

Blackpool Music School

Health & Safety Manual

**Produced:** 21-3-2022

**To be reviewed:** 31-3-2023

**Health and Safety General Introduction**

It is important that all community halls are operated in such a way that people do not get injured. However, Health and Safety is often seen as a major task and often stands in the way of people enjoying themselves.

Some safety issues need to be assessed every time you open your hall, whereas some need checking intermittently over longer periods of time and should be scheduled into your committee meetings at regular intervals or as a standing point of discussion.

This manual is presented to simplify these tasks and reference material is included as appendices. Please use this manual as a workbook; there are spaces where you can make notes to simplify your tasks.

Acknowledgments:

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who were involved in the original creation and development of this document.

**Disclaimer:**

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**1. Introduction**

The Board of Blackpool Music School (BMS) has a 'duty of care' under common and charity law towards individuals and organisations using their premises to avoid carelessly causing personal injury or damage to property. They also have a statutory duty under Health and Safety Legislation to take reasonably practical steps to ensure the health and safety of employees and others who use the hall. Others will include volunteers, trustees, members of the public and people contracted to visit the hall for any reason e.g: plumber, electrician, meter reader etc.

The volume of health and safety legislation can seem daunting to any Board of a volunteer run hall. The aim of this one stop manual is to explain in simple terms the key statutory requirements as they community type facilities and to provide volunteer committee members with the information, documentation, and guidance they need to address them. It is very important that committee members take steps to ensure that they do not become liable under any health and safety legislation or that the hall insurance is not invalidated through their own negligence.

Health and safety is a shared responsibility, management committees are encouraged to make full use of available publications from the Health and Safety Executive as it is vital to get information on regulations that affect the running of your hall from an authoritative source. As a Board you are jointly and severally liable for acts committed by yourselves and steps taken so it is important everyone takes an active role in ensuring health and safety matters are taken seriously and acted upon as required

No one can guarantee a totally risk-free hall. Assessing risks and the measures required to reduce or avoid them have always to be balanced against the cost and practicality of the risk reduction measure.

The manual should be used by the Board and appropriate staff/volunteers as a working document for checking health and safety requirements, drawing up appropriate records and acting as a signpost to other sources of information.

**2. Basic Health & Safety every time you use the Centre**

**Have a look around the car park**

* Are there any serious trip hazards?
* Are the lights working so that people can find their way safely to and from the building?
* Has any rubbish been dumped?
* Could the emergency services such as fire brigade or ambulance easily get in?

**Check the outside of the building**

* Has there been any vandalism, broken windows etc?
* Has anybody blocked your fire exits, make sure they are clear?

**Inside the building**

* Can you smell gas? If so, leave the building and get help.
* Are your lights working, can you see to safely move about?
* Are the fire exits clear and unlocked?
* Are there any trip hazards such as loose carpets, spills, rubbish, or items left around?

**Decide if these items are relevant to you.**

**Asbestos**

Have you had an inspection and certificate issues to ensure that the building does not contain asbestos? A newly built building or part build will list materials used but an older building may contain asbestos and you will need an inspection to determine if you need take further action. That inspection will determine what course of action is most appropriate and costs/work are to be factored into both the cashflow and maintenance schedule

**Gas**

If you do not use gas in your building then no further action is required. However, if you do use gas then appliance checks will be needed at regular intervals and should be added to the maintenance schedule

**Electricals**

All premises use electrics both in the fabric of the building and in the offices or equipment used by groups accessing the premises for activities. Your hiring agreement should make it clear that groups bringing their own equipment have to have had up to date PAT testing done on any equipment used, should state what that equipment is and should be insured for its use on your site.

Additionally, serviced offices providing computers, a computer suite or other equipment in the kitchen and throughout the buildings must have a register of electrical assets and must maintain a log of PAT tests conducted and the date when new checks are required. Again, this and the suitability of the electric being supplied via fuse boxes etc must be checked to ensure it is fit for purpose and should be factored into the maintenance schedule.

**Lifts/Stairlifts**

If you do not have a person carrying lift then no action is required. However, as the BMS has a person bearing lift then it is necessary to have 6 monthly checks and these costs and work need to be factored into your maintenance schedule and cash flow

**Food**

Do you prepare food on the premises? If so, then training will be required for volunteers assisting with the food preparation. If the role of food preparation is hived off to a third party, then checks are needed to ensure that they hold the relevant certification to undertake this role and that they have the necessary insurance in place to cover the food they supply to the public. Equipment is also needed to ensure that the kitchen has all the necessary things in place to ensure health and safety of those accessing the kitchen and being served from it (thermometers, chopping boards, fridges, rotation of stock processes etc)

**Items for periodic review (at least annually)**

**Fire** Review your *Fire Risk Assessment*

**Gas** Have an annual inspection

**Electrical** Inspect portable equipment at least annually, fixed wiring every five years

**Signs** Review your signs; especially escape routes at least annually

**Special Events**

Each and every time a new activity is planned at the Centre then a risk assessment will be required to identify and mitigate against risks that could arise. This report should be attached to the hiring document if hired by an external body (and they should conduct their own risk assessment also? Or to the file for that project retained in the central office for the Centre to show the work has been undertaken for insurance and to show how the group has met its duty of care requirement.

**3. Fire Precautions**

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005[[1]](#footnote-1) affects all non-domestic premises. Community building managers, including voluntary groups used by members of the public need to comply with the requirements under the watchful eye of the Board which governs them.

As such, you will need to ensure that your Manager undertakes a robust fire risk assessment of their premises, that it has been completed and any possible dangers and risks have been identified and actions taken to deal with such issues. Any issues should be reported as part of the Manager’s monthly report to the Board and decisions requiring Board input be taken as quickly as possible to prevent the Centre from having to close down for a period of time until issues are resolved.

Most Centres have a *Public Entertainment Licence* (which means that they have passed a fire safety inspection) and for them the key point is that the Centre committee, as employer, hiring body and user of volunteers, must carry out the fire risk assessment and keep their equipment properly maintained.

**How to carry out a simple Fire Risk Assessment**

You should also consider if your emergency lighting is sufficient; what would happen if the power failed (which is likely in the event of a fire) and the centre is full of people, how could they safely move about?

**Appendix**

*Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 A short guide to making your premises safe from fire* gives further information to help you

Logo

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**4. Electrical Safety**

The Electricity at Work Act 1992 applies to all village & community halls whether or not they employ anyone but because they admit the public to their premises. The Building Regulations also apply which require certain works to be approved by your local Building Control Department or using **a Part P[[2]](#footnote-2) registered electrician** (which is the preferred option and lower cost as Building Control will also charge).

The Regulations aim to ensure that the electrical systems are constructed; maintained and used in a manner to prevent danger and that the user is protected from electric shock and fire hazard. The fixed wiring may need testing at 5 yearly periods, and you will be issued with a certificate. If you get any work carried out on your electrical systems, you should get an *Installation Certificate* from the contractor who must be registered to issue such certificates.

**Notifiable** (to Building Control or using a Registered Electrician)

* Rewiring all or part of the property
* New ring or radial circuits
* A new lighting circuit
* Electrical floor or ceiling heating systems
* Electrically heated showers
* Central heating & hot water heater controls
* Air conditioning, ventilation, or extractor fans
* Replacing a consumer unit
* Rooms in a *special location* ie: with a bath or shower etc
* Extending a circuit in a kitchen

**Work that can be carried out without notification** (however, it is good practice to have your work checked by an electrician)

* Adding lighting points and socket outlets in an existing circuit providing they are not situated in a kitchen or a *special location*
* Fused spurs to an existing circuit
* Work on extra-low voltage wiring for communication equipment
* Replacing electrical fittings such as ceiling roses, switches and sockets
* Minor work such as replacing a flex on appliances that can be unplugged

**Portable Appliance (PAT) Testing**

Many companies will offer a service to test portable appliances and this approach may give you piece of mind; however, it is possible that you can carry out a visual inspection of your equipment by a responsible person and still comply with the law.

The person just needs to be sensible, know what to look for and have enough common sense to avoid danger to themselves. The following checklist will prove useful:

* + Switch off and unplug equipment before starting any checks
  + Check that the plug is not damaged and that the cable is not frayed, cracked or repaired with insulating tape, if so, it needs replacing by a competent person
  + Check that the plug is correctly wired, and connections are tight (only if you are competent to do so)
  + Ensure that the fuse is correctly rated for the equipment
  + Check that the outer casing is not damaged in a way that will give rise to electrical or mechanical hazards
  + Check for burn marks or staining that would suggest overheating

Equipment that fails the above inspection should be taken out of use for repair or replacement

**Appendix:** *Electrical safety and you – a brief guide HSE INDG (231)*

**5. Gas Safety** Logo, company name

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If you have gas appliances installed in your property then you should have them checked annually by a *Gas Safe* Engineer because of the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning or potential fire or explosion.

The law

The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 and The Gas safety (Installation and Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 place duties on gas consumers, installers, suppliers and landlords. These regulations link with other safety controls on combustion equipment eg: Building Regulations which are standards for ventilation and flues. For your own protection remember:

By law anyone carrying out work on gas appliances or fittings as part of their business must be competent and registered with the Gas Safe Register. Always check your engineer is registered by asking to see their ID card which has a photo of the engineer, their business registration number and personal licence number, company name, sort and expiry date of the card and a BMSurity hologram. You can also call the Gas Safety Register during normal office hours on 0800 408 5500 or go to their website ([www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk) )

By law only a competent person can carry out work on gas appliances or fittings. Do it Yourself work on gas appliances and fittings can be dangerous and is likely to be illegal. By law you MUST NOT use any gas appliance or fitting you know or suspect to be unsafe.

If you smell gas or suspect there is a gas leak or a carbon monoxide leak, you should immediately do the following:-

1. Open all doors and windows
2. Shut off the gas supply at the meter control valve (make sure you know where it is)
3. If gas continues to escape call the National Grid on the Gas Emergency Freephone Number on 0800 111 999
4. Make sure that any investigations or repairs are carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer

If your Centre is supplied by propane, either by tank or cylinders, it is important to ensure that the installation is BMSure as there is a potential for vandalism or arson attack.

**Appendix:** *Gas Appliances HSE INDG238*

**6. Water and Legionnaires Disease**

**Water**

The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 play an important part in protecting public health, safeguarding water supplies, and promoting the efficient use of water within a customers’ premises across the UK.

They set the legal requirements for the design, installation, operation and maintenance of plumbing systems, water fittings and water-using appliances. They have a specific purpose to prevent misuse, waste, undue consumption or erroneous measurement of water and, most importantly, to prevent contamination of drinking water. These Regulations and Byelaws apply in all types of premises supplied, or to be supplied with water from a water undertaker (the legal term for a specific type of water supplier).

They apply from the point where water enters the property’s underground pipe (usually at the stop tap at the property boundary. To where the water is used in plumbing systems, water fittings and water-using appliances.

Centre Management and anyone who installs plumbing systems or water fittings must ensure that the systems and appliances satisfy these regulations. Any plumbing system or water fitting installed before these regulations can still be used, even if it would be illegal to install now. If the Board intend to do their own installations (which is not suggested as best practice unless they hold the necessary qualifications to do so), then they must ensure that they meet the necessary requirements. However, if they are employing someone else, an approved plumber will issue an installation certificate stating compliance with the regulations. If breaches are found then the responsibility falls with the plumber and not the hall committee.

**Legionella (Legionnaire’s Disease)**

Legionellosis is the collective name given to the pneumonia-like illness caused by legionella bacteria. Legionnaire’s Disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia, and everyone is susceptible to infection. The main source of this infection is in fully air-conditioned buildings and spa pools, which are unlikely in most Centres.

A risk assessment will demonstrate what, if any, action is required to be taken.

There is however, a small risk of infection if:

1. Water is stored or recirculated as part of your system
2. The water in all or part of your system is between 20 and 45ºC
3. There are sources of nutrients such as rust, sludge, scale, and organic matter – as these conditions are likely to encourage bacteria to multiply
4. It is possible that small water droplets can be produced and, if so, they can be dispersed over a wide area eg: shower areas and the people who could be exposed to them are more susceptible due to age or illness

It is unusual to find these conditions in a community centre type facility however you are obliged to show that you have carried out a risk assessment to verify this. It is also good practice to examine any water storage tanks as it has been known that inBMSts, rodents or even dead pigeons have found their way into tanks and could be a source of infection, even if it is not legionella.

**Appendix: ***-holders HSE INDG458*

**7. Lifts, Stairs and Walkways**

**Lifts:**

If a passenger lift is installed in your Centre then you have a duty of care to have an independent inspection every six months, in addition to regular maintenance. This will also apply to stair-lifts and wheelchair transfer platforms.

**Stairways:**

Hall stairways should always be kept free from obstructions and substances likely to cause a person to slip trip or fall. Any floor covering, carpets and edgings should be checked regularly for wear, security or other trip hazards and repaired or replaced if necessary. Handrails should be secure and sufficient height for all users and the spindles should not have a gap of more than 100mm to prevent a child passing through or getting their head stuck.

**Walkways:**

Slips, trips and falls are the most common cause of accidents often resulting in broken bones.

All floor surfaces should be of a construction that is suitable for the purpose and should have holes or uneven surfaces.

Wet surfaces from leaks or spills which should be cleaned immediately, however your cleaning may itself cause a hazard and temporary warning signs should be used until the surface is dry.

Are there facilities for people to wipe their feet as they enter the building? On a wet day there is the possibility that water carried in will make the floor slippery, however be careful that any mats do not become a trip hazard or be liable to slippage.

Kitchens have a number of potential risks especially if you use cooking oil and even dishwashing may produce spills which make the floor slippery.

Kitchens are often very busy places, especially when you have a function, some people may be handling food, others may be carrying plates and spills often go un-noticed and very serious injuries can be caused to a number of people.

Prepare well in advance to avoid situations which cause spills and always have a prepared mop and bucket handy rather than having to rush about to deal with problems.

Non-slip surfaces should be seriously considered if the above scenario looks familiar.

**8. Food handling**



The Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 will apply and the premises will need to be registered with your Local Authority (registration is free), however the majority of catering establishments will need to be registered, however, certain activities which operate on an infrequent or occasional basis for certain social or funding events, (e.g. less than once a month) may be exempt from registration requirements. Whether the building is registered or not, it must comply with the various requirements of food safety legislation.

If you use outside caterers, it is important that the ultimate responsibility for food safety rests with the caterers and you should inspect their certification for food hygiene training. Volunteers would also benefit from attending a food handling course which are run by many Local Authorities and colleges and the certificates will demonstrate that you take the responsibility seriously.

The website following website provides excellent information however it is too large to include in this document.

https:/[/www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/](http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/publication/sfbb-tagd-cater-fullcol-)m[ultimedia/pdfs/publication/sfbb-tagd-cater-fullcol-](http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/publication/sfbb-tagd-cater-fullcol-) pack0513.pdf

**See also APPENDIX** Catering for charity and community Groups providing food

Structure of the kitchen:

**Floors**

Should be in good condition, non, absorbent, anti-slip and easily cleaned without dirt-harbouring crevices.

**Walls and ceilings**

Should be smooth, impervious, non-flaking and easily cleanable. Gloss or vinyl silk paint is suitable.

**Worktops and surfaces**

Should be impervious and be easily cleanable with no crevices at the side or back which may harbour food particles an promote growth.

**Hot and cold water**

Should be in good supply for food preparation and dishwashing and a separate wash hand basin must be provided. Sinks should be fitted with impervious splash backs and there must be adequate trapped drainage to cope with peak loads.

**Power points**

Should be ideally available for all appliances and should be arranged so that extension leads are not needed and do not trail across work-surfaces.

**Ventilation**

Either natural or powered should be sufficient ventilation to remove excessive heat, steam and condensation and to remove odour. (The use of certain gas appliances require interlocked powered ventilation your gas engineer will advise);

Good Food Handling Practice

**Outdoor clothing**

Should not be kept in the kitchen unless there is special storage provided.

**Handwashing**

This essential before and during food handling, especially after using the toilet or contact with non-food related tasks. As well as hot water, anti-bacterial hand wash should be used and hands dried using disposable paper towels.

**Cutlery, crockery, equipment and surfaces**

Should be kept clean and in good condition. Re- wash if not used for a long period.

**Refrigerators**

Are only required where food is stored. They should be kept between 3 - 5°C and checked regularly with a thermometer. It should be made clear to outside caterers that it is their responsibility to check the suitability any equipment that will be used.

**Cleaning**

It is important that food preparation areas are regularly cleaned to an acceptable standard; caretakers may require specific instruction on the standards required. Day to day cleaning should be acceptable with periodic *deep cleaning* behind appliances, inside cupboards etc. Kitchens should not be an area for storing items not connected with food preparation, especially cleaning materials such as mops used for cleaning toilets or other parts of the building.



**9. Asbestos**

Asbestos was used for many years in many building materials and other items where you would not expect it:

Floor tiles, textured ceiling surfaces and tiles, paper, water cisterns as well as the more well-known fire-resistant boards, pipe insulation and cement asbestos roofing, gutters and waste pipes.

It is important that you know if you have asbestos in your building and a survey should have been carried out by a trained and qualified asbestos surveyor. This will identify if you have asbestos present in your buildings and what action is required. Generally, the action will be to leave it undisturbed. It is only when asbestos is disturbed especially when broken up or turned to dust that it becomes a problem.

Building or maintenance workers are particularly at risk, they are more likely to disturb materials during building work that may otherwise be protected and may breathe in the fibres themselves or spread it around the building. An asbestos register produced by the surveyor should be made available prior to work being carried out so that safe working procedures can be used. Hopefully the register will show that the risks in your building are minimal.

**Appendix: 4.** *Asbestos in buildings - HSE INDG233*



**10. Chemicals (use & storage)**

All Centres will keep some chemicals on their premises either for cleaning or maintenance purposes. Substances such as oils, adhesives, paints solvents, oven sprays, bleach and cleaning agents, all have the potential to cause harm if not used and stored correctly.

