

Health and safety



Principle:

Workers are protected from exposure to occupational health and safety hazards that are likely to pose a risk of permanent injury, illness or death.

Definition

“Occupational health deals with all aspects of health and safety in the workplace and has a strong focus on primary prevention of hazards.”¹

What is health and safety management?

- Health and safety (H&S) management is about following procedures intended to prevent accidents, injury or illness in the workplace.
- Prevention of harm is central to H&S.
- Prevention involves identifying, assessing and controlling H&S risks.

How to identify health and safety hazards?

- Walking around sites and speaking to workers is a good first step towards identifying H&S hazards.
- Other steps for identifying H&S hazards include:
 - checking manufacturers’ instructions for chemicals, machinery or other equipment.
 - reviewing accident records regularly to identify patterns in accidents.
 - thinking about activities which are not conducted frequently but could be hazardous.
 - identifying the causes of bad health, such as the long-term health effects of chemical inhalation or loud noise.
 - looking at examples of H&S risk assessments others have created (e.g. Health and Safety Executive examples at www.hse.gov.uk/risk/casestudies)

How to control health and safety hazards?

- The hazard should be removed where possible - e.g. by covering electrical wiring.



Key message:

Prevention is the key to tackling H&S hazards.

Facts

- A worker dies every 15 seconds from a work-related disease or injury.²
- Work-related injury and illness causes 2.3 million deaths per year.²
- 81% of these deaths are the result of illness and disease.²
- The most common forms of work-related death are from cancer, circulatory diseases and infectious and transmissible diseases.³
- 317 million non-fatal accidents occur at work every year.²
- Workplace accidents are much lower when workers feel part of the H&S process⁴



Respiratory disease, such as silicosis, can be a cause of illness and death in some sectors.

Continued...

Health and safety



- Try a less risky alternative - if the hazard cannot be removed, it is often possible to implement less risky alternatives.
- Install protective equipment - for example, guards and rails on machinery or fences to stop falls.
- Provide healthcare facilities and first aid boxes. These should always be available in case of an accident. Designated individuals should be trained in first aid, with records kept.
- Restrict access to hazardous areas, processes or products. Unsafe areas should be off limits to unauthorised personnel, and chemicals should be kept in locked chemical stores.
- Reduce the exposure to the risk - reducing the amount of time or contact with a hazardous process.
- Issue personal protective equipment (PPE). If the hazard cannot be removed, it may be necessary to issue PPE free of charge, with training provided on its use.

What is expected at sites?

- Organisational health and safety policies.
- Risk assessments.
- Health and safety emergency response plans, including fire response, and emergency alarms.
- Appropriate fire equipment, including functional fire extinguishers.
- Accident records.
- Training on health and safety, emergency response and PPE usage, together, with records kept.
- Chemical lists controlling hazardous chemical storage and use.
- Clear access to emergency exits and emergency lighting.
- Guards and safety features on equipment and machines.
- Sufficient ventilation.
- Portable water for workers, tested to ensure it is safe for drinking.
- Clean and hygienic toilets, canteens and break areas.
- First aid equipment, access to medical facilities and trained first aid providers.
- Issuing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and records.
- Machine and general site maintenance and records.
- Insurance for workers.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Activities requiring PPE should be identified through risk assessment.
- PPE needs to be appropriate for the task and climate.
- PPE must be used - workers should be trained in proper PPE use and its importance.
- The use of PPE must be enforced by site management.
- PPE should be maintained, not tampered with, and replaced regularly.



Appropriate personal protective equipment should be used to help manage health and safety

Risk assessments

- A process for identifying things that might cause harm to workers and the public.
- It involves prioritising the most likely and harmful risks.
- These risks can then be controlled through H&S management.

Additional information and resources

- [ILO Occupational Safety and Health Convention](#)
- [Sample - workers' training guidance](#)
- [Sample - health and safety policy](#)
- [Sample - training records: description](#)
- [Sample - training records: attendance register](#)
- [Sample - PPE request form and records](#)
- [Sample - H&S risk assessment](#)
- [Sample - Accident Report](#)
- [Guidance - First Aid Box](#)