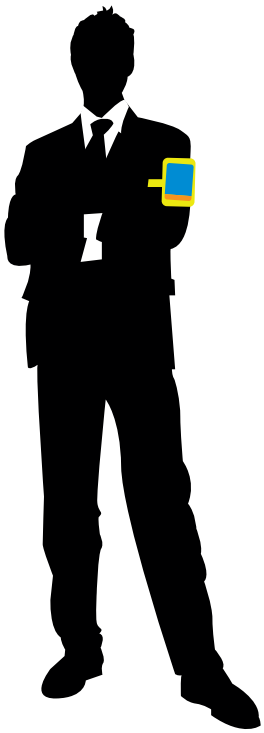
Chapter 4: The importance of safe working practices



Health and safety in the workplace

Every year, thousands of people in the UK are forced to take time off work due to health and safety-related issues. For some, this may only mean a few days off work, but for others it could mean long-term injuries or even death.

The vast majority of incidents can be avoided through better health and safety procedures. Health and safety procedures in our places of work need to be effective to keep staff, visitors and customers safe. Furthermore, there is specific legislation in place to ensure that proper health and safety procedures are enforced anywhere where people work or come to be served.

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

(Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978) covers employers, employees, the self-employed, suppliers, people who control premises and visitors/customers who come onto the site. Those failing to comply with health and safety legislation face a range of penalties, and businesses can be closed for serious breaches.

Breaches of the legislation can be dealt with by either the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or by the local environmental health practitioner (EHP) from the local authority. Breaches can result in:

- improvement notices
- prohibition notices
- criminal proceedings

Duty of care

Employers have a moral and legal duty of care to protect the health, safety and well-being of their employees and others, including customers and members of the public who might be affected by their business. Employers must do whatever is reasonably practicable to achieve this. Serious breaches of health and safety legislation can result in penalties of up to 2 years' imprisonment and/or unlimited fines.

Health and safety responsibilities

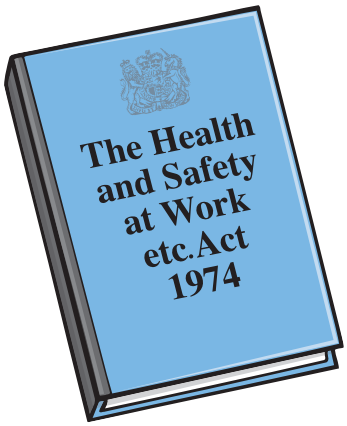
Employers must carry out a proper risk assessment of any possible risks to employees and other people visiting the site. Then they must do what they reasonably can to either remove or reduce those risks. They can do this by providing proper safety equipment, relevant warning signs, putting safe working practices in place, providing any relevant training or instruction and by supplying staff with any suitable personal protective clothing or equipment (PPE). They must provide safe access and egress as well as providing proper first-aid facilities, and ensuring that there are proper reporting procedures in place in case of incidents.

Depending on the size of the site and the number of people working there, they may have to also provide a written health and safety policy.

Employees and the self-employed

Employees and the self-employed working on the site, be they full-time or part-time, have a duty to take care of their own health and safety, and must make sure that they do not do anything that puts someone else's health and safety at risk.

Employees must follow the site's health and safety policy at all times if there is one in place, they should obey all safety instructions and should use safety and personal protective equipment properly. If serious incidents occur, they must follow the site's emergency procedures to help protect themselves, other staff and any visitors/customers. They must then follow the site's reporting procedures to inform the employer of any accidents and/or injuries.



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Workplace hazards and risks

Good health and safety practices in the workplace are all about reducing hazards and risks.

Definition

Hazard

Potential source of harm or adverse health effect on a person or persons.

Typical hazards in the workplace include:

- factors that cause slips, trips (e.g. unsuitable footwear), flooring, steps, uneven surfaces, spillages for example cleaning fluids and contamination, poor lighting

Risk

Likelihood that a person may be harmed or suffer adverse health effects if exposed to a hazard. Levels of risk may be, high, medium or low impact.