Chemicals can enter the body when breathed in, taken by mouth, skin contact or splashed into the eyes.

* Always store hazardous material in a locked storage cupboard, away from children and vulnerable adults.
* Always pay attention to the label which gives basic information on hazards and storage.
* Always keep hazardous materials in their original containers whenever possible.
* Never decant hazardous materials into unmarked containers, particularly those which could be mistaken for food or drink.
* Always use suitable gloves and eye protection if shown on the label
* Flammable substances should be stored in a fireproof cabinet.

Very often your chemical/cleaning supplier will provide a COSHH list stating the chemicals involved and safety things to consider.

* Ensure that the caretaker or cleaning staff are made aware of the hazards of any substances they use as well as the precautions to be taken
* Never use toilet bowl cleaner as well as bleach, the mixture will release poisonous chlorine gas

**Appendix:** *Read the label, How to find out if chemicals are dangerous*

*HSE INDG(352)*

**11. Maintenance Work and Contractors**

This section clarifies the general health and safety responsibilities of your Board and Contractors to protect each other, staff and anyone else e.g. visitors, service users, Centre Hirers the general community and local residents.

The Board has legal responsibilities as well as any contractor undertaking work on their behalf, to ensure that work is carried out safely. It is important that you get specific guidance for larger projects as the work may be within the scope of the Construction, Design and Maintenance Regulations (CDM) with very specific requirements.

The attached appendix gives in depth information regarding the use of contractors, the following points may give initial guidance:

Identify the job by writing down your requirements as this can prevent arguments later

Select a suitable contractor and be satisfied that they are competent

Consider ……..

* What experience have they in the type of work you want?
* What qualifications and skills they have they have
* Are they a member of a relevant trade or professional body?
* Will they use sub-contractors and how do they select them?

The contractor should be shown your asbestos register so that they can determine if there are any risks from the material

It may be necessary to get a separate asbestos survey if there is any uncertainty

They should produce a method statement and risk assessment; this will detail how they will undertake the work and how they will minimize any risks

How will you ensure that the work is being carried out as agreed, do you have a competent person who will periodically check that the work is satisfactory, and that payment is only made when you are satisfied.

Work carried out by volunteers

The Board has an obligation towards their volunteers with regards to Health and Safety.

A volunteer is someone who benefits the organisation and who does so freely, through personal choice without expectation of financial reward, except for the payment of actual reasonable and proper out-of-pocket expenses that can be evidenced.

You should check that your insurance covers work carried out by volunteers. Many insurance companies cover them under the *Employers Liability Insurance* even if you do not directly employ anybody. If you pay any member of your organisation, you will have many legal obligations to your employee (volunteer) which is beyond the scope of this document.

The Duty of Care is a general duty on all organisations to avoid carelessly causing injury to persons. If the volunteer is asked to do a task or job of work which results in them injuring themselves, the Board may be liable if they have acted in any way which is fraudulent, negligent, in breach of trust or breach of duty or which is committed by them in reckless disregard of whether it is a breach of trust, breach of duty or not. It is important that you carry out risk assessments prior to work commencing so that any risks identified can be minimised.

**Appendix:** *Using contractors A brief guide - HSE INDG(368)*

**12 Risk Assessment**

After considering all of the previous issues, you should now be in a good position to

consider the hazards associated with your hall and how you will control risks.

**Definitions:**

**Hazard**

Is anything that can cause harm e.g use of ladders, damaged electrical equipment etc.

**Risk**

Is how likely it is that injury may be caused by the hazard

The HSE document 5 Steps to Risk Assessment give you further details and is summarised here, you can use the *risk assessment form* included in this manual to simplify the process.

Step 1. What are the hazards

Divide the hall into areas such as kitchen, meeting room, outside areas;

List the hazards associated with the area;

List specific tasks (including maintenance tasks) and the associated hazards;

Step 2. Who might be harmed and how?

Members of the public, employees such as caretakers or cleaners, People doing specific tasks;

List on the form how the hazard could cause harm.

Step 3. What are you already doing and what you need to do?

List on the form what you already have in place to reduce the risk;

You need to make sure that you reduce risks *so far as is reasonably practicable*. Try to look at what best practices are available.

Step 4. How will you put the action into practice?

Look at the *significant risks* and action these first;

A committee or representative should decide who will carry out the action and when;

The actions should be regularly reviewed until completed;

Step 5. Review your assessment and update if necessary

Do not overcomplicate the process. You are only looking for the significant risks

Your risk assessment should be reviewed periodically and especially when things may have changed.

**Appendix:** *HSE Village Hall, Example risk assessment*

1. **Manual Handling**

There are often occasions when volunteers prepare for functions and get involved in manual handling such as moving chairs and furniture, lifting boxes of food and drink etc. Additionally, a caretaker or manager may also undertake such tasks, so it is important that all those involved have had the requisite training to satisfy your legal obligations around your duty of care. Records of who has undertaken what training and when, when it is due for renewal etc should always be maintained and updated with additional training being booked as and when required and in the interests of the charity to do so (eg when you have a cohort so it is a viable and cheaper option per head then just holding a training session for one person).

In summary

* Lifting or lowering
* Pushing or pulling
* Exerting force

People often sustain injury from any of the above, particularly strain to the lower back, however other injuries such as sprains, strains, bruising, lacerations and other injuries may result.

How do I know if there is a risk of injury?

It is a matter of judgement every time you decide to move anything, but there are certain things to look out for such as puffing and seating, excessive fatigue. In particular look out for bad posture such as bending, twisting or reaching.

Before attempting a move ask yourself:

* How heavy is the load?
* Does the load need to be moved or lifted?
* Is there a suitable mechanical means for moving the item (eg truck or dolly)?
* IS the load secure?
* Can other people help?
* Is there sufficient room and space to move it?
* Has the move been properly planned??

Consider training your volunteers or staff. There are many publications and videos on the subject which can be consulted. Get them to sign when they have undertaken any training to acknowledge they have been provided this by the charity

If you search YouTube for *Child's Play - Safetycare OHS DVD* it can be previewed before purchase and gives very simple and useful guidance applicable for all.

1. **Working at height - Ladders and stepladders**

Falls from height account for many fatalities and major injuries every year and one of the most significant causes is falling from a ladder. There are any occasions when you need to work at heights, even if it is only putting up Christmas decorations. In such instances, the Board should consider the following:

* Do you carry out maintenance or cleaning tasks that involve working at height?
* Does anyone ever need to work on the roof or near to fragile surfaces?
* Do you have the appropriate equipment for the task?
* Can windows be cleaned using a pump and wash pole rather than using a ladder?
* Should a temporary scaffold or platform be used in place of a ladder or stepladder?
* Can you use steps instead of standing on a chair or table?
* Roof work is of a particular concern and access by scaffolding and edge protection may be the only acceptable method of protecting people.
* High level access may require the use of a hired cherry picker or access platform rather than using a ladder

**Appendix: *8****. Safe use of ladders and stepladders a brief guide HSE INDG(455)*

1. **First Aid, Accident Reporting and Investigation**

At the very least you should have a well-stocked up to date first aid kit and ideally people who are trained in first aid. As you may well be based at the centre of the community you should consider having an AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) available so that immediate assistance can be given to someone who is having a cardiac arrest.

Dealing with Accidents

* Assess if there is any danger to yourself or the injured person
* Look after the victim but do not put yourself in danger
* Do not move the injured person in order to prevent further injury and reassure them, carry on speaking to them and remain calm
* Call for help. If there is a first aider in the Centre get them to come and take over & call for an ambulance if needed

It is important that all accidents and incidents should be recorded in an accident book so that the accident can be investigated and corrective action taken if required. Remember that you do not always have to take corrective action but may make changes if you feel that you have found something wrong. In these days of litigation, making procedural or other changes to practice can be seen as an admission that there was a problem in the first place and could leave yourselves wide open to that litigation.

Centre Management Actions

* Following an accident, take photographs, sketch and take a note of the circumstance regarding the accident site.
* Include any relevant details regarding weight, distances, lighting levels trip hazards in the hall or outside.
* Complete an accident form and get statements from any witnesses.
* The accident and any actions should be reviewed at the next committee meeting and any alterations, changes or actions taken be ratified following the Manager’s report to the Board.

Accidents to members of the public or others who are not at work must be reported if they result in an injury and the person is taken directly from the scene of the accident to hospital for treatment to that injury. Examinations and diagnostic tests do not constitute ‘treatment’ in such circumstances.

There is no need to report incidents where people are taken to hospital purely as a precaution when no injury is apparent.

You should report to the HSE using the online form at [www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/report.htm#online](http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/report.htm#online)

**Appendices**

**Contains public sector information published by the Health and Safety Executive and other government departments and licensed under the Open Government Licence**

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order 2005) – A short guide to making your premises safe from fire

Electrical safety and you – a Brief Guide HSE INDG (231)

Gas Appliances HSE INDG(238)

Legionnaire’s Disease – A Brief Guide for Duty Holders HSE INDG (458)

Catering advice for charity and community groups providing food – Food Standards Agency

Asbestos in Buildings HSE INDG (233)

Read the Label, How to find out if chemicals are dangerous HSE INDG (352)

Using Contractors – A Brief Guide HSE INDG (368)

Village hall, Example Risk Assessment HSE

Safe Use of ladders and stepladders a Brief Guide HSE INDG (455)

**Useful forms**

* 1. Health and safety checklist for village and community halls
  2. **Accident report and investigation**





HM Government

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

**A short guide to making your premises safe from fire**



**Introduction**

This booklet provides simple and practical advice to people

responsible for fire safety in small and medium-sized businesses.

It provides guidance on how to make sure that you are meeting the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

It is not a detailed guide, and it does not replace any of our more wide-ranging guides.

If you feel that you need more information, you can find details on how to get the various guides and a list of other useful reading material at the end of this leaflet.

**What is the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005?** The Government is committed to regulating only where necessary and in a way that is more suited to the needs of modern business. That is why the order was made, under the Regulatory Reform Act 2001. It replaces most fire safety legislation with one simple order. It means that any person who has some level of control in premises must take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire and make sure people can safely escape if there is a fire.

What can this booklet do?

This booklet will lead you through a step-by-step process to achieve the safest possible outcome without, in most cases, the need for any specialist or formal knowledge or training.

Achieving fire safety is often a matter of common sense, but you will have to make sure that you set aside enough time to work through the necessary steps. In more complicated premises or those with many people at risk, such as care homes, hospitals or large cinemas, you may need more expert help.

Where does the order apply?

The order applies to virtually all premises and covers nearly every type of building, structure and open space.

For example, it applies to:

* offices and shops;
* premises that provide care, including care homes and hospitals;
* community halls, places of worship and other community premises;
* the shared areas of properties several households live in (housing laws may also apply);
* pubs, clubs and restaurants;
* schools and sports centres;
* tents and marquees;
* hotels and hostels; and
* factories and warehouses.

It does not apply to:

* people's private homes, including individual flats in a block or house.

What are the main rules under the order?

You must:

* carry out a fire-risk assessment identifying any possible dangers and risks;
* consider who may be especially at risk;
* get rid of or reduce the risk from fire as far as is reasonably possible and
* provide general fire
* precautions to deal with any possible risk left;
* take other measures to make sure there is protection if flammable or explosive materials are used or stored;
* create a plan to deal with any emergency and, in most cases, keep a record of your findings; and
* review your findings when necessary.

Who is responsible for meeting the order?

Under the order, anyone who has control of premises or anyone who has a degree of control over certain areas or systems may be a 'responsible person'. For example, it could be:

* the employer for those parts of premises staff may go to;
* the managing agent or owner for shared parts of premises or shared fire safety equipment such as fire-warning systems or sprinklers;
* the occupier, such as self-employed people or voluntary organisations if they have any control; or
* any other person who has some control over a part of the premises.

Although in many premises the responsible person will be obvious, there may be times when a number of people have some responsibility.

###### How do I meet the order?

If you are the responsible person, you must make sure you carry out a fire-risk assessment although you can pass this task to some other competent person. However, you will still be responsible, in law, for meeting the order.

The responsible person, either on their own or with any other responsible person, must as far as is reasonably practical make sure that everyone on the premises, or nearby, can escape safely if there is a fire.

This is different from previous legislation in that you must consider everyone who might be on your premises, whether they are employees,visitors or members of the public, for example, at an open-air entertainment venue. You should pay particular attention to people who may have a disability or anyone who may need special help.

The order says that you must manage any fire-risk in your premises. Fire authorities no longer issue fire certificates and those previously in force will have no legal status.

You must still carry out a fire-risk assessment but any fire certificates you have may be useful as a good starting point.

If your premises have been designed and built in line with modern building regulations (and are being used in line with those regulations), your structural fire precautions should be acceptable. You will still need to carry out a fire-risk assessment and make sure that you keep up all fire precautions and maintenance routines.

**Fire Safety risk assessment**

**1. Identify Fire Hazards**

\* sources of ignition

\* sources of fuel; and

\* sources of oxygen

**2. People at risk**

\* people in and around the premises; and

\* people who are especially at risk

**3. Evaluate, remove or reduce and protect from risk**

\* evaluate the risk of a fire starting

\* evaluate the risk to people from a fire

\* remove or reduce fire hazards

\* remove or reduce the risks to people from a fire

\* protect people by providing fire precautions

**4. Record, plan, inform, instruct and train**

\* record any major findings and action you have taken

\* discuss and work with other responsible people

\* prepare an emergency plan

\* inform and instruct relevant people

\* provide training

**5. Review**

\* review your fire-risk assessment regularly

\* make changes where necessary

**Remember to review your fire-risk**

Step 1 - Identify the hazards within your premises

You need to identify:

* sources of ignition such as naked flames, heaters or some commercial processes;
* sources of fuel such as built-up waste, display materials, textiles or overstocked products; and
* sources of oxygen such as air conditioning or

medicinal or commercial oxygen supplies.

Step 2 - Identify people at risk

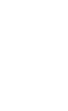
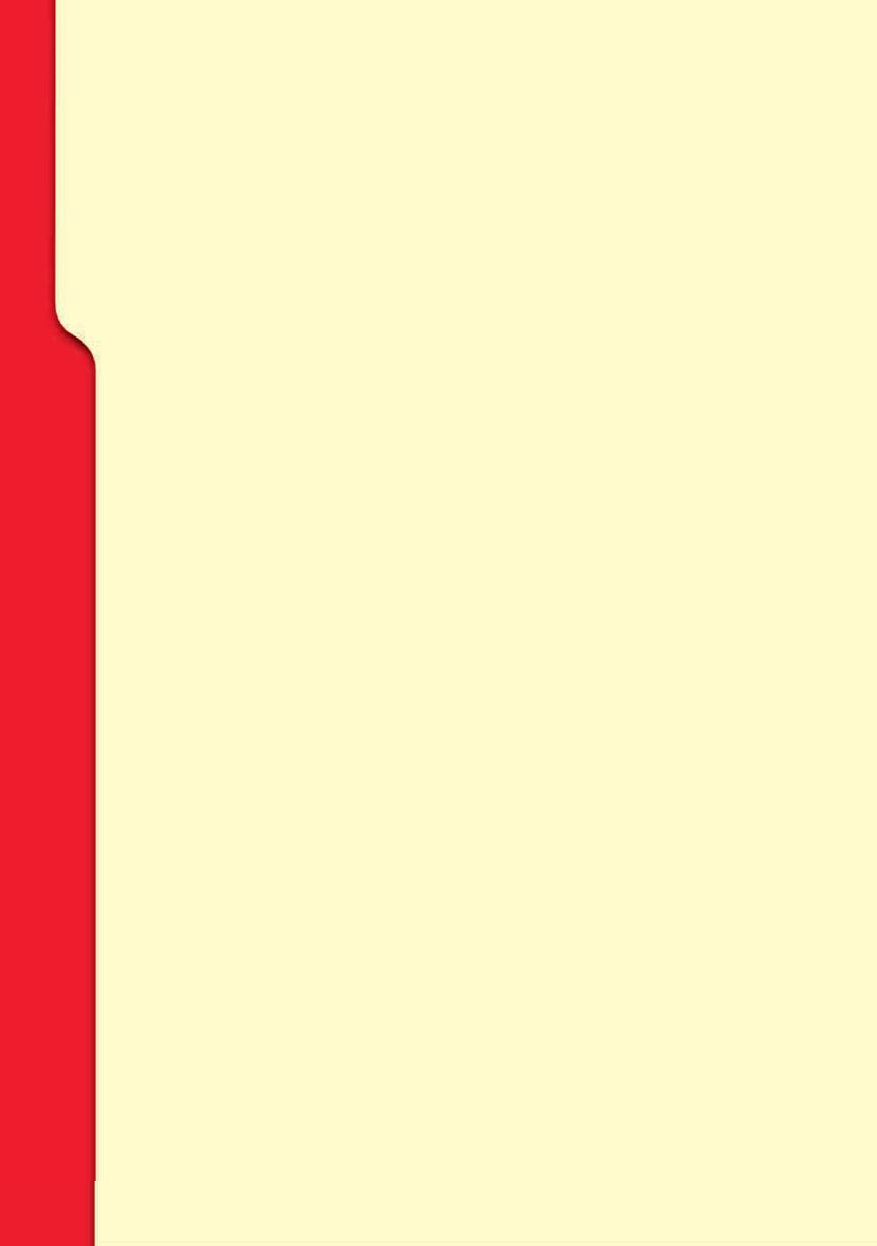
You will need to identify those people who may be especially at risk such as:

* people working near to fire dangers;
* people working alone or in isolated areas (such as in roof spaces or storerooms);
* children or parents with babies; and
* the elderly or infirm and people who are disabled.

**Step 3 - Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk** Evaluate the level of risk in your premises. You should remove or reduce any fire hazards where possible and reduce any risks you have identified. For example, you should:

* replace highly flammable materials with less flammable ones;
* make sure you separate flammable materials from sources of ignition; and
* have a safe-smoking policy.

When you have reduced the risk as far as possible, you must assess any risk that is left and decide whether there are any further measures you need to take to make sure you provide a reasonable level of fire safety.



