system. From this, progress can be planned and monitored.

2. SET YOUR POLICY

A written statement of your policy is required if 5 or more persons are employed. It should include details of the organisation and arrangements for its implementation and should be communicated to all staff.

3. ORGANISE THE WORKFORCE

(i) **Allocate responsibilities for health and safety.** This should be done at all levels in the organisation and so help secure commitment and co-operation.

(ii) **Ensure competence.** This is achieved by ensuring that the company has, or has access to, sufficient health and safety knowledge, skills and experience. Appropriate resources should be allocated and training needs identified and met in a planned way.

(iii) **Communicate.** This entails providing information about hazards, risks and preventative measures. It also involves measures to encourage/secure the participation of all the workforce.

N.B. The **documentation** of policies, procedures etc. is an important element in the successful management of health and safety. Documentation should be sufficient to support the health and safety management system, not drive it; it should be **proportional to the needs of the business** on grounds of effectiveness and efficiency.

4. PLAN AND IMPLEMENT

This involves setting objectives, identifying hazards, assessing risks, implementing performance standards and developing a positive attitude to health and safety i.e. what is to be done, who is responsible, when it is to be done and the desired end result. Standards must be measurable, achievable and realistic.



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5. MEASURING PERFORMANCE

This may be achieved by the adoption of 'active' systems which monitor the achievement of plans and the extent of compliance with standards and 'reactive' systems which monitor accidents, ill-health and incidents.

6. REVIEWING PERFORMANCE

Organisations can maintain and improve their ability to manage risks by learning from experience through the use of audits and performance reviews.

HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

Under MHSWR, an employer may need to organise health surveillance where a worker is exposed to hand/arm vibrations. COSHH requires health surveillance where workers are exposed to hazardous substances such as chemicals, solvents, fumes, dusts, gases and vapours, aerosols, biological agents (micro-organisms). Specific regulations require medical examinations for asbestos, lead and work in compressed air.

COMPETENCY OF THOSE ASSISTING

Employers are responsible for ensuring that anyone they appoint to assist them with their health and safety measures is competent to carry out the tasks they are assigned and are given adequate information and support.

OTHER INCLUSIONS IN THE ARRANGEMENTS

Employers must also establish procedures for dealing with serious and imminent danger; for danger areas; for co-operating with other occupiers where workplaces are shared; informing and co-operating with contractors and agency workers and for contacting external services such as first-aid; emergency medical care and rescue workers. There are also specific responsibilities for young persons and new or expectant mothers.



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CHECKLIST -

MANAGING HEALTH & SAFETY

Policy

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1 Do you have a clear policy for health and safety? Is it written down? Is it up to date? | Yes No |
| 2 Does it allocate responsibilities to individuals/posts throughout the firm? | Yes No |
| 3 Does it specify the organisation and arrangements for identifying hazards, assessing risks and controlling them? | Yes No |
| 4 Are staff aware of, and understand, the policy? | Yes No |
| 5 Is safety documentation in place/appropriate/ current? | Yes No |

Organise

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 6 Have you allocated responsibilities for health and safety to specific people throughout the firm? | Yes No |
| 7 Do you consult and involve your staff including safety representatives) if appropriate on matters of health and safety? | Yes No |
| 8 Do you provide sufficient information, instruction and training regarding hazards, risks and preventative measures? | Yes No |
| 9 Do you have an appropriate level of health and safety expertise in, or available to, the firm? | Yes No |

Plan and Implement

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 10 Do you have a health and safety plan, including objectives? | Yes No |
| 11 Have all hazards been identified, risks assessed and preventative measures established? | Yes No |
| 12 Are safety standards implemented? | Yes No |

Measure Performance

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 13 Do you know whether your safety plans have been implemented and objectives achieved? | Yes No |
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- 14 Do you know how effective your risk controls are? Yes No
- 15 Do you have accurate records of injuries, ill-health and accidental losses? Do you analyse these? Yes No

Audit and Review

- 16 Do you learn from your mistakes? Yes No
- 17 Do you operate a health and safety audit system? Yes No
- 18 Do you periodically review your health and safety policy statement and your safety performance? Yes No

REFERENCES/FURTHER DETAILS

Publications

1. Leaflet- Managing health and safety. Five steps to success - special help for directors and managers' IND(G) 275(HSE)
2. HS(G)65 Successful health and safety management ISBN 0-7176-1276-7 (HSE)
3. British Standard BS8800:1996 Guide to operational health and safety management systems. (BSI) (British Standards Institution, 389 Chiswick High Road, London W4 4AL)
4. Safety management review training material for the Lead Authority Scheme (HSE) ISBN 0-71-760964-2
5. Leaflet – Director's responsibilities for health and safety (HSE). IND(G) 343
6. Management of health and safety at work - Approved Code of Practice L21 (HSE) ISBN 0-7176-2488 9
7. Book - Essentials of health and safety at work (HSE) ISBN 0-7176-0716X
8. Booklet – An introduction to health and safety- what you should know. INDG259. (HSE)
9. Leaflet - Consulting employees on health and safety - a guide to the law IND(G) 232L (HSE).