Safe routes for people to leave the premises

* The ideal situation is when there is more than one escape route from all parts of the premises, although this is not always possible.
* If only one route is available, you may need to make it fire­ resisting (protected) or install an automatic fire-detection system.
* The distance people need to go to escape (the travel distance) should be as short as possible. The travel distance should be measured from the farthest point in a room to the door to a protected stairway or, if there is no protected stairway, to the final exit from the building.
* If there is only one escape route, the travel distance should not normally be more than "18 metres. This distance should be shorter ("12 metres or less) in any parts of the premises where there is a high chance of a fire starting or spreading quickly. The distance can be longer (up to about 25 metres) where the chance of a fire starting or spreading quickly is very low.
* If there is more than one escape route, the travel distance should not normally be more than 45 metres (around 25 metres in areas where the risk of fire is high and about 60 metres in areas where the risk of fire is very low).
* Stairways, corridors and areas near the fire exits should be kept clear of obstructions and material which can catch fire.
* The escape route should lead to a final exit and a safe place.
* If the stairway is not protected, the travel distance should be in line with those suggested above for single escape routes and the final exit should be easy to see and get to from the stairway at ground-floor level.
* High-risk rooms should not generally open directly into a fire-protected stairway.
* If your fire-risk assessment shows that people using any floor would not be aware of a fire, you may need other fire-protection measures, for example, an automatic fire-detection and warning system.

You should follow the above guidelines with caution. You must look at each part of the premises and decide how quickly people would react to a warning of fire. If you are in any doubt or your premises provide care or sleeping facilities, you should read the more detailed guidance published by the Government or get expert advice. Some factories and warehouses can have longer distances to travel to escape the fire.

Suitable fire exit doors

* + You should be able to use fire exit doors and any doors on the escape routes without a key and without any specialist knowledge.
  + In premises used by the public or large numbers of people, you may need push (panic) bars or push pads.

Other things to consider

* + Whether you need emergency lighting.
  + Suitable fire-safety signs in all but the smallest premises.
  + Training for your staff or anyone else you may reasonably expect to help in a fire.
  + A management system to make sure that you maintain your fire safety systems.

Some very small and simple premises may be able to satisfy all these steps without difficulty. However, you should still be able to show that you have carried out all the steps.

Step 4 - Record, plan, instruct, inform and train

In this step you should record, plan, instruct, inform and train. You will need to record the dangers and people you have identified as especially at risk in **step 1** and **step 2.** You should also record what you did about it in **step 3.** A simple plan can help you achieve this.

You will also need to make an emergency plan, tailored to your premises.

It should include the action that you need to take in a fire in your premises or any premises nearby. You will need to give staff, and occasionally others, such as hotel guests or volunteer stewards, instructions. All employees should receive enough information and training about the risks in the premises. Some, such as fire marshals, will need more thorough training.

Step 5 - Review

You should make sure your fire-risk assessment is up to date. You will need to re-examine your fire-risk assessment if you suspect it is no longer valid, such as after a near miss and every time there is a significant change to the level of risk in your premises. This could include:

* if you store more materials which can catch fire easily;
* a new night shift starting; or
* a change in the type or number of people using your premises.

Enforcing the order

Fire authorities will be the main agency responsible for enforcing all fire-safety legislation in non-domestic premises. They will target their resources and inspections at those premises that present the highest risk. All fire authorities will continue to look into complaints about fire safety, carry out investigations after fires where poor fire-safety management is discovered and may carry out targeted inspections.

If you do not meet the order, the fire authority will provide practical advice or, if the risk is serious, a formal notice. Except in the most serious cases, the fire authority will work with you to achieve a satisfactory level of fire safety.

If there is a very serious risk to life, the fire authority can issue a notice preventing the premises being used for certain things (such as sleeping), or preventing people from using all or part of the premises. This power is shared with housing authorities in properties which several households live in.

In all cases you will have a right of appeal, both informally and formally.

An informal appeal, normally to a more experienced fire-safety manager, can sometimes identify a different way of meeting the order.

If this is not successful, you can appeal formally to a magistrate. You can also agree with the enforcing authority to ask for a formal decision from the BMSretary of State on a solution if you cannot agree about technical issues.

If you change your premises

In most cases you will be able to change your premises. However, you must remember that you will be responsible for managing the risk you create and you will still have to follow the planning process and building regulations. You will need to look at your fire-risk assessment again and look at how the changes will affect the risk in your premises. You should assess if your risk-management measures are adequate and if you need to take any further action.

In some higher risk premises, for example, those in which the risk to life can be said to be higher than normal or where particularly complicated fire-safety arrangements are needed, the fire authority will be able to issue an alterations notice.

Under the alterations notice, you must tell them about any changes you plan to make to premises if those changes would create a significant increase in the risk.

Gas cooker

IGNITION SOURCE

Cardboard boxes

COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS

Ashtray/Smoking

IGNITION SOURCE

Portable heater

IGNITION SOURCE

Magazine & card rack

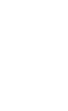
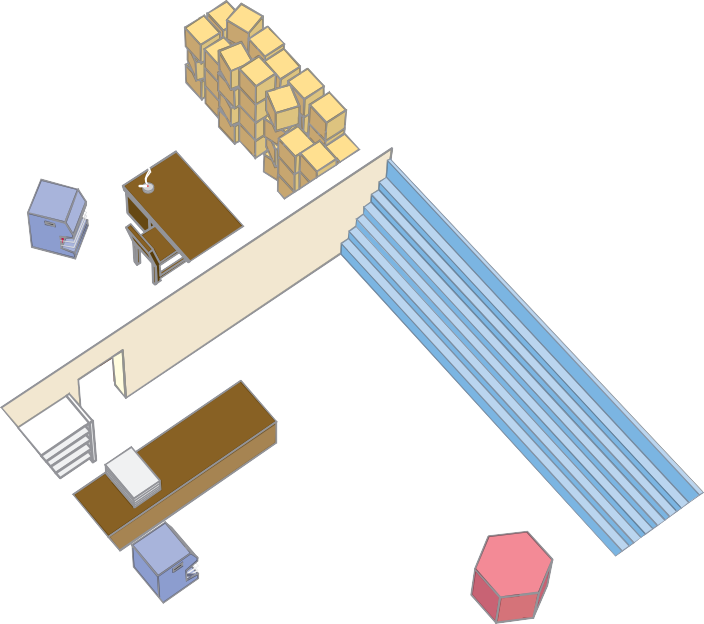
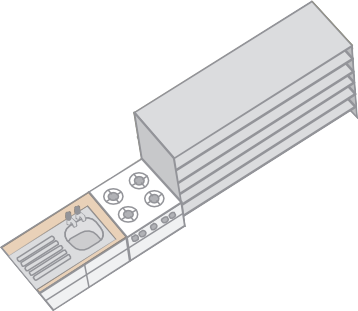
COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS

Stack of newspapers on counter

COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS

Portable heater

IGNITION SOURCE



Display carousel with disposable lighters

IGNITION SOURCE

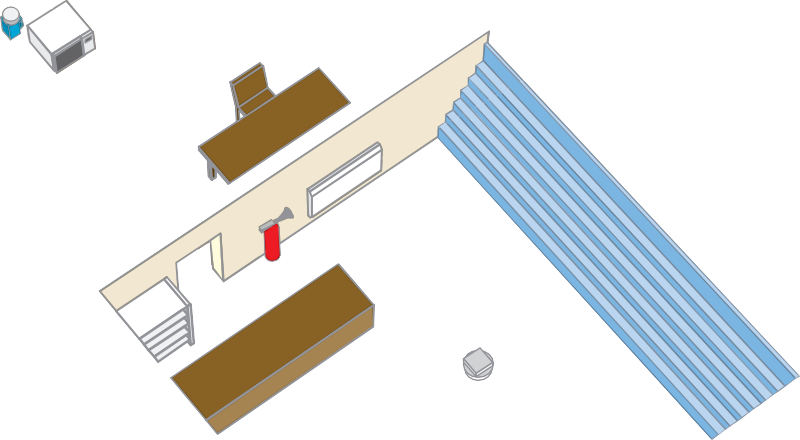
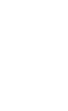
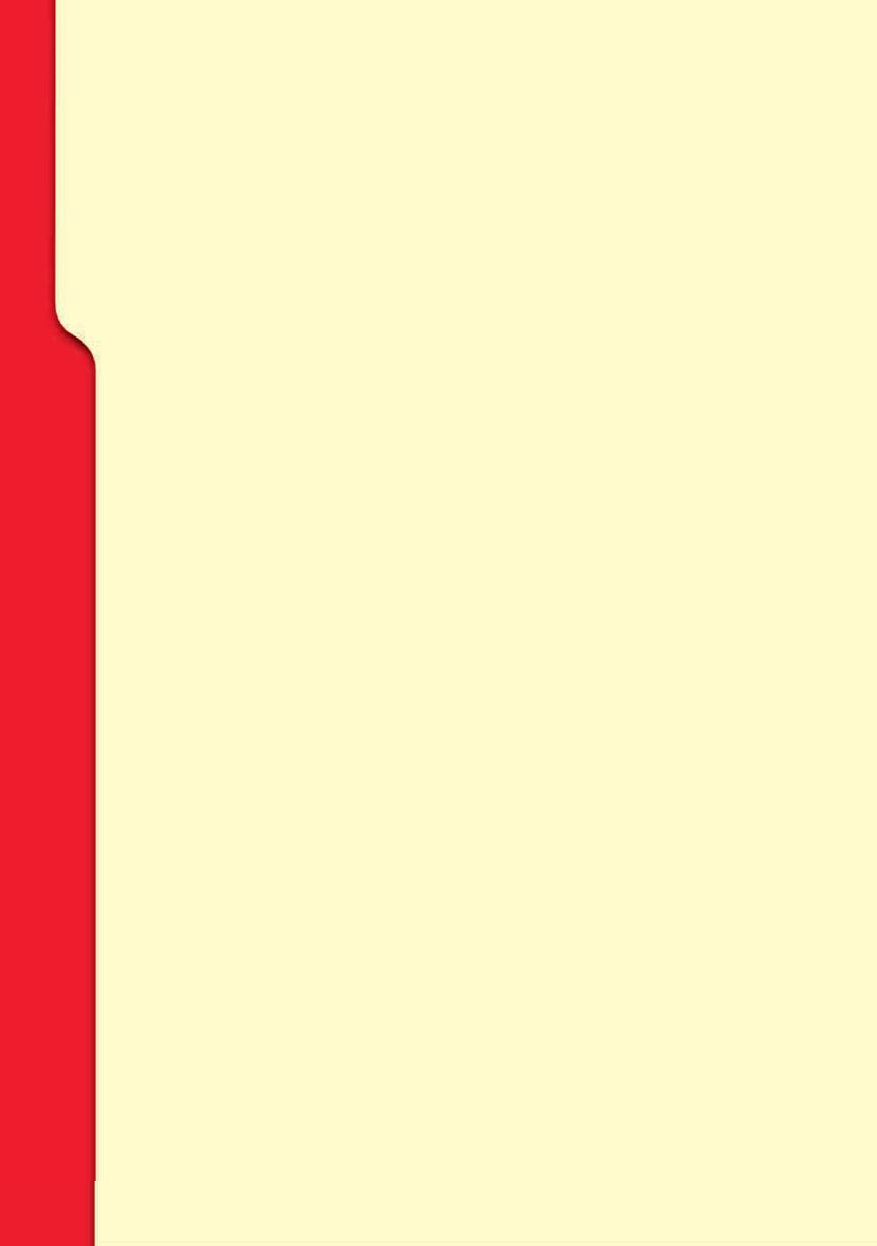
Gas cooker replaced with a microwave

Torch provided in the back room

Enough suitable storage shelving provided

Smoking not allowed

Portable heaters replaced with fixed electric radiator



Desk now facing the door

Extinguisher provided

Smoke detector fitted

Display carousel moved closer to a supervised counter

making your premises safe from fire

A short guide to



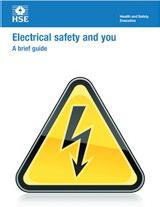
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**Electrical safety and you**

**A brief guide**

Introduction



Electricity can kill or severely injure people and cause damage to property. Every year many accidents at work involving electric shock or burns are reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Most of the fatal incidents are caused by contact with overhead power lines.

Even non-fatal shocks can cause severe and permanent injury. For example, shocks from faulty equipment may lead to falls from ladders, scaffolds or other work platforms.

Those using or working with electricity may not be the only ones at risk – poor



This is a web-friendly version of leaflet INDG231(rev1), published 04/12

also cause death or injury to others. Most of these accidents can be avoided by careful planning and straightforward precautions.



use of electricity at work. Further guidance for particular industries or subjects can be found on HSE’s website (www.hse.gov.uk).

What are the hazards?

The main hazards are:



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contact with live parts causing shock and burns – normal mains voltage, 230 volts AC, can kill;



Assessing the risk

Your health and safety risk assessment should take into account the risks associated with electricity. It will help you decide what action you need to take to use and maintain your electrical installations and equipment and also how often maintenance is needed. See HSE’s website for further guidance [(www.h](http://www.hse.gov/)s[e.gov.](http://www.hse.gov/) uk/risk).

The risk of injury from electricity is strongly linked to where and how it is used. The risks are greatest in harsh conditions, for example:

in wet surroundings – unsuitable equipment can easily become live and can make its surroundings live;

outdoors – equipment may not only become wet but may be at greater risk of damage; and

in cramped spaces with a lot of earthed metalwork such as inside a tank – if an

Some items of equipment can also involve greater risk than others. Extension leads are particularly liable to damage – to their plugs, sockets, connections and

which is often moved, can suffer from similar problems.

Reducing the risk



reduce unacceptable risks from the electrical equipment in your workplace. There are many things you can do to achieve this, and some of them are listed below.

***Ensure people working on or with your electrical equipment or systems are ‘competent’ for the task***

Competent means having suitable training, skill, and knowledge for the task to prevent injury to themselves and others.

***Ensure the electrical installation is safe***

Make sure that:

new electrical systems are installed to a suitable standard, eg BS 7671 *Requirements for electrical installations*,1 and then maintain them in a safe condition;

existing installations are maintained in a safe condition; and

you provide enough socket outlets because overloading socket outlets by

***Provide safe and suitable equipment***

Choose equipment that is suitable for its working environment.

Electrical risks can sometimes be eliminated by using air, hydraulic or hand- powered tools which are especially useful in harsh conditions.

Make sure that equipment is safe when supplied and that it is then maintained in a safe condition.

cut off power in an emergency.

For portable equipment, use socket outlets which are close by so that equipment can be easily disconnected in an emergency.



terminals.

Replace damaged BMStions of cable completely.

Use proper connectors or cable couplers to join lengths of cable. Do not use strip connector blocks covered in insulating tape.

Some types of equipment are double insulated. These are often marked with a ‘double-square’ symbol .The supply leads have only two wires – live (brown) and neutral (blue). Make sure they are properly connected if the plug is not moulded.

Protect light bulbs and other equipment which could easily be damaged in use.

equipment designed for these areas should be used. You may need specialist advice.

***Reduce the voltage***

One of the best ways of reducing the risk of injury when using electrical equipment is to limit the supply voltage to the lowest needed to get the job done, such as:

temporary lighting can be run at lower voltages, eg 12, 25, 50 or 110 volts;

where electrically powered tools are used, battery-operated ones are safest; or portable tools designed to be run from a 110 volt centre-tapped-to-earth supply are readily available.

***Provide a safety device***

If equipment operating at 230 volts or higher is used, an RCD (residual current device) can provide additional safety. An RCD is a device which detects some, but not all, faults in the electrical system and rapidly switches off the supply.

The best place for an RCD is built into the main switchboard or the socket outlet, as this means that the supply cables are permanently protected. If this is not possible, a plug incorporating an RCD or a plug-in RCD adaptor can also provide additional safety.

RCDs for protecting people have a rated tripping current (sensitivity) of not more than 30 milliamps (mA). Remember:

an RCD is a valuable safety device, never bypass it;

if it trips, it is a sign there is a fault – check the system before using it again; if it trips frequently and no fault can be found in the system, consult the manufacturer of the RCD; and

the RCD has a test button to check that its mechanism is free and functioning

– you should use this regularly.

***Carry out preventative maintenance***

All electrical equipment, including portable equipment and installations, should be maintained (so far as reasonably practicable) to prevent danger; this is a requirement of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.

*What does ‘so far as reasonably practicable’ mean?*

You do not have to remove all the risks but the law requires you to do everything ‘reasonably practicable’ to protect people from harm. An explanation of what is ‘reasonably practicable’ means is provided at [www.gov.uk/risk/faqs/htm.](http://www.gov.uk/risk/faqs/htm)

These Regulations state principles of electrical safety and apply to all electrical systems and equipment. **However, they do not specify what needs to be done, by whom or how frequently.**

Decisions on maintenance levels and the frequency of checks should be made in consultation with equipment users, based on the risk of electrical items becoming faulty. There is an increased risk of this happening if the equipment isn’t used correctly, isn’t suitable for the job, or is used in a harsh environment.

An appropriate system of maintenance is strongly recommended. This can include:



damage;

a visual inspection by someone with more knowledge, eg checking inside the plug for internal damage, bare wires and the correct fuse; and

**where necessary**, a portable appliance test (PAT) by someone with the necessary knowledge and experience to carry out a test and interpret the results.

Damaged or defective equipment should be removed from use and either repaired by someone competent or disposed of to prevent its further use.

*Not every electrical item needs a PAT and those that do may not need to be tested every year*

By concentrating on a simple, inexpensive system of looking for visible signs of damage or faults, most of the electrical risks can be controlled.

There is no legal requirement to label equipment that has been inspected or tested, nor is there a requirement to keep records of these activities.

Although it is not a legal requirement, maintaining a record and labelling system can be a useful way to monitor and review the effectiveness of the maintenance scheme.

Guidance on portable appliance testing, including the frequency of checks, is available in the booklets mentioned later and in the frequently asked questions at [www.hse.gov.uk/electricity.](http://www.hse.gov.uk/electricity)

***Work safely***

Make sure that people who are working with electricity are competent to do the job. Even simple tasks such as wiring a plug can lead to danger – ensure that people know what they are doing before they start.

Check that:

* suspect or faulty equipment is taken out of use, labelled ‘DO NOT USE’ and kept BMSure until examined by a competent person;
* where possible, tools and power socket outlets are switched off before plugging in or unplugging; and
* equipment is switched off and/or unplugged before cleaning or making adjustments.

More complicated tasks, such as equipment repairs or alterations to an electrical installation, should only be carried out by people with knowledge of the risks and the precautions needed.

You must not allow work on or near exposed, live parts of equipment unless it is absolutely unavoidable and suitable precautions have been taken to prevent injury, both to the workers and to anyone else who may be in the area.

***Underground power cables***

Always assume cables will be present when digging in the street, pavement or near buildings. Use up-to-date service plans, cable avoidance tools and safe digging practice to avoid danger.

Service plans should be available from regional electricity companies, local authorities, highways authorities etc. More detailed guidance is available in HSE publication *Avoiding danger from underground services* (HSG47).2

***Overhead power lines***

Over half of the fatal electrical accidents each year are caused by contact with overhead lines.

When working near overhead lines, it may be possible to have them switched off if the owners are given enough notice. If this cannot be done, consult the owners about the safe working distance from the cables.

References

* BS 7671:2008 (2011) *Requirements for electrical installations* British Standards Institution (Also known as IET Wiring Regulations 17th edition)
* *Avoiding danger from underground services* HSG47 (BMSond edition) HSE Books 2000 ISBN 978 0 7176 1744 9 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg47.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg47.htm)
* *Avoiding danger from overhead power lines* General Guidance Note GS6 (Fourth edition) HSE 2013 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/gs6.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/gs6.htm)

Further reading

*Health and safety made simple: The basics for your business*

HSE Books 2011 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg449.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg449.htm)

*Maintaining portable and transportable electrical equipment* HSG107 (BMSond edition) HSE Books 2004 ISBN 978 0 7176 2805 6

[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg107.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg107.htm)

*Maintaining portable electrical equipment in low-risk environments*

INDG236(rev2) HSE Books 2012 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg236.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg236.htm)

*Electricity at work: Safe working practices* HSG85 (BMSond edition) HSE Books 2003 ISBN 978 0 7176 2164 4 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg85.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg85.htm)

*Memorandum of guidance on the Electricity at Work Regulations* 1989. Guidance on Regulations HSR25 (BMSond edition) HSE Books 2007

ISBN 978 0 7176 6228 9 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsr25.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsr25.htm) HSE’s ‘Electrical safety at work’ site: [www.hse.gov.uk/electricity](http://www.hse.gov.uk/electricity)

Further information

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit [www.hse.gov.uk/.](http://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 BMSure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance.

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# Gas appliances

#### Get them checked Keep them safe

The problem

Every year about 14 people die from carbon monoxide poisoning caused by gas appliances and flues which have not been properly installed or maintained.

Many others also suffer ill health. When gas does not burn properly, as with other fuels such as coal, wood or oil, excess carbon monoxide is produced, which is poisonous.

You can't see it. You can't taste it. You can't even smell it. But carbon monoxide can kill without warning in just a matter of hours.



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You are particularly at risk when you are asleep because you cannot recognise the early symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. These include tiredness, drowsiness, headache, nausea, pains in the chest and stomach pains. These symptoms can mimic many common ailments and may easily be confused with flu or simple tiredness.

If you or your family experience the above symptoms, and you believe carbon monoxide may be involved, you must seek urgent medical advice. Your doctor will need to test a blood or breath sample. Carbon monoxide quickly leaves

the blood and tests may be inaccurate if taken more than four hours after exposure has ended.

You are at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning if: your appliance was poorly installed;

your appliance is not working properly;

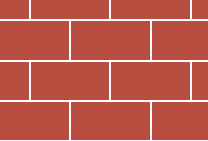
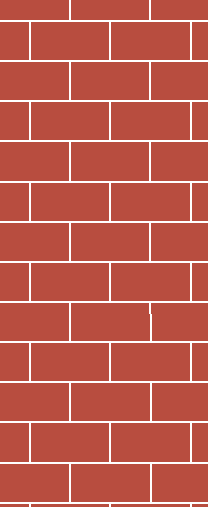
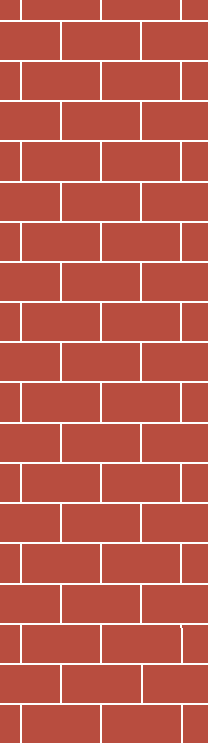
your appliance has not been checked for safety or maintained regularly; there is not enough fresh air in the room;

your chimney or flue gets blocked up;

you allow an engineer who is not on the Gas Safe Register to install or maintain your appliance(s).

There is a particular risk if you sleep in a room where an appliance that is not of the room-sealed type (eg a conventional gas fire) is left burning at night. (Flue outlets for room-sealed appliances are commonly located on an external wall at a low level protected by a cage rather than at or above roof level.)

A safe gas appliance



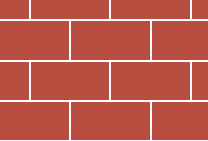
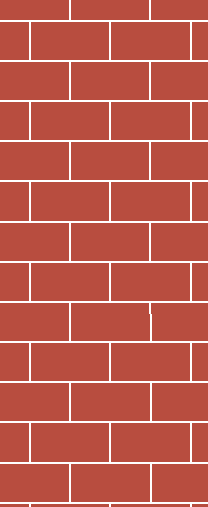
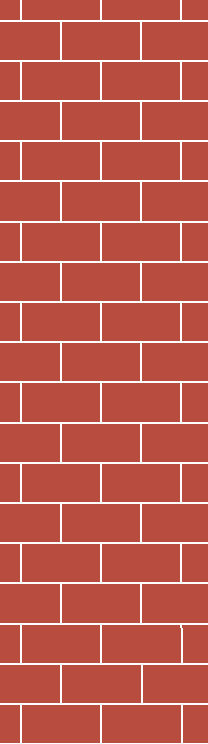
Clear flue

FUMES

Steady

blue flame

A dangerous gas appliance



Scorched

or sooty stains

Yellow or

orange flame

FUMES

Blocked

flue

The answers

NEVER use a gas appliance if you think it is not working properly. Signs to look out for include yellow or orange flames (except for fuel-effect fires which display this colour flame), soot or stains around the appliance and pilot lights which frequently blow out.

NEVER cover an appliance or block the convection air vents. NEVER block or obstruct any fixed ventilation grilles or air bricks. NEVER block or cover outside flues.

CAUTION Whenever draught exclusion, ceiling or extraction fans, double glazing or conservatory extensions are fitted to a room containing a gas appliance, the appliance should subsequently be checked for safety.

ALL gas consumers are advised to have appliances checked for safety at least every 12 months by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

You could be entitled to a free safety check. If you are over 60, chronically sick, disabled, deaf or hearing-impaired, blind or visually impaired, you are entitled to join your supplier's Priority Service Register. It is free to join and once a member you are entitled, among other things, to a free annual gas safety check (unless you live in rented accommodation where it is your landlord's duty to ensure the check is done). For more information look at the back of your gas bill.

CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS are a useful back-up precaution but must NOT be regarded as a substitute for proper installation and maintenance of gas equipment by a Gas Safe registered engineer. If you decide to buy a carbon monoxide alarm, ensure it meets current safety standards (BS EN 50291) and

carries the Kitemark. If in doubt ask a member of staff for advice. Always follow the manufacturer's siting instructions.

If you smell gas, or suspect there is a gas escape or a carbon monoxide leak, you should immediately do the following:

Open all doors and windows.

Shut off the gas supply at the meter control valve (if you know where it is). If gas continues to escape call National Grid on the Gas Emergency Freephone Number 0800 111 999.

Make sure that any investigations or repairs are carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

The law

The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 place duties on gas consumers, installers, suppliers and landlords. These regulations link with other safety controls on combustion equipment, eg the Building Regulations, which are standards for ventilation and flues.

For your own protection remember:

* by law anyone carrying out work on gas appliances or fittings as part of their business must be competent and registered with the Gas Safe Register. Always check your engineer is registered by asking to see their ID card which has a photo of the engineer, their business registration number and personal licence number, company name, the start and expiry date of the card and a BMSurity hologram. The reverse of the card details what kind of gas work the engineer is able to do. You can also call Gas Safe Register during normal office hours on 0800 408 5500 or go to the website www.gassaferegister.co.uk;
* by law only a competent person can carry out work on gas appliances or fittings. Do-it-yourself work on gas appliances or fittings could be dangerous and is likely to be illegal;



* by law you must not use any gas appliance or fittings you know or suspect to be unsafe. Through Gas Safe Register, HSE has asked all registered engineers to disconnect any gas appliance or fittings which are so dangerous as to be a threat to life if they are used. If your engineer asks your permission to disconnect such an appliance or fitting it will be in the interests of your own safety, and that of others, to agree. Before you use this appliance or fitting again, have it repaired by a Gas Safe registered engineer;
* by law, landlords are generally responsible for making sure that gas fittings and flues are maintained in good order, and gas appliances and flues are checked for safety once in a period of 12 months. They must also keep a record of the safety checks for at least two years and issue the latest certificate to existing tenants and any new tenants before they move in. If you own the appliance, you are responsible for its maintenance and safety checks;
* by law, with the exception of the room-sealed type, there are restrictions on the installation of gas appliances such as fires, boilers and heaters in sleeping accommodation. These restrictions apply only to appliances fitted after 1 January 1996 and to those already installed in rooms in rented accommodation which have been converted to bedrooms after 31 October 1998. Appliances which are not room-sealed, eg conventional gas fires of 14 kilowatts or less, may only be fitted if they have a device which automatically turns the gas supply off before a dangerous level of fumes can build up. However, for appliances above 14 kilowatts only those of a room- sealed type are allowed in such accommodation.
* by law, since 31 October 1998, it has been illegal to install in any room instantaneous water heaters which are not room-sealed or fitted with a safety device which automatically turns the gas supply off before a dangerous level of poisonous fumes builds up;
* by law, mains gas transporters/emergency service providers (ESPs) must, in the event of an emergency, make the situation safe. They should establish the cause of a gas escape and take action to prevent the gas from escaping within 12 hours. In the case of actual or suspected escapes of carbon monoxide they should respond to reports from consumers and make the situation safe.

Further reading

If you would like more detailed information on the subject, you will find the following HSE publication useful: *Safety in the installation and use of gas systems and appliances. Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. Approved Code of Practice and guidance* L56 (BMSond edition) HSE Books 1998 ISBN 978 0 7176 1635 0.

Also, for safety information on gas, solid fuel and oil burning appliances, and information on the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, look at the Department of Health booklet *Keep warm keep well* (updated annually). Download it from [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk/) or [www.direct.gov.uk,](http://www.direct.gov.uk/) or write to Department of Health Publications, PO Box 777, London SE1 6XH, Tel: 0300 123 1002.

Further information

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit [www.hse.gov.uk/.](http://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.

British Standards can be obtained in PDF or hard copy formats from BSI: [http://shop.bsigroup.com](http://shop.bsigroup.com/) or by contacting BSI Customer Services for hard copies only Tel: 020 8996 9001 email: [cservices@bsigroup.com.](mailto:cservices@bsigroup.com)

HSE Gas Safety Advice Line

Tel: 0800 300 363

HSE's Gas Safety website: [www.hse.gov.uk/gas/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas/index.htm) Gas Safe Register website: [www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/)

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory 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 BMSure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance as illustrating good practice.

This leaflet is available in priced packs of 15 from HSE Books,

ISBN 978 0 7176 6337 8. Single free copies and a web version can be found at: [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg238.pdf.](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg238.pdf)

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# Legionnaires' disease

##### A brief guide for dutyholders

Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is aimed at employers and people in control of premises, eg landlords, where man-made water systems are used that could be a potential source for legionella bacteria growth. It will help you to understand the health risks associated with legionella. *Legionnaires' disease: The control of legionella bacteria in water systems*1 provides further details about how to manage and control the risks in your system.

What is legionnaires' disease?

Legionellosis is the collective name given to the pneumonia-like illness caused by legionella bacteria. This includes the most serious legionnaires' disease, as well as the similar but less serious conditions of Pontiac fever and Lochgoilhead fever.

Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia and everyone is susceptible to infection. However, some people are at higher risk, including:

* people over 45 years of age; smokers and heavy drinkers;
* people suffering from chronic respiratory or kidney disease; and anyone with an impaired immune system.



Health and Safety Executive

Where are legionella bacteria found?

The bacterium *Legionella pneumophila* and related bacteria are common in natural water sources such as rivers, lakes and reservoirs, but usually in low numbers. Since legionella bacteria are widespread in the environment, they may also contaminate and grow in purpose-built water systems such as cooling towers, evaporative condensers, hot and cold water systems and whirlpool spas.

Are there legionella risks in my workplace?

Any water system that has the right environmental conditions could potentially be a source for legionella bacteria growth. There is a reasonably foreseeable legionella risk in your water system if:

* water is stored or re-circulated as part of your system;
* the water temperature in all or some part of the system is between 20-45 °C; there are sources of nutrients such as rust, sludge, scale and organic matters; the conditions are likely to encourage bacteria to multiply;
* it is possible for water droplets to be produced and, if so, if they can be dispersed over a wide area, eg showers and aerosols from cooling towers; and it is likely that any of your employees, residents, visitors etc are more susceptible to infection due to age, illness, a weakened immune system etc and whether they could be exposed to any contaminated water droplets.

The most common places where legionella can be found include purpose-built water systems, cooling towers, evaporative condensers, hot and cold water systems and spa pools. There are also a number of other systems that may pose a risk to exposure to legionella, eg humidifiers, air washers, emergency showers, indoor ornamental fountains etc.

What are my duties?

Under general health and safety law, as an employer or person in control of a premises (eg a landlord), you have health and safety duties and need to take suitable precautions to prevent or control the risk of exposure to legionella. Details of the specific law that applies can be found in part 1 of *Legionnaires' disease: The control of legionella bacteria in water systems*.

Carrying out a risk assessment is your responsibility and will help you to establish any potential risks and implement measures to either eliminate or control risks. You may be competent to carry out the assessment yourself but, if not, you should ask someone with the necessary skills to conduct a risk assessment. This can be done by someone from within your own organisation or from someone outside, eg an external consultant.

How do I identify and assess sources of risk?

To identify the risks in your water system you, or a competent person who understands your water systems and any associated equipment, should establish any possible exposure to legionella risks, as listed above, as part of a risk assessment.

Your risk assessment should include:

* management responsibilities, including the name of the competent person and a description of your system;
* any potential risk sources;
* any controls currently in place to control risks; monitoring, inspection and maintenance procedures;
* records of the monitoring results, inspection and checks carried out; and a review date.

If you decide that the risks are insignificant and are being properly managed to comply with the law, your assessment is complete. You will not need to take any further action, but it is important to review your assessment periodically in case anything changes in your system.

How do I manage the risk?

As an employer or person in control of premises, you must appoint someone competent to help you comply with your health and safety duties, eg take responsibility for managing the risks. A competent person is someone with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to manage health and safety, including the control measures. You could appoint one, or a combination of:

* yourself;
* one or more workers; and/or someone from outside your business.

If there are several people responsible for managing your risks, eg because of shift- work patterns, you need to make sure that everyone knows what they are responsible for and how they fit into the overall risk management programme.

If you decide to employ contractors to carry out water treatment or other work, it is still the responsibility of the competent person to ensure that the treatment is carried out to the required standards. Remember, before you employ a contractor, you should be satisfied that they can do the work you want to the standard that you require. There are a number of external schemes to help you with this, for example *The control of legionellosis: A recommended code of conduct for service providers*.2

How do I prevent or control the risk?

You should consider whether you can prevent the risk of legionella in the first place by considering the type of water system you need, eg consider whether it is possible to replace a wet cooling tower with a dry air-cooled system. The key point is to design, maintain and operate your water services under conditions that prevent or adequately control the growth of legionella bacteria.

You should, as appropriate:

ensure that the release of water spray is properly controlled;

avoid water temperatures and conditions that favour the growth of legionella and other micro-organisms;

ensure water cannot stagnate anywhere in the system by keeping pipe lengths as short as possible or by removing redundant pipework;

avoid materials that encourage the growth of legionella. The *Water Fittings and Materials Directory*3 references fittings, materials, and appliances approved for use on the UK Water Supply System by the Water Regulations Advisory Scheme);

keep the system and the water in it clean; and

treat water to either kill legionella (and other microorganisms) or limit their ability to grow.

If you identify a risk that you are unable to prevent, you must introduce appropriate controls. You should introduce a course of action that will help you to control any risks from legionella by identifying:

* your system, eg developing a written schematic;
* who is responsible for carrying out the assessment and managing its implementation;
* he safe and correct operation of your system;
* what control methods and other precautions you will be using; and
* what checks will be carried out to ensure risks are being managed and how often.

What records do I need to keep?

If you have five or more employees, you have to record any significant findings, including any groups of employees identified by it as being particularly at risk and the steps taken to prevent or control risks.

If you have less than five employees, you do not need to write anything down, although it is useful to keep a written record of what you have done.

Records should include details about:

* the person or people responsible for conducting the risk assessment, managing, and implementing the written scheme;
* any significant findings of the risk assessment;
* the written control scheme and its implementation; and
* the results of any inspection, test or check carried out, and the dates.

This should include details about the state of operation of the system, ie in use/not in use.

These records should be retained throughout the period for which they remain current and for at least two years after that period. Records kept in accordance with the last bullet point above should be retained for at least five years.

Do I have any other duties?

Under the Notification of Cooling Towers and Evaporative Condensers Regulations 1992,4 you must notify your local authority, in writing, if you have a cooling tower or evaporative condenser on site and include details about where it is located. You must also tell them if/when such devices are no longer in use. Notification forms are available from your local environmental health department.

If you have a case of legionellosis in an employee who has worked on cooling towers or hot water systems that are likely to be contaminated with legionella, you must report this under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).5

References

1. *Legionnaires' disease. The control of legionella bacteria in water systems. Approved Code of Practice and guidance* L8 (Third edition) HSE Books 2001 ISBN 978 0 7176 1772 2 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/L8.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/L8.htm)
2. *The control of legionellosis: A recommended code of conduct for service providers* The British Association of Chemical Specialities and the Water Management Society 2005 [www.legionellacontrol.com/Legionella-Control-](http://www.legionellacontrol.com/Legionella-Control-) Association-Code-of-Conduct-%20Issue-5-07.pdf
3. *Water Fittings and Materials Directory*

[www.materialstesting.co.uk/materials\_directory.htm](http://www.materialstesting.co.uk/materials_directory.htm)

1. *The Notification of Cooling Towers and Evaporative Condensers Regulations 1992*

SI 1992/2225 TSO 1992 [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/)

1. *Reporting accidents and incidents at work: A brief guide to the Reporting of lnjuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RlDDOR)* Leaflet INDG453 HSE Books 2012 (priced pack ISBN 978 0 7176 6460 3)

[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/INDG453.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/INDG453.htm)

Further information

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit [www.hse.gov.uk/.](http://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.

The Stationery Office publications are available from The Stationery Office,

PO Box 29, Norwich NR3 1GN Tel: 0870 600 5522 Fax: 0870 600 5533

email: [customer.services@tso.co.uk](mailto:customer.services@tso.co.uk) Website: [www.tsoshop.co.uk/](http://www.tsoshop.co.uk/) (They are also available from bookshops.) Statutory Instruments can be viewed free of charge at [www.legislation.gov.uk/.](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/)

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

This leaflet is available in priced packs from HSE Books, ISBN 978 0 7176 6500 6. A web version can be found at [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg458.htm.](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg458.htm)

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Home Business & industry Food hygiene for businesses Catering advice for charity and community groups providing food

Catering advice for charity and community groups providing food

**Last updated:** 20 February 2014

Advice on providing food in a village hall or other community setting for volunteers and charity groups.

**About the questions and answers**

Applies to England

**This information is for:**

volunteers and charity groups that want to provide food in a village hall, or other community setting

**Legal status:**

this guidance provides advice on the law

**Questions and answers**

Questions and answers for volunteers and charity groups.

**Collapse All**

**I’m making food for lots of people at a fundraiser event. What general advice can you give me?**

When you're making food for large numbers of people, it's important to keep food safe. Here are some general practical tips:

* plan ahead - if you can prepare food in advance, this should make things easier later wash your hands and any equipment you are using in hot soapy water
* keep food out of the fridge for the shortest time possible even if people are waiting to eat, don't reduce cooking times
* always make sure food is properly cooked before you serve it keep raw and ready-to-eat foods apart
* do not use food past its ‘use by’ date
* know what is in the ingredients so information about allergens can be provided (e.g. provide a ’contains nuts’ label for cakes)

**Which people are particularly vulnerable?**

If food is being provided to vulnerable people – this can include the elderly, infants under five years of age, expectant mums and anyone with a serious or long-term medical condition – you should take particular care to ensure the food is safe. The advice here will be helpful and the FSA also recommends contacting the local authority, who can provide free advice.

**Is it okay to sell homemade cakes at the school fair?**

There is no rule banning the sale of homemade cakes at school fetes or other community events. Homemade cakes should be safe to eat, as long as the people who make them follow good food hygiene advice and the cakes are stored and transported safely.

At home, people making cakes should follow these tips:

* always wash your hands before preparing food
* make sure that surfaces, bowls, utensils, and any other equipment is clean
* don't use raw eggs in anything that won't be thoroughly cooked, such as icing or mousse keep cheeBMSakes and any cakes or desserts containing cream in the fridge
* store cakes in a clean, sealable container, away from raw foods, especially raw meat

On the day, people bringing in cakes from home or running the stall should follow these tips:

* transport cakes in a clean, sealable container wash their hands as frequently as possible
* make sure that cheeBMSake and any cakes or desserts containing cream are left out of the fridge for the shortest time possible
* when handling cakes use tongs or a cake slice instead

**How long can I leave food out on a buffet?**

In general, food that needs to be chilled, such as sandwich fillings, should be left out of the fridge for the shortest time possible. If it is left at room temperature for a long time, bacteria can grow or toxins can form, and both of these could cause food poisoning.

If you are preparing a buffet, you should try to keep food out for a short time and not more than four hours. After this time, any remaining food should be thrown away or put back in the fridge but if you do put the food back in the fridge, don't let it stand around at room temperature if you serve it again.

**Do I need to label cakes and jams sold for charity?**

If you sell food for a charity or other community organisation, you will have to follow Food Labelling Regulations 1996 only if the charity or organisation is a registered food business. So, in general the labelling regulations won't apply to most food being sold for charity and so won't need to be labelled, including food sold at one-off events such as church fêtes and school fairs which are not registered.

However, even if you're not legally required to label a food, you could label it voluntarily. For example:

* the product name
* a list of ingredients (in descending order of weight)
* details of any ingredients that could cause an allergic reaction – such as egg, milk, sulphites, peanuts and tree nuts

If you do label a food, you must make sure that the information you provide is clear and accurate.

From December 2014, new labelling rules will apply. Again the laws will only apply to registered food businesses but,

if a person providing food in a village hall voluntarily provides allergen information, it will need to be accurate and in the correct format, especially if it is deemed to be pre-packed, such as a jar of jam or lemon curd.

Registered food businesses will need to provide mandatory information which includes allergen information. More information on the new allergen labelling rules can be found via the link below.

**Allergy and intolerance: guidance for businesses**

**I’m organising an event in my local community and will provide food. Do I need to let my local authority know?**

Possibly. It depends on a number of things – how large the event is, how often it is held, for example. The FSA has produced some guidance which might help you, which you can see via the link below. If you’re still unsure, contact your local authority. In England, environmental health officers can provide advice to community and charitable groups about food quality, hygiene and safety issues. They also deal with consumer complaints about supplied food.

You can use our online search facility to help you find the contact details of your nearest local authority environmental health team.

**How should homemade cakes be stored?**

**Wedding cake, Christmas cake and other baked goods**

It is difficult to assess the storage time of cakes and other baked goods; much will depend on the recipe as this will influence the chances of any mould growth, which would be the major cause of concern. Cakes and baked goods with a high sugar content will keep for longer as this will delay any mould growth. Keeping cakes and baked goods in an airtight container is also important to prevent mould growth through absorption of moisture from the atmosphere. Storing the cake in the fridge will also mean it will last for longer, but may affect its quality.

It is worth consulting reputable cooking books and web sites as these may give some additional tips for storage.

**Cream and other high moisture additions**

If you add any high moisture additions after baking (e.g. cream) then the cake should not be left at room temperature but must be stored chilled (in the fridge) and eaten within the shelf-life of the added product.

However, there are some types of icing such as ganache and butter cream that can be stored without refrigeration because of the high sugar content and relatively low water content, which should prevent growth of harmful bacteria. While growth of harmful food poisoning bacteria should not be supported, it is possible that moulds and other spoilage organisms could grow so it’s best to store the products somewhere cool and dry. The FSA advises that you check the guidelines for storage of the particular icing product you will be using and/or a reputable recipe. So inclusion of cream would mean you should keep product in the fridge, but butter icing etc should be ambient stable due to the high sugar content.

**Can I sell home-made jam in re-used jam jars?**

Re-using glass jam jars occasionally to supply food does not present a food safety concern. This means it is safe to sell home-made jam or chutney in re-used jam jars at village fetes and other occasional events. The key thing is good hygiene – if jam jars are re-used they should be free from chips and cracks, and should be sterilised. Well-fitting lids will also minimise any hygiene risks to the food in the jars.

The regulations on food contact materials apply to businesses and these regulations are unlikely to apply to the use of jam jars for occasional community and charity food provision. New domestic enforcement regulations relating to contact materials, which came into force in November 2012, make this clearer.

If you have any concerns about the re-use of jam jars you should contact your local authority.

**I’m a volunteer that sells food at charity events. Do I need a food hygiene certificate?**

No. Food hygiene certificates are not a legal requirement. If you are selling or handling food at a charity event, you need to do so safely but a qualification is not essential.

To help make sure any food you make, handle and sell is safe, you should check out the practical hygiene advice for caterers at the link below, or contact your nearest local authority environmental health team.

**A number of different community groups use the same community hall kitchen for a few hours each month to make hot drinks and sandwiches. Does the kitchen need to be registered as a food business?**

No. A community hall kitchen will not need to be registered as a food business on its own but groups using it should ensure that it is kept clean and that food preparation areas are suitably disinfected after use.. The hall management should ensure it is structurally sound and meets any other relevant legislation.

Community groups will need to register as food businesses if their food activities meet the description in the law – see the FSA’s views in the community and charity food provision guidance on this page.

**Is it true some types of food need more care during preparation and cooking to ensure they can be eaten safely?**

Yes. Raw food is often the main source of bacteria in the kitchen. The FSA recommends food providers look at the advice for preparing and cooking ‘foods which need extra care’ which can be found in our Safer food better business pack via the link below*.*

**What are the new requirements for allergens and do they apply to community and charity events?**

New food information rules regarding the declaration of allergens apply from 13 December 2014. If you are a charity or community food operation which is not required to be registered as a food business, you don’t have to provide information for consumers about allergens present in the food as ingredients. However, we recommend that you or anyone else managing charity operations, consider the risks. This would be good practice.

Community and charity food operations that are registered food businesses will need to comply with the new allergen rules. More information about allergens can be found via the link below. This is for charity operations not registered as food businesses as well as registered food businesses.

**Allergy and intolerance: guidance for businesses**

**Should older people avoid certain foods?**

Yes. People over 65 years of age, as well as pregnant women, young children and other vulnerable groups, are at higher risk of food poisoning. Some foods such as soft cheeses, pâté, raw eggs, raw milk, raw shellfish and cured meat are more likely to cause food poisoning than others. Read more about these and other foods on the NHS Choices website .

**We run a charity food bank. Do the rules regarding ‘use by’ dates apply to us?**

Yes. If you are supplying people with packaged food from a food bank you should always check and follow the ‘use by’ dates because these show how long the food remains safe to eat or drink. Giving out food after its ‘use by’ date puts people at risk, and could lead to enforcement action being taken against the food bank. More information can be found on the NHS Choices website .

**More in this BMStion**

**Community and charity food provision: guidance on the application of EU food hygiene law**

Guidance based on the Agency's interpretation of the relevant law, and provides clarity on what 'a certain continuity of activities and a certain degree of organisation' might mean. This should help local authority food safety officers decide on whether or not to register an activity carried out in the village hall, community and charity BMStor.

Is there anything wrong with this page?

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# Managing asbestos in buildings:

A brief guide

## Who’s this guidance for?

This guidance is for, anyone who is responsible for maintenance and repairs in a building, which may contain asbestos. The 'duty to manage' asbestos is included in the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. You are a 'dutyholder' if:

you own the building;

you are responsible through a contract or tenancy agreement;

you have control of the building but no formal contract or agreement; or

in a multi-occupancy building, you are the owner and have taken responsibility for maintenance and repairs for the whole building.

What buildings are affected?

All non-domestic buildings, whatever the type of business.

The common areas of domestic buildings, eg halls, stairwells, lift shafts, roof spaces. All other domestic properties are not affected by the duty to manage.



Health and Safety Executive

If you are not the dutyholder but have information about the building, you must co-operate with the dutyholder, eg leaseholders must allow managing agents access for inspection.

## Why manage asbestos?

Breathing in air containing asbestos fibres can lead to asbestos-related diseases, mainly cancers of the lungs and chest lining. Asbestos is only a risk to health if asbestos fibres are released into the air and breathed in. Past exposure to asbestos currently kills around 4500 people a year in Great Britain. Workers who carry out building maintenance and repair are particularly at risk.

There is usually a long delay between first exposure to asbestos and the onset of disease. This can vary from 15 to 60 years. Only by preventing or minimising these exposures now can asbestos-related disease eventually be reduced.

It is now illegal to use asbestos in the construction or refurbishment of any premises, but many thousands of tonnes of it were used in the past and much of it is still in place. There are three main types of asbestos that can still be found in premises, commonly called 'blue asbestos' (crocidolite), 'brown asbestos' (amosite) and 'white asbestos' (chrysotile). All of them are dangerous carcinogens, but blue and brown asbestos are more hazardous than white. Despite their names, you cannot identify them just by their colour.

Any buildings built or refurbished before the year 2000 may contain asbestos. As long as the asbestos-containing material (ACM) is in good condition, and is not being or going to be disturbed or damaged, there is negligible risk. But if it is disturbed or damaged, it can become a danger to health, because people may breathe in any asbestos fibres released into the air.

## Who’s at risk?

The more asbestos fibres breathed in, the greater the risk to health. Therefore, workers who may be exposed to asbestos when carrying out maintenance and repair jobs are at particular risk. Such workers include:

* construction and demolition contractors, roofers, electricians, painters and decorators, joiners, plumbers, gas fitters, plasterers, shop fitters, heating and ventilation engineers, and surveyors;
* anyone dealing with electronics, eg phone and IT engineers, and alarm installers; general maintenance engineers and others who work on the fabric of a building.

If asbestos is present and can be readily disturbed, is in poor condition and not managed properly, others who may be occupying the premises could be put at risk.

## Where is asbestos found in buildings?

## Asbestos was used in many parts of buildings, below is a sample of uses and locations where asbestos can be found:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Asbestos product | What it was used for |
| Sprayed asbestos (limpet) | Fire protection in ducts and to structural steel work, |
| Lagging | Thermal insulation of pipes and boilers |
| Asbestos insulating boards (AIB) | Fire protection, thermal insulation, wall partitions, |
| sheets | water tanks |
| Certain textured coatings | Decorative plasters, paints |
| Bitumen or vinyl materials |  |

Some ACMs are more vulnerable to damage and more likely to give off fibres than others. In general, materials that contain a high percentage of asbestos are more easily damaged. The table above is roughly in order of ease of fibre release (with the highest potential fibre release first). Sprayed coatings, lagging and insulating board are more likely to contain blue or brown asbestos. Asbestos insulation and lagging can contain up to 85% asbestos and are most likely to give off fibres. Work with AIB can result in equally high fibre release if power tools are used. On the other hand, asbestos cement contains only 10-15% asbestos. The asbestos is tightly bound into the cement and the material will only give off fibres if it is badly damaged or broken, or is worked on (eg drilled, cut etc).

## Higher risk materials



Abestos pipe lagging Asbestos insulating board (AIB)



Perforated AIB ceiling tiles Door with AIB panel

## Normally lower risk materials



Asbestos cement wall cladding Asbestos-containing floor tiles

Remember, although these are the most likely uses and places where asbestos will be found, asbestos was used in many other materials. If you are in doubt, it is safer to presume that a material contains asbestos, unless there is strong evidence that it does not.

## What does the duty to manage

asbestos involve?

The duty to manage asbestos is included in the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. The duty requires you to manage the risk from asbestos by:

* finding out if there is asbestos in the premises (or assessing if ACMs are liable to be present and making a presumption that materials contain asbestos, unless you have strong evidence that they do not), its location and what condition it is in;
* making and keeping an up-to-date record of the location and condition of the ACMs or presumed ACMs in your premises;
* assessing the risk from the material;
* preparing a plan that sets out in detail how you are going to manage the risk from this material;
* taking the steps needed to put your plan into action;
* reviewing and monitoring your plan and the arrangements made to put it in place; and
* setting up a system for providing information on the location and condition of the material to anyone who is liable to work on or disturb it.

Anyone who has information on the whereabouts of asbestos in your premises is required to make this available to you as the dutyholder, but you will need to assess its reliability. Those who are not dutyholders, but control access to the premises, have to co-operate with you in managing the asbestos.

## How can you comply with the duty?

This BMStion tells you what you need to do to comply with the duty. There is a checklist setting out the whole process of managing the risk from asbestos further on in this leaflet. You can use this to check that you are taking the right steps. If you prefer, the HSE website hosts a web-based tool to take you through the steps [(www.hse.gov.uk/asbes](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/managing/index.htm))t[os/managing/index.htm).](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/managing/index.htm))

Although you may appoint a competent person to carry out all or part of the work to meet the requirements of the duty, you will have to be involved in the final assessment of the potential risk. In particular, you will know how the premises are used and what disturbance is likely to occur. The BMStion 'Step 2 - Assess the condition of any ACMs' provides advice on doing this.

Remember, the responsibility for complying with the duty to manage the potential risk remains yours if you are responsible for maintaining relevant parts of a building.

Was the building built or refurbished before 2000?

If Yes, assume asbestos is present.

If No, asbestos is unlikely to be present - no action required. Do you already have information on asbestos in your building?

Walk around your building to identify all ACMs or presumed ACMs, including areas not normally visited like roof voids, store rooms etc.

ACMs may be present if the building was constructed or refurbished before 2000. All asbestos use was prohibited by 1999. You need to do all that you reasonably can to find them by:

looking at building plans and any other relevant information, such as builders' invoices, which may tell you if and where asbestos was used in the construction or refurbishment of the premises;

carrying out a thorough inspection of the premises both inside and out to identify materials that are, or may be asbestos; and

consulting others, such as the architects, employees or safety representatives, who may be able to provide you with more information and who have a duty of co-operation to make this available.

If the building's age or the information you obtain provide strong evidence that no ACMs are present, then you do not need to do anything other than to record why this evidence indicates there is no asbestos present.

You should always presume any material contains asbestos unless there is strong evidence to suggest it does not. Some material obviously does not contain asbestos such as glass, solid wooden doors, floorboards, bricks and stone.

Step 1 Find out if asbestos is present



Next: Move to Step 2



Assess the amount and condition of any ACMs, or presumed ACMs in the building to tell you how likely they are to release asbestos fibres into the air.

The type of ACM, the amount of it and its condition will determine its potential to release asbestos fibres into the air, if disturbed. This will help you decide what you need to do next. The condition of ACMs can be considered by addressing a series of questions:

Is the surface of the material damaged, frayed or scratched? Are the surface sealants peeling or breaking off?

Is the material becoming detached from its base? (This is a particular problem with pipe and boiler lagging and sprayed coatings.)

Are protective coverings, designed to protect the material, missing or damaged? Is there asbestos dust or debris from damage near the material?

If the ACMs in your premises are in poor condition, you will have to arrange repairs or have them sealed, enclosed or removed.

Step 2 Assess the cond it ion of any ACMs

Next:

If you have decided to presume material is asbestos and have no maintenance or repair work planned, nor any suspected ACMs in poor condition, you can move straight to Step 4.

If you do have ACMs in poor condition, or are planning to do work, or want to be sure whether asbestos is present, move to Step 3.

Remember, if you are presuming its asbestos but then want to do work at a later stage, you will either have to go to Step 3 or make sure the work is carried out with full asbestos safety precautions.

### Step 3 Survey and sample for asbestos



Have a suitably trained person conduct a survey to identify ACMs.

Have the materials analysed to prove if asbestos is present, and what type it is.

You may choose to employ a suitably trained person to do a survey of the premises to identify ACMs, particularly if you are planning maintenance or refurbishment of the premises or installing wiring or pipework/ ducting. The survey should identify what types of ACMs are present, where

they are and what condition they are in. You should ask the person or organisation:

if they are accredited or certificated for asbestos survey work; for evidence of their training

and experience in such work; and for evidence that they have suitable liability insurance.

HSE provides further information on asbestos surveys in its guidance document HSG264 *Asbestos:*

*The survey guide.*

If you suspect materials contain asbestos, you may need to have samples analysed. Often, this

is the only certain way of identifying if a material does contain asbestos. Samples should only

be taken by suitably trained people.

Do not break or damage any material which may contain asbestos to try to identify it.

Organisations that sample and analyse asbestos need to be accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS). UKAS also run an accreditation scheme for organisations that do asbestos surveys. An accredited company is likely to employ suitably trained people for these

types of work, but you should check what the firm is accredited for, as some will only be qualified

to do surveys and take samples and others only to analyse samples (the UKAS website address is: www.ukas.com).

Surveys may also be undertaken by other competent surveyors who have the appropriate combination of qualifications and experience. Firms are generally listed in Yellow Pages and other business directories.

Organisations that carry out asbestos analysis and identification are listed under 'laboratories' or 'asbestos analysts'. Alternatively, you can contact UKAS, see [www.ukas.com/tools/contact-ukas.asp.](http://www.ukas.com/tools/contact-ukas.asp)

Next: Move to Step 4

Write down the ACMs you have found, where they are and their condition. Record the roles and responsibilities for managing asbestos in your organisation.

You need to prepare a record that shows where the asbestos or presumed asbestos is, the type if known, its form, and what condition it is in. This record needs to be simple, clear and always available at the premises so that you, or any other person that needs to know where the ACMs are, can easily find them. It could be a plan or diagram, a written list or a computer-based record - storing it electronically can make it easier to update.

There may be some areas of the premises which you cannot look at, such as in roofs and heating ducts and behind wall partitions. You should note these on your drawing and presume ACMs may be present, unless you have strong evidence for thinking this is highly unlikely. If you have employed an external organisation to conduct a survey for you, they should provide you with a written record or with the information so you can create your own.

Step 4 Keep a written record or register

Next: Move to Step 5

### Step 5 Act on your findings

Your plan should include passing on your asbestos register to any worker/contractor carrying out maintenance work on your property.

Assess the potential risk from the ACMs - how likely are they to be disturbed? Draw up a priority

plan for action.

You must assess whether the ACMs are being, or are likely to be disturbed. Consider the following factors: the information gathered on the location, amount and condition of the ACM;

if the ACM is in a position where it is likely to be disturbed;

how much ACM is present;

whether there is easy access to the ACM;

whether people work near the ACM in a way that is liable to disturb it;

if it is close to areas in which people normally work when it is disturbed; the numbers of people

who use the area where the ACM is; and

if maintenance work, refurbishment or other work on the premises is likely to be carried out where

the ACM is.

You will need to prepare and implement a plan to manage these risks:

Give high priority to damaged material and materials likely to be disturbed; these will need

to be repaired, sealed, enclosed or removed using trained personnel - if unsure, seek specialist

advice from an asbestos surveyor, a laboratory or a licensed contractor.

If the material is in good condition and is unlikely to be worked on or disturbed, it is usually safer to

leave it in place and manage it.

*Repair and removal*

Some damaged asbestos can be made safe by repairing it and either sealing or enclosing it to prevent further damage. If this can be done safely, mark the area after it has been repaired and make sure it is on your record of asbestos locations.

If asbestos is likely to be disturbed during routine maintenance work or daily use of the building, it will release fibres.

If it cannot be easily repaired and protected, you should have it removed. This work must be carried out by someone trained and competent to carry out the task.

Remember, most work on asbestos insulation, asbestos insulating board and lagging, including sealing and removal, should normally be done by a contractor licensed by HSE.

*Managing asbestos left in place*

If you decide to leave in place ACMs or presumed ACMs that are in good condition, make sure it is on your record and keep this information up to date.

You must make sure that everyone who needs to know about the asbestos is told about its presence,

eg maintenance workers, contractors. You can label ACMs clearly with the asbestos warning sign or

use some other warning system (for example colour coding).

If you decide not to label the asbestos, you need to make sure that those who might work on the

material know that it contains or may contain asbestos, before they start work, eg when you ask for a quote for a job. You can then agree the precautions necessary to prevent exposure.

It can save time and prevent confusion if you make a note of the location of non-asbestos material, which could be mistaken for asbestos.

Remember, anyone who may work on asbestos must be trained and use safe working methods. Most work with asbestos needs to be done by a licensed contractor.

Next: Move to Step 6



Regularly reinspect any ACMs in your premises and update your records; Monitor and review the effectiveness of your action plan.

Even after your action plan is completed, you need to continue to manage the risks from asbestos left in place in your building. Walk around your building to review your record and update it as necessary. Look at the ACMs left in place, including those you have sealed or enclosed, to see if they have deteriorated or been damaged or disturbed in any way. The time between inspections will depend on the type of material, where it is and its condition, but it should be at least every six to 12 months.

You will need to check that the arrangements to control the risk set out in your plan, have been put in place and are working effectively. You must also review the plan if there are significant changes that will affect these arrangements, for example if you do different sorts of work on the premises, or if any of the ACMs are removed.

Step 6 Keep your records up to date

## Checklist

Find You must check if materials containing asbestos are present or are liable to be present

Condition You must check what condition the material is in

Presume You must assume the material contains asbestos unless you have strong evidence that it does not

Identify If you are planning to have maintenance or refurbishment of the building carried out or the material

Record Record the location and condition of the material on a plan or drawing

Assess You must decide if the condition or the location means the material is likely to be disturbed

Plan Prepare and implement a plan to manage these risks

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Minor damage | Good condition |
| The material should be repaired and/or encapsulated  The condition of the material should be monitored at regular intervals. Where practical, the material should be labelled Inform the contractor and any other worker likely to work on or disturb the material | The condition of the material should be monitored at regular intervals  Where practical, the material should be labelled  Inform the contractor and any other worker likely to work on or disturb the material |
| Poor condition | Asbestos disturbed |
| Asbestos in poor condition should be removed | Asbestos likely to be disturbed should be removed |

## Other useful information

HSE publications

*A comprehensive guide to managing asbestos in premises* HSG227 HSE Books 2002 ISBN 978 0 7176 2381 5 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/HSG227.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/HSG227.htm)

*Asbestos: The survey guide* HSG264 (BMSond edition) HSE Books 2012 ISBN 978 0 7176 6502 0 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/HSG264.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/HSG264.htm)

*Asbestos essentials: A task manual for building, maintenance and allied trades on non-licensed asbestos work* HSG210 (Third edition) HSE Books 2012

ISBN 978 0 7176 6503 7 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/HSG210.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/HSG210.htm)

*Work with materials containing asbestos. Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006. Approved Code of Practice and guidance* L143 HSE Books 2006

ISBN 978 0 7176 6206 7 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/L143.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/L143.htm)

*The management of asbestos in non-domestic premises. Regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2006. Approved Code of Practice and guidance* L127 (BMSond edition) HSE Books 2006 ISBN 978 0 7176 6209 8 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/L127.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/L127.htm)

*Want construction work done safely? A quick guide for clients on the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007* Leaflet INDG411 HSE Books 2007 (priced packs ISBN 978 0 7176 6246 3) [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg411.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg411.pdf)

Stationery Office publications

*The Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2005* SI 2005/894 The Stationery Office 2005 ISBN 978 0 11 072685 4

*The Special Waste Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2004* Scottish SI 2004/112 The Stationery Office 2004 ISBN 978 0 11 069030 8

Useful contacts

Asbestos Removals Contractors Association, Unit 1 Stretton Business Park, Brunel Drive, Stretton, Staffordshire DE13 0BY Tel: 01283 566467 [www.arca.org.uk](http://www.arca.org.uk/)

Asbestos Control and Abatement Division, TICA House, 34 Allington Way, Yarm Road Business Park, Darlington DL1 4OB Tel: 01325 466704 [www.tica-acad.co.uk](http://www.tica-acad.co.uk/)

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, RICS HO, Parliament Square, London, SW1P 3AD [www.rics.org](http://www.rics.org/)

United Kingdom Accreditation Service, 21-47 High Street, Feltham, Middlesex TW13 4UN Tel: 020 8917 8400 [www.ukas.com](http://www.ukas.com/)

## Further information

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit [www.hse.gov.uk/.](http://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.

The Stationery Office publications are available from The Stationery Office, PO Box 29, Norwich NR3 1GN Tel: 0870 600 5522 Fax: 0870 600 5533

email: [customer.services@tso.co.uk](mailto:customer.services@tso.co.uk) Website: [www.tsoshop.co.uk/](http://www.tsoshop.co.uk/) (They are also available from bookshops.) Statutory Instruments can be viewed free of charge at [www.legislation.gov.uk/.](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/)

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

This leaflet is available in priced packs from HSE Books, ISBN 978 0 7176 6487 0. A web version can be found at [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg223.pdf.](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg223.pdf)

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# Read the label

#### How to find out if chemicals are dangerous

If you use chemicals at work, this leaflet is for you.



Health and Safety Executive

Read the label

How to find out if chemicals are dangerous



This is a web-friendly version revised 05/10

It explains how to find out more about the chemicals you use just by reading their labels. There is more information on labels than you might think.

Chemicals

A chemical is not just something used by scientists in laboratories. Most people use chemicals as part of their job or at home every day. Cleaning products such as bleach and oven sprays are chemicals. So are paints, inks, glues and oils.

Most of the chemicals you might use at work are not dangerous if you use them properly and know what to do if something goes wrong (such as a spillage). But some chemicals need more careful handling than others.

Labels can help you identify the more hazardous chemicals, tell you what the dangers are, and how to avoid them.

So what can a label tell me?

A label can tell you a lot.

You are probably already familiar with the current hazard symbols that appear on chemicals, such as those below.

These symbols help us to know that the chemicals we are using might be explosive, oxidising, highly or extremely flammable, (very) toxic, harmful/irritant, corrosive, or dangerous for the environment. You might see one or more of these symbols on a single product.

Let's take a look at a typical label (overleaf) you might find on a chemical used in the workplace. You will see that it gives basic information which alerts you to the dangers and precautions, and gives details of the supplier so you can get further advice. Look for the label on all the chemicals you use.



Health and Safety Executive



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Glutaraldehyde | | |
| Toxic | Dangerous to the Environment | Toxic by inhalation and if swallowed. Causes burns.  May cause sensitisation by inhalation and by skin contact.  Very toxic to aquatic organisms.  Keep locked up and out of reach of children. In case of contact with eyes, rinse immediately with plenty of water and seek medical advice.  Wear suitable protective clothing, gloves and eye/ face protection.  In case of accident or if you feel unwell, seek medical advice immediately (show the label where possible).  Avoid release to the environment. Refer to special  instructions/safety data sheet. |
| EC label 203-856-5 | |
| Supplied by: Name, address and telephone number of supplier | | |

What use is this information?

As well as helping users, the information on the label helps employers identify dangerous chemicals and undertake risk assessments under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH).

By law, suppliers of chemicals are required to label their products with hazard symbols, warnings and safety advice if a chemical is dangerous; managers in workplaces where chemicals are kept or used must ensure that the chemicals are used safely. For more information see the leaflet *Working with substances hazardous to health: What you need to know about COSHH* (INDG136).

Further safety instructions

Manufacturers may also include 'instructions for use' either on the label, or on a leaflet supplied with the product. Suppliers must provide safety data sheets for dangerous chemicals used in the workplace. This is a detailed information sheet provided by chemical suppliers to their customers so that workers and the environment can be properly protected. It is not confidential and employees and their representatives should be provided with copies on request. If a safety data sheet isn't provided with the chemical, your employer should ask the supplier

to provide one. Someone in your company should receive a safety data sheet for each of the dangerous chemicals the company uses. Safety data sheets provide more technical and detailed information about the chemical and more information about how to use it safely and how to deal with emergencies.

I want to know more

If you work with dangerous chemicals and you want more information, you should ask about your employer's risk assessment and its conclusions about the risks in your workplace and what precautions should be taken. Or, if you need to know more about a particular dangerous chemical, you could ask for the safety data sheet. Safety data sheets can be used by your employer to do a COSHH Essentials risk assessment which advises your employer on the right way to protect your health from hazardous substances. Your employer can do a free COSHH Essentials risk assessment through the internet on: [www.coshh-essentials.org.uk/.](http://www.coshh-essentials.org.uk/)

Further information on the law on labelling and chemical hazard classification is also available on HSE's website: [www.hse.gov.uk/chip/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/chip/) or [www.hse.gov.uk/ghs/.](http://www.hse.gov.uk/ghs/)

Safety representatives

If you have any questions about safety precautions for dangerous chemicals, ask your employer first. If there is a safety representative or representative of employer safety in your workplace, you may find it useful to talk over any concerns that you still have.

Most people think that accidents only ever happen to somebody else. Until they happen to you. For your own safety and the safety of those you work with, each time you use a chemical, pause for a moment and.

READ THE LABEL!

Some changes to look out for



You may have heard people talking about changes to how chemicals are classified and labelled. You may have heard people using terms such as 'GHS', 'CLP' or the 'CLP Regulation'. If you have, do not be alarmed! These are all terms referring to changes to the law on how chemicals are classified and labelled.

These changes will gradually come in over the next few years so you'll start to see changes to hazard labels soon.

A new European Regulation on the Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Substances and Mixtures - known as the CLP Regulation - is already in force in the UK and all other countries in the European Union. Over a transitional period lasting until 2015, the CLP Regulation will replace the existing system of classification, labelling and packaging.

The CLP Regulation will mean:

newly designed hazard symbols, called 'pictograms';

new wording to help you understand the hazards that are in the chemical you are using and how to use it safely ('hazard statements' and 'precautionary statements').

So, that means a few changes to hazard labels. As chemical suppliers can apply the new CLP Regulation now, you might start to see these changes soon. Let's take a look at the new pictograms. They might look familiar to you, just a slightly different shape and in different colours.



You might also see some new symbols too. These are:

This pictogram reflects serious longer term health hazards such as carcinogenicity and respiratory sensitisation.

This pictogram refers to less serious health hazards such as skin irritancy/sensitisation and replaces the CHIP

symbol.

This pictogram means 'Contains gas under pressure'.

You'll also see a signal word either 'warning' or 'danger', to help alert you to a harmful chemical.

Further reading

More information about suppliers' responsibilities to classify, label and package chemicals properly under the Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply) Regulations 2009 (CHIP 4) can be found in:

*An introduction to CHIP 4* Leaflet INDG350(rev1) HSE Books 2010 (single copy free or priced packs of 10 ISBN 978 0 7176 6413 9) [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg350.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg350.pdf)

Information about the new European Regulation on Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Substances and Mixtures (CLP Regulation) can be found at:

[www.hse.gov.uk/ghs/eureg.htm.](http://www.hse.gov.uk/ghs/eureg.htm)

and on the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) website at: <http://echa.europa.eu/clp_en.asp>

ECHA Guidance can be found in:

*Introductory guidance on the CLP Regulation: CLP is Regulation (EC) No 272/2008 on classification, labelling and packaging (CLP) of substances and mixtures* Guidance European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) 2009 <http://echa.europa.eu/clp/clp_help_en.asp>

Further information

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# Using contractors

##### A brief guide

This leaflet is aimed at businesses that use contractors. A contractor is anyone you ask to do work for you who is not an employee.



Using contractors

A brief guide

The guidance tells you what you must do to comply with health and safety law when you use contractors. However, it doesn't apply to temporary or agency workers - there is more specific information about them at [www.hse.gov.uk/workers/agencyworkers.htm.](http://www.hse.gov.uk/workers/agencyworkers.htm)

The guide includes:

This is a web-friendly version of leaflet INDG368(rev1), published 06/12

Case studies that show the importance of taking the work of contractors seriously.

'Stop check!' boxes that tell you when you may need to take extra steps and provide sources of more detailed guidance and industry-specific advice.

A checklist at the end of the leaflet will help you ask the right questions and prioritise your actions.

Your responsibilities

Both you and the contractor you use have responsibilities under health and safety law. Everyone needs to take the right precautions to reduce the risks of workplace dangers to employees and the public. Make sure everyone understands the part they need to play in ensuring health and safety.

What you need to do

*ldentify the job*

Identify all aspects of the work you want the contractor to do. Consider the health and safety implications of the job. Remember, the level of risk will depend on the nature and complexity of the work. You should provide potential contractors with this information and make sure they know and understand the performance you expect of them. You could include this information in the job specification.





Health and Safety Executive

Stop check!

If the work is construction or building work, as the client you have duties under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007. You can find out more in the HSE leaflet *Want construction work done safely? A quick guide for clients on the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007*.

If you are a small to medium-sized chemical company, there is more detailed guidance in *Managing contractors: A guide for employers*.

*Select a suitable contractor*

You will need to satisfy yourself that the contractor you choose can do the job safely and without risks to health. This means making enquiries about the competence of the contractor - do they have the right combination of skills, experience and knowledge The degree of competence required will depend on the work. Similarly, the level of enquiries you make should be determined by the level of risks and the complexity of the job.

Examples of questions you could ask potential contractors include:

What arrangements will you have for managing the work For example, who will be responsible, how will the work be supervised, what checks do you make on equipment and materials etc

Will you be using subcontractors and if so how will you check they are competent The level of competence for subcontractors will depend on the risk and the complexity of the work.

What is your recent health and safety performance For example, how many accidents and cases of ill health have you had, has HSE taken any action taken against you

Do you have a written health and safety policy (This is only a requirement if five or more people are employed.)

Can you provide existing risk assessments done for similar jobs Again, written risk assessments are only required by law if five or more people are employed. What qualifications, skills and experience do you have in this type of work What health and safety information and training do you provide for your workers

If required, do you have Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance

These questions will help you find out whether the contractor is complying with their duties under health and safety law. You can then decide how much evidence is needed to support what you have been told.

Other questions you can ask which may help you to decide which contractor to choose include:

Do they have any independent assessment of their competence Are they members of a trade association or professional body

Will they be producing a safety method statement for the job A safety method statement is not required by law. It does however describe in a logical sequence exactly how a job is to be carried out in a safe manner and without risks to health. It includes all the risks identified in the risk assessment and the measures needed to control those risks. This allows the job to be properly planned and resourced.

Case study

A tree surgeon was felling a branch, when it fell into a neighbouring garden, damaging a fence panel. An hour earlier the neighbour had been in the garden playing with her 20-month-old child. The tree surgeon had neither the qualifications to use a chainsaw nor the skill to carry out the job safely. If the property developer who hired the tree surgeon had checked that he was competent to carry out the work, this incident would have been avoided. Don't assume someone is competent, check it yourself.



*Assess the risks of the work*

Both you and the contractor need to think about the planned work:

What can harm people

Who might be harmed and how How will you control the risks

You can find more detailed information on risk assessment and control at [www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm*.*](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm)

You should already have a risk assessment for the work activities of your own business. Make sure your assessment covers risks to contractors from your business (eg asbestos, on-site vehicles). The contractor must assess the risks for the contracted work and then both of you must get together to consider any risks from each other's work that could affect the health and safety of the workforce or anyone else.

You need to think about any risks to your workers and members of the public, because you have contractors on site. Also, make sure you agree the measures needed to control risk with the contractor before work starts.

Stop check!

Include health risks, such as high levels of noise or exposure to harmful substances, as well as safety risks.

Once you have agreed action to control risks, be clear about who will do what and when. An easy way to communicate and record your findings is to use the risk assessment template [(www.hse.go](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/risk-assessment-and-)v[.uk/risk/risk-assessment-and-](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/risk-assessment-and-) policy-template.doc).

There are specific requirements for some higher risk workplaces. For more information go to HSE's industries pages at [www.hse.gov.uk/guidance/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/guidance/) industries.htm.

Case study

A worker was killed when she was run over by a vehicle operated by a contractor. Neither the employer nor the contractor had identified pedestrian routes to keep pedestrians separate from moving vehicles. Additionally, the contractor hadn't given his drivers adequate training to make sure they operated the vehicles safely. The employer should have identified risks from the contractor being on site and agreed measures to control those risks before the work started.

*Provide information, instruction and training*

You and the contractor need to communicate with each other throughout the process. Make sure that the contractor and their employees have information on:

health and safety risks they may face; measures in place to deal with those risks; your emergency procedures.

The information you provide should be in a form that is easy to understand.

Similarly, you must provide clear instructions, information and adequate training for your own employees.



Stop check!

For more advice, see HSE's leaflet *Health and safety training: What you need to know*.

Pay particular attention to those whose first language may not be English - see HSE's migrant workers web pages for more information, at [www.hse.gov.uk/migrantworkers.](http://www.hse.gov.uk/migrantworkers)

Case study

A farm worker received internal injuries and severe burns from electric shock when he lifted an irrigation pipe and it contacted 33 000 V overhead power lines. The employer had not discussed the presence of the overhead lines and identified a safe way of moving the irrigation pipes. The employer should have made the contractor aware of the risks he faced and agreed a method of work before the job was started. Don't assume that contractors will be aware of all risks, even if they seem obvious to you.

*Cooperate and coordinate with the contractor*

You and the contractor must work together and coordinate your activities, to make sure the work can be done safely and without risks to health. One way of doing this is to have regular meetings throughout. The level of cooperation and coordination needed will depend on:

the job to be done;

the number of contractors (or subcontractors) involved; the risks involved.

Case study

A delivery driver was injured when a lift truck hit him as he walked into a factory to find out where he should deliver his load. The employer should have identified the risks to the driver and given him clear instructions.

*Consult the workforce*

You have to consult your employees on health and safety matters. Involving your workers will help you make better decisions on the actual risks and the measures to control them. Involve your workers in the process and consult them on:

how the contractor's work will affect their health and safety; information and training;

making sure they know how to raise any concerns they may have about the contractors and their work.

Case study

A contractor working at a newsprint firm had his leg amputated when it was trapped in machinery. He had climbed onto the conveyor to move a reel that was stuck and his leg was caught between the roller and the moving slatted metal conveyor. The employer should have identified the risks from the work and provided a safe system of carrying it out. If the employer had consulted employees, this method of working would have been identified and controls put in place to prevent the accident.

*Manage and supervise the work*

Decide what you need to do to manage contractors' work. The measures you put in place should be consistent with the level of risk, ie the greater the risk, the more you need to do.

Consider:

Who will be responsible for the work and what do you expect them to do Who will supervise the work and how

How will the work be done and what precautions will be taken What equipment should or should not be worked on/used

What personal protective equipment is to be used and who will provide it What are the working procedures, including any permits-to-work

What are the arrangements for stopping the work, if there are serious health and safety concerns

Once the work has started, make sure you keep a check on how the work is going against what you have agreed. You can do this by:

regular checks - ask yourself 'are the control measures working ' investigating if things go wrong, eg near misses, accidents, ill health. Ask

yourself 'what went wrong and what can we do to prevent it happening again '

After the job is finished, there will be benefits in reviewing and learning from any lessons to see if performance can be improved in future.

Case study

Contractors were employed to install new guttering on a 7 m high building. The workers could get onto the roof from a mobile tower at the front of the building, but there wasn't any equipment to stop them falling at the back where work was taking place. The employer should have made a decision about how the work would be carried out, what equipment would be used and who would supply it before work started. Don't assume that the contractor will have the right equipment to carry out the job safely.

Stop check!

This guide provides basic information on managing health and safety when using contractors. Further guidance on managing health and safety can be found in *Successful health and safety management*.

Checklist

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Questions you shou d ask: | Yes/ No |
| Have you dent f ed a aspects of the work you want the contractor to do? |  |
| Have you nc uded the hea th and safety mp cat ons of the work n the job spec f cat on? |  |
| s the work construct on or bu d ng work? f so, do you know what more you need to do to comp y w th the Construct on (Des gn and Management) Regu at ons 2007? |  |
| Have you made enqu r es about the competence of the contractor? f so, have you checked for ev dence before they get the job? |  |
| Have you assessed the r sks of the work and agreed act on to contro the r sks w th the contractor? |  |
| Have you prov ded the contractor and the r emp oyees w th nformat on about the r sks? |  |
| Have you prov ded the contractor and the r emp oyees w th your emergency procedures? |  |
| Have you prov ded nstruct ons, nformat on and tra n ng for your own emp oyees? |  |
| Have you put n p ace arrangements w th the contractor to coord nate your act v t es dur ng the work? |  |
| Have you consu ted your emp oyees about the work and how they can ra se any concerns? |  |
| Have you dent f ed who w be respons b e for the work and what you w expect them to do? |  |
| Have you dent f ed who w superv se the work and how? |  |
| Have you put n p ace arrangements to keep a check on how the work s go ng aga nst what you have agreed w th the contractor? |  |
| Have you agreed how the job w be rev ewed to earn any essons from t? |  |

Want to know more?

*Consulting workers on health and safety: Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (as amended) and Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (as amended). Approved Codes of Practice and Guidance* (BMSond edition) L146 HSE Books 2012

ISBN 978 0 7176 6461 0 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l146.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l146.htm)

*Health and safety training: A brief guide* Leaflet INDG345(rev1) HSE Books 2012 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg345.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg345.htm)

*Managing contractors: A guide for employers* HSG159 (BMSond edition) HSE Books 2011 ISBN 978 0 7176 6436 8 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg159.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg159.htm)

*Managing health and safety in construction. Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007. Approved Code of Practice* L144 HSE Books 2007 ISBN 978 0 7176 6223 4 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l144.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l144.htm)

*Successful health and safety management* HSG65 (BMSond edition) HSE Books 1997 ISBN 978 0 7176 1276 5 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg65.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg65.htm)

*Want construction work done safely? A quick guide for clients on the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007* Leaflet INDG411 HSE Books 2007 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg411.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg411.pdf)

For more information about risk assessment, see [www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm)

Further information

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit [www.hse.gov.uk/.](http://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 BMSure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance.

This leaflet is available in priced packs from HSE Books, ISBN 978 0 7176 6467 2. A web version can be found at [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg368.pdf.](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg368.pdf)

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**Example risk assessment for a village hall**

**Setting the scene**

**The management committee decided to do a risk assessment of their village hall to control the risks to people who used the hall aind were involved in its maintenance and upkeep.**

**The management committee did not have a legal requirement to record the findings of this risk**

**Important reminder**

**This example risk assessment shows the kind of approach a small organisation of this nature might take.**

**Use it as a guide to think through some of the hazards in your organisation and the steps you need to take to control the risks.**

**Please note that it is not a generic risk assessment that you can just put your name on and adopt wholesale without any thought. This would not satisfy the law - and would not be effective in protecting people.**

**Every organisation is different -you need to think through the hazards and controls required for yourself.**

**assessment as less than five people work at the halll.**

**Much of the repair and maintenance work at the hall was done by self-employed workers, who have responsibility for their own health and safety, as welll**

**as for other issues like the hours they work and their financial and tax arrangements.**

**However, the management committee decided that there were sound legal and business reasons to record the findings of the risk assessment, and to take steps to make sure that they were brought to the attention of those working or holding an event in the ha!!.**

**The BMSretary of the management committee did the risk assessment.**

**How was the risk assessment done?**

The BMSretary followed the guidance in *Five* steps *to risk*

assessment ([www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf).](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf))

1. To identify the hazards, the BMSretary:

* looked at HSE's web pages for free health and safety advice and guidance for small businesses;
* walked around the hall, car park and other areas with

another member of the management committee, and a regular user of the hall, noting things that might pose a **risk; and**

* spoke to other users of the hall, and to people who had done jobs at the hall, to learn from their experience and to get their views on health and safety.

1. The BMSretary then wrote down who could be harmed

by the hazards and how.

1. They wrote down what controls were in place to manage these risks and then compared these to the guidance on HSE's website.
2. They put the findings of the risk assessment into practice, writing down who was responsible for doing what, and by when. They decided to tick off each action when it was completed, and to record the date when it was done.
3. The BMSretary discussed the findings with the management committee. The committee decided to put in place all the additional risk controls the

BMSretary had suggested. They also decided that the risk assessment would be shown to all workers doing jobs at the hall, and given to all users of the hall, and that it would be discussed with the representatives of all groups using the hall for the first time. A copy was also put up in the reception and kitchen areas. The management committee decided to review the risk assessment every year, or immediately if any changes occurred to the hall or how the hall was used.

**Company name: Village hall Date of risk assessment: 1 June 2007**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What are the hazards?** | **Who might be harmed and how?** | **What are you already doing?** | **What further action is necessary?** | **Action by who?** | **Action by when?** | **Done** |
| **Slips, trips and falls**  Eg uneven surface of car park, cleaning floors etc. | Users of the hall and car park may suffer injuries such as fractures or bruising if they slip, eg on spillages or trip over objects. | * Car park surface maintained to be as even as possible. * Parking spaces for visitors with disabilities available next to halI entrance. * Good lighting in car park and all rooms and corridors in hall. * Users know (through hire agreement) to clear up spillages immediately and know where equipment for   this is kept.   * Mats at entrances to stop rain water being carried in. * No storage in corridors. * No trailing electrical leads/cables. | * Surface to be inspected regularly and repaired as necessary. | BMSretary/ Treasurer | Inspect three- monthly | 16 June, then every three months |
| * Check that hall cleaner knows which products to use   on which type of floor. | BMSretary | 16/6/07 | 8/6/07 |
| **Work at height** Eg changing light bulbs, cleaning  windows, putting up decorations etc. | Anyone working at any height could suffer injuries, possibly very serious ones, should they fall. | * Appropriate, commercial stepladder BMSurely stored and available for use. * Hall users know (through hire agreement) that they are responsible for using the stepladder safely. * Hall committee members and cleaner know how to use the stepladder safely. | * Print copies of HSE guidance on safe use of stepladders and make available to those who may use stepladder. | BMSretary | 16/6/07 | 8/6/07 |
| * Put in place system for checking condition of   stepladder. | BMSretary | 16/6/07 | 8/6/07 |
| * Consider implications for work at height of any future alterations to the halI. | BMSretary | As needed |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What are the hazards?** | **Who might be harmed and how?** | **What are you already doing?** | **What further action is necessary?** | **Action by who?** | **Action by when?** | **Done** |
| **Vehicle movement** | Pedestrians could suffer  ,.,,.,.,..:,..,., ,,., :.-.:, ,,..., **:f** ,.,+,.., **,,.,\_1,. h.,**  ::,1::11uu::, 11 IJUI y II ::,u UL,I\ uy  cars entering/leaving car park or moving in it. | * Entrance/exit to car park clearly marked. * For large events, parking controlled by marshals wearing high-visibility vests. * Car park well lit. * Skip/recycling collection takes place at times when hall not in use. | * Apply 5 mph speed limit in car park and put up signs. | BMSretary | 30/6/07 | 30/6/07 |
| * Advise users of hall, through hire agreement, to consider whether they need to control car parking. | BMSretary | 30/6/07 | 30/6/07 |
| **Hazardous substances**  Eg cleaning products | The cleaner, and others cleaning, risk skin problems, eg dermatitis and eye damage, from direct contact with cleaning chemicals.  Vapour may cause breathing problems. | * Mops, brushes and strong rubber gloves provided. * Cleaning products marked 'irritant' replaced with milder alternatives. * Cleaner trained to use products safely, eg follow instructions on the label, dilute properly and never   transfer to an unmarked container.   * Cleaning products stored BMSurely. | * Cleaner reminded to check for dry, red or itchy skin on her hands and, if finding any, to go to doctors for advice and to tell the BMSretary to the management committee. | BMSretary | 16/6/07 | 8/6/07 |
| **Electricity** | Users risk electric shocks or burns from faulty equipment or installation. | * Fixed installation correctly installed by qualified electrician, and inspected regularly. * All repairs by qualified electrician. * Safety plugs in sockets. * Portable equipment checked for visual signs of damage before use. * Hall users know they are responsible for any equipment   used on site. | * Make sure hall users know where the fuse box is and how to switch supply off in an emergency. | BMSretary | 30/9/07 | 25/9/07 |
| * Remind users that portable equipment considered unsafe should be marked and taken out of use. | BMSretary | 30/9/07 | 25/9/07 |
| **Stored equipment** | Users could be injured by coiiapsing stacks. | * Users know that they must stack tables and chairs carefully so that they do not collapse | * No further action needed. |  |  |  |
| **Manual handling** | Users may suffer back pain if they try to lift objects that are too heavy or awkward. | * Trolleys available to move heavy equipment and users know where they are kept. | * No further action needed |  |  |  |

**Health and Safety Executive**

**HSE**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What are the hazards?** | **Who might be harmed and how?** | **What are you already doing?** | **What further action is necessary?** | **Action by who?** | **Action by when?** | **Done** |
| **Asbestos** | Staff, and others,  **nnl"l"ll'nr. l"'U 1+ nnl"l'V'l,nl**  l,dllYlllt) UULIIUlllldl  activities at very low risk. Asbestos only poses a risk if fibres are released into air and inhaled.  Maintenance workers are most at risk. | * No risk controls at present. | * Find out if hall contains any asbestos (eg in ceiling tiles, wall panels). * If so, and if asbestos is in good condition, record where it is and put up signs warning that it is   asbestos and is not to be disturbed (and then make regular checks to ensure it remains undisturbed and the signs maintained).   * Damaged asbestos to be removed by specialist   contractors.   * If hall is ever demolished/refurbished, asbestos should first be removed by specialist contractors. | BMSretary | 30/9/07 | 21/8/07 |
| **Fire** | If trapped, staff could suffer fatal injuries from smoke inhalation/burns | * Fire risk assessment done, see [www.communities.gov.](http://www.communities.gov/) uk/fire and necessary action taken. | * Ensure the actions identified as necessary by the fire risk assessment are done. | Chair of the Management r.nmmittP.P. | From now on |  |

**Assessment review date: 1/6/08**

Example risk assessment: Village hall Published by the Health and Safety Executive

11/10

4 of 4 pages

# Safe use of ladders and

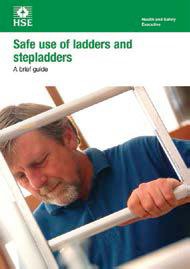
stepladders

##### A brief guide

**Ladders and stepladders are not banned under health and safety law.**

**In fact they can be a sensible and practical option for low-risk, short- duration tasks.**

Introduction



This guidance is for employers on the simple, sensible precautions they should take to keep people safe when using ladders and stepladders in the workplace. This will also be useful for employees and their representatives.

This is a web-friendly version of leaflet INDG455, published 01/14

Following this guidance is normally enough to comply with the Work at Height Regulations 2005 (WAHR). You are free to take other action, except where the guidance says you must do something specific.

Ladders and stepladders are not banned under health and safety law.

In fact they can be a sensible and practical option for low-risk, short-duration tasks, although they may not automatically be your first choice. Make sure you use the right type of ladder and you know how to use it safely.

The law calls for a sensible, proportionate approach to managing risk, and further guidance on what you should do before deciding if a ladder is the right type of equipment for a particular task is provided in *Working at height: A brief guide* (see 'Further reading').

References to ladders in this leaflet, unless otherwise indicated, refer to leaning ladders (sometimes known as extension ladders) and stepladders and the guidance applies similarly to both. More specific requirements that only apply to a leaning ladder or a stepladder are covered in detail under the relevant headings.

When is a ladder the most suitable equipment?

The law says that ladders can be used for work at height when a risk assessment has shown that using equipment offering a higher level of fall protection is not justified because of the low risk and short duration of use; or there are existing workplace features which cannot be altered.

Short duration is not the deciding factor in establishing whether use of a ladder is acceptable or not - you should have first considered the risk. As a guide, if your task would require staying up a leaning ladder or stepladder for more than 30 minutes at a time, it is recommended that you consider alternative equipment.

You should only use ladders in situations where they can be used safely, eg where the ladder will be level and stable, and where it is reasonably practicable to do so, the ladder can be BMSured.

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**Health and Safety Executive**

Who can use a ladder at work?

To use a ladder you need to be competent, ie have had instruction and understand how to use the equipment safely.

Appropriate training can help. If you are being trained, you should work under the supervision of somebody who can perform the task competently. Training can often take place on the job.

Check your ladder before you use it

Before starting a task, you should always carry out a 'pre-use' check to spot any

A pre-use check should be carried out:

by the user;

at the beginning of the working day;

after something has changed, eg a ladder has been dropped or moved from a dirty area to a clean area (check the state or condition of the feet).

**Check the stiles** - make sure they are not bent or damaged, as the ladder could buckle or collapse.

**Check the feet** - if they are missing, worn or damaged the ladder could slip. Also check ladder feet when moving from soft/dirty ground (eg dug soil, loose sand/ stone, a dirty workshop) to a smooth, solid surface (eg paving slabs), to make sure the foot material and not the dirt (eg soil, chippings or embedded stones) is making contact with the ground.

**Check the rungs** - if they are bent, worn, missing or loose the ladder could fail.

**Check any locking mechanisms** - if they are bent or the fixings are worn or damaged the ladder could collapse. Ensure any locking bars are engaged.

**Check the stepladder platform** - if it is split or buckled the ladder could become unstable or collapse.

**Check the steps or treads on stepladders** - if they are contaminated they could be slippery; if the fixings are loose on steps, they could collapse.

If you spot any of the above defects, don't use the ladder and notify your employer.

Use your ladder safely

Once you have done your 'pre-use' check, there are simple precautions that can minimise the risk of a fall.

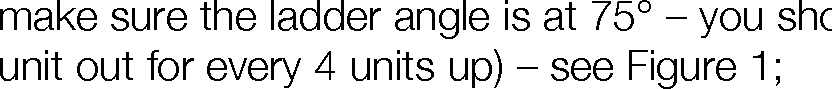
***Leaning ladders***

When using a leaning ladder to carry out a task:

only carry light materials and tools - read the manufacturers' labels on the ladder and assess the risks;

don't overreach - make sure your belt buckle (navel) stays within the stiles; make sure it is long enough or high enough for the task;

don't overload it - consider workers' weight and the equipment or materials they are carrying before working at height. Check the pictogram or label on the ladder for information;



always grip the ladder and face the ladder rungs while climbing or descending - don't slide down the stiles;

don't try to move or extend ladders while standing on the rungs; don't work off the top three rungs, and try to make sure the ladder extends at least 1 m (three rungs) above where you are working; don't stand ladders on moveable objects, such as pallets, bricks, lift

trucks, tower scaffolds, excavator buckets, vans, or mobile elevating work platforms;

avoid holding items when climbing (consider using a tool belt);

don't work within 6 m horizontally of any overhead power line, unless it has been made dead or it is protected with insulation. Use a non-conductive ladder (eg fibreglass or timber) for any electrical work;

maintain three points of contact when climbing (this means a hand and two feet) and wherever possible at the work position - see Figures 2 and 3; where you cannot maintain a handhold, other than for a brief period (eg to hold a nail while starting to knock it in, starting a screw etc), you will need to take other measures to prevent a fall or reduce the consequences if one happened;

for a leaning ladder, you should BMSure it (eg by tying the ladder to prevent it from slipping either outwards or sideways) and have a strong upper resting point, ie do not rest a ladder against weak upper surfaces (eg



Figure 1 Ladder showing the BMSuring omitted for clarity)

you could also use an effective stability device.





Figure 2 Correct - user maintaining three points of contact (means of BMSuring omitted for clarity)



Figure 3 Incorrect - overreaching and not maintaining three points of contact (means of BMSuring omitted for clarity)



Figure 4 Correct - use of a stand-off device to ensure a strong resting point. Do not rest a ladder against weak upper surfaces such as glazing or plastic gutters. Follow the manufacturer's instructions

***Stepladders***

When using a stepladder to carry out a task:

check all four stepladder feet are in contact with the ground and the steps are level;

only carry light materials and tools; don't overreach;

don't stand and work on the top three steps (including a step forming the very top of the stepladder) unless there is a suitable handhold;

ensure any locking devices are engaged;

try to position the stepladder to face the work activity and not side on. However, there are occasions when a risk assessment may show it is safer to work side on, eg in a retail stock room when you can't engage the stepladder locks to work face on because of space restraints in narrow aisles, but you can fully lock it to work side on;

try to avoid work that imposes a side loading, such as side-on drilling through solid materials (eg bricks or concrete);

where side-on loadings cannot be avoided, you should prevent the steps from tipping over, eg by tying the steps. Otherwise, use a more suitable type of access equipment;

maintain three points of contact at the working position. This means two feet and one hand, or when both hands need to be free for a brief period, two feet and the body supported by the stepladder (see Figure 5 and associated text).



Figure 5 Example where two hands need to be free for a brief period for light work. Keep two feet on the same step

and the body (knees or chest) supported by the stepladder to maintain three points of contact. Make sure a safe handhold is available

When deciding if it is safe to carry out a particular task on a stepladder where you cannot maintain a handhold (eg to put a box on a shelf, hang wallpaper, install a smoke detector on a ceiling), this needs to be justified, taking into account:

the height of the task;

whether a handhold is still available to steady yourself before and after the task;

whether it is light work; whether it avoids side loading; whether it avoids overreaching;

whether the stepladder can be tied (eg when side-on working).

What about the place of work where the ladder will be used?

As a guide, only use a ladder:

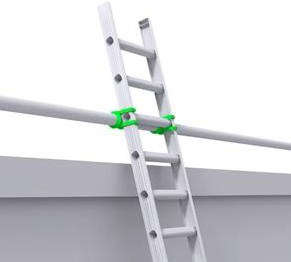
on firm ground;

on level ground - refer to the manufacturer's pictograms on the side of the ladder. Use proprietary levelling devices, not ad-hoc packing such as bricks, blocks, timbers etc;

on clean, solid surfaces (paving slabs, floors etc). These need to be clean (no oil, moss or leaf litter) and free of loose material (sand, packaging materials etc) so the feet can grip. Shiny floor surfaces can be slippery even without contamination;

where they will not be struck by vehicles (protect the area using suitable barriers or cones);



where they will not be pushed over by other hazards such as doors or windows, ie BMSure the doors (not fire exits) and windows where possible; where the general public are prevented from using it, walking underneath it or being at risk because they are too near (use barriers, cones or, as a last resort, a person standing guard at the base);

where it has been BMSured.

What are the options for BMSuring ladders?

The options are as follows:

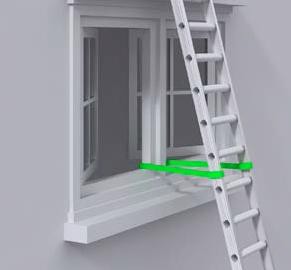
tie the ladder to a suitable point, making sure both stiles are tied, see where this is not practical, BMSure with an effective ladder stability device; against a wall;



Figure 6 Correct - ladder tied at top stiles (correct for working on,

but not for gaining access to a working platform/roof etc)

if you can't achieve any of these options, foot the ladder. Footing is the last resort. Avoid it, where 'reasonably practicable', by using other access equipment.

What about ladders used for access?

In general:



extend at least 1 m above the landing point to provide a BMSure handhold. At ladder access points, a self-closing gate is recommended;

stepladders should not be used to access another level, unless they have been specifically designed for this.



Figure 7 Correct - tying part way down

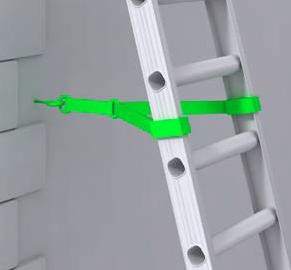




Figure 8 Correct - tying near the base



Figure 9 Correct - access ladders should be tied and extend at least 1 m above the landing point to provide a BMSure handhold

What about the condition of the equipment?

Employers need to make sure that any ladder or stepladder is both suitable for the work task and in a safe condition before use. As a guide, only use ladders or stepladders that:

have no visible defects. They should have a pre-use check each working day; have an up-to-date record of the detailed visual inspections carried out regularly by a competent person. These should be done in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Ladders that are part of a scaffold system still have to be inspected every seven days as part of the scaffold inspection requirements; are suitable for the intended use, ie are strong and robust enough for the job. HSE recommends British Standard (BS) Class 1 'Industrial' or BS EN 131 ladders for use at work (see 'Further reading');

have been maintained and stored in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

A detailed visual inspection is similar to 'pre-use' checks', in that it is used to spot defects. It can be done in-house by a competent person (pre-use checks should be part of a user's training) and detailed visual inspections should be recorded.

When doing an inspection, look for:

twisted, bent or dented stiles; cracked, worn, bent or loose rungs; missing or damaged tie rods;

cracked or damaged welded joints, loose rivets or damaged stays.

Make pre-use checks and inspect ladder stability devices and other accessories in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Further reading



*Working at height safely: A brief guide*

Work at height web pages on the HSE website: [www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm)

You can access the Work at height Access equipment Information Toolkit (WAIT) at [www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/wait/index](http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/wait/index)

British Standards provide more information on current product standards (see 'Further information'), eg:

*Specification for portable timber ladders, steps, trestles and lightweight stagings* British Standards Institution

BS 2037 *Specification for portable aluminium ladders, steps, trestles and lightweight stagings* British Standards Institution

BS EN 131 *Ladders (Specification for terms, types, functional sizes; Specification for requirements, testing, marking; User instructions; Single or multiple hinge-joint ladders)* British Standards Institution



Further information

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit [www.hse.gov.uk.](http://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.

British Standards can be obtained in PDF or hard copy formats from

BSI: [http://shop.bsigroup.com](http://shop.bsigroup.com/) or by contacting BSI Customer Services for hard

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 BMSure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance.



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|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Comments | N/A |
| **Car park** | Is the car park surface maintained to minimise slip  and trip risks? |  |  |
| Are vehicle and pedestrian routes/flows and car park and site entrance/exits clearly marked? |  |  |
| Is the car park well lit? |  |  |
| Can emergency vehicles gain access? |  |  |
| **Movement around the building** | Are paths, steps and any ramps to and from the hall  properly maintained to minimise slip and trip risks? |  |  |
| Is lighting suitable and sufficient to allow safe access and exit (including lighting of emergency  exits)? |  |  |
| Have you provided matting to minimise rainwater  etc. being carried into the building? |  |  |
| Do rooms and corridors have sufficient lighting? |  |  |
| Are corridors clear of clutter? |  |  |
| Are there any trailing electrical leads/cables? |  |  |
| Are permanent fixtures in good condition, e.g.  seats, shelving, cupboards, notice boards, signage etc.? |  |  |
| Is internal flooring in good condition, e.g. are  carpets fixed? |  |  |
| Where any doors contain glass, is this made from a  safety material? |  |  |
| Are all stairs fitted with handrails? |  |  |
| Are windows capable of being opened safely? |  |  |
| Are doors and gates fitted with safety devices if  necessary? |  |  |
| Do toilets have hot water, soap or hand-wash, a  means of drying and are clean? |  |  |
| Is drinking water available? |  |  |
| Is a lift installed and inspected every six months? |  |  |
| **Electrical equipment and services** | If you have any fixed electrical installations:  Are they correctly installed, modified or repaired, then inspected and tested by an electrician or other suitably qualified person before being put into use?  Are they inspected and tested at suitable (occasional) intervals by an electrician or other suitably qualified person? |  |  |
| If you own or hire any portable or fixed electrical equipment (e.g. a cooker or vacuum cleaner etc.):  Has it been visually checked and, where necessary, tested at suitable (occasional) intervals to ensure that it is safe to use? Has any damaged electrical equipment  been taken out of service or replaced? |  |  |
| **Gas equipment and services** | If fixed gas appliances are available for use (e.g. a boiler, cooker, water heater), are arrangements in place for periodic examinations and any remedial  action by a Gas Safe registered engineer? |  |  |
| If mobile gas appliances are available for use (e.g. heaters fuelled by bottled gas), are arrangements for periodic examinations and any remedial action  by a competent person in place? |  |  |



|  |  |  |  |
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| **LPG (liquefied petroleum gas)** | If there is an externally sited LPG installation with a storage vessel:  Is the area around the vessel kept clear? If it is near a road, is it protected from passing traffic?  Have pipes carrying the LPG to the hall been checked to ensure that they are in good condition? |  |  |
| **Asbestos** | Does the hall contain any asbestos? |  |  |
| If there is asbestos, and it is in good condition, has a record been made of where it is? Are there arrangements to provide this information to anyone  who carries out maintenance work on the building? |  |  |
| Is there a system in place (e.g. fixed warning signs) to ensure the asbestos is not disturbed, and are regular checks made to ensure it remains  undisturbed and in good condition? |  |  |
| If damaged asbestos has been identified, have arrangements been made to ensure it is either repaired, encapsulated or removed? (The majority of work on asbestos must be carried out by a licensed contractor unless the asbestos fibres in the material are so well-bound-in that the work is lower  risk and can be done by a contractor who is not licensed by HSE.) |  |  |
| Have records of any asbestos been kept so that asbestos material likely to release high fibre levels can be removed first by licensed contractors if the  hall is refurbished/demolished? |  |  |
| **Fire** | Has a fire risk assessment been completed and are  adequate fire safety measures in place? |  |  |
| Has an evacuation plan been implemented and tested? |  |  |
| Is the fire alarm tested regularly? |  |  |
| Are fire drills carried out at least once a year? |  |  |
| Are regular checks made to ensure escape routes and fire exit doors are: unobstructed; and adequate and effective for the number of people using the hall (including those who are disabled or  vulnerable)? |  |  |
| Are combustible substances or waste stored  safely? |  |  |
| Is fire-fighting equipment in place and tested    Are staff (and others) trained in how to use it? |  |  |
| Are fire exits clearly signed with the correct  signage? |  |  |
| **disease** | Do you or users do anything that involves spraying/sprayed water (e.g. using showers in changing rooms, or a humidifier) that could contain legionella bacteria? (These bacteria can cause |  |  |
| If you cannot avoid spraying water, do you have an  up-to-date plan for dealing with this risk? |  |  |
| Is it clear who is responsible for doing things in the plan and do they keep a record of any checks (e.g. temperature checks)? |  |  |

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| **Kitchen or food prep area** | Is food prepared on the premises? |  |  |
| Is the hall registered with local environmental  health? |  |  |
| Are staff / volunteers trained in food hygiene? |  |  |
| Is the kitchen in good order? |  |  |
| Is the temperature of the refrigerator checked  regularly? |  |  |
| Is there a means of dealing quickly with spills? |  |  |
| **Chemicals** | Are chemicals stored in suitable and safe  containers? |  |  |
| Are Chemicals stored safely? |  |  |
| **General** | Is a visitor H&S notice on display? |  |  |
| Is an accident book or report system in place? |  |  |
| Are risk assessments completed for significant  risks? |  |  |
| First aid box provided and adequately stocked? |  |  |
| Are hirers made aware of first aid provision? |  |  |
| **Responsibility** | Do users have all the information about the hall  they need to operate safely? |  |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Action needed | N/A |
| **Additional issues** |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**Observations:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **THE INJURED PERSON** | |
| Name: | Address: |
| Phone: |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ACCIDENT DETAILS** | | |
| Date of accident: | M T W T F S S | Time of accident: : |
| Where did it happen: | | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Body Part** | **Details of Injury:** |
| **Treatment Given:** |
| **Name of First Aider:** |

|  |
| --- |
| **STATEMENT OF INJURED PERSON:** |
| **What Happened?** |
| **Where did it happen?** |
| **Why did it happen?** |
| **Signed: Date:** |

|  |
| --- |
| **STATEMENT OF WITNESS:** |
| **What did you see?** |
| **What did you do?** |
| **Signed: Date:** |

|  |
| --- |
| **ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION:** |
|  |
| **Person(s) investigating:** |

|  |
| --- |
| **CORRECTIVE ACTION (if any):** |
|  |
| **Corrective action taken by:** |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Senior person conclusion:** | |
|  | |
| **Signature:** | **Date:** |

1. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 19-3-2022 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Part P states that anyone carrying out electrical installation work in any building must make sure that the work is designed and installed to protect people from fire and electric shocks and Part P applies to any changes made to existing installations, including any parts that have been rewired. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)