Typical risks in the workplace include:

- accidents due to poor lighting, uneven surfaces, steps etc.
- infection from body fluids
- dealing with aggressive or violent behaviour
- injuries from poor manual handling
- misuse/abuse of machinery
- sharp objects (needles/knives)
- diseases
- hazardous chemicals
- noise pollution
- moving vehicles
- obstructions
- fire/floods and other emergencies
- unsuitable footwear
- spillages, for example cleaning chemicals
- global or critical incidents

In relation to global (or critical) incidents such as pandemics, epidemics, acts of terrorism, etc. you must ensure that you follow all relevant health and safety policies and organisational procedures. In the case of a pandemic, you may find that you are required to work from home where possible, if this is not possible then you may be asked to wear additional PPE such as face masks when in the workplace. You can find further information on the .gov website and the World Health Organization website **https://www.who.int/** about current global incidents.

Minimising risks to personal safety and security

Once a hazard or risk has been identified, you need to follow the **hierarchy of control** to work out the best ways to deal with the potential problem. This is done by asking yourself:

- can the hazards be eliminated?
- can the hazard be substituted with a reduced risk?
- can the hazard be isolated or enclosed?
- would the introduction of a safe system of work reduce the risk? For example, new procedures and routines.
- would information, training or supervision reduce this risk?
- would PPE help?

Examples of personal protective equipment (PPE) for security operatives include:

- waterproof clothing
- high-visibility clothing
- headwear
- gloves (needle/slash resistant)
- rubber gloves and face shields (body fluids)
- stab-resistant vests
- ear defenders
- eye protection
- safety footwear
- face masks/coverings (infectious diseases)

There are 5 steps to carrying out a risk assessment

Step 1
Identify the hazards

Step 2
Identify who may be harmed and how

Step 3
Evaluate the risk and introduce further controls

Step 4
Record the findings and implement them

Step 5
Review and revise and update if necessary

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The 6 safe lifting techniques are:

1. Stop and think
2. Position the feet
3. Bend the knees
4. Get a firm grip, keep the back slightly flexed
5. Raise with the legs
6. Keep the load close to the body

Definition

Risk assessment

The identification of hazards, the calculation of risk, the reduction of that risk, either completely or to an acceptable level.

Equipment:

- metal detectors and/or mirrors for searching
- body-worn CCTV
- radios
- mobile phones
- personal alarms
- torches
- equipment as it applies to the incident e.g. to help control infections

Safe manual handling

Manual handling is the movement or support of any load by physical effort, including lifting, moving, carrying, pushing and pulling.

If you lift or move heavy objects without using the recognised procedures, you run the risk of sustaining the following injuries:

- fractures
- spinal disc injuries
- trapped nerves
- friction burns
- damage to muscles
- damaged ligaments and tendons
- abrasions and cuts
- hernias

It is important to follow safe routines and be systematic before attempting to lift a load, use

L I T E

to evaluate the risk.

L LOAD

Look at the load. If it is too heavy, can it be lightened or split?
If it is unstable, can handles be fitted or the load be reapportioned?

I INDIVIDUAL

Consider the capability of the person. Are they strong or fit enough? Are they adequately trained for the task?

T TASK

Evaluate the job to be done. Does the task involve stretching, twisting or bending? Can machinery be used or can team handling be used?

E ENVIRONMENT

Control the environment where the task takes place.
Is the floor slippery or uneven?
Can the layout or floor condition be improved?

Lone working

Security operatives who work alone can be at particular risk in the workplace. They may feel isolated if they only have technological means with which to communicate with colleagues or call for assistance, technology can often fail to work in the manner intended.

Security officers could particularly be susceptible to:

- violence
- injury
- ill health
- lack of support/communication
- lack of welfare facilities for rest

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Safety signs and signals

Safety signs are used to communicate health and safety instructions. They must be kept clean, in good condition and must be displayed where they can be easily seen.

Security operatives must be aware of the colours and shapes of the 6 different types of signs.



PROHIBITION 1



Prohibition signs mean that you are prohibited from doing something.

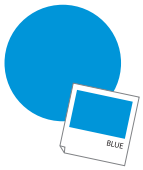








MANDATORY 2



Mandatory signs mean that you must do something.

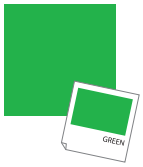








SAFE CONDITION 3



Safe condition signs indicate where to go to for safety.









WARNING 4



Warning signs indicate a specific danger.

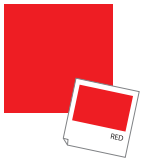








FIRE SAFETY 5



Fire safety signs indicate firefighting equipment.











HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE 6

Hazardous substances signs warn you about dangerous chemicals.


Very Toxic


Toxic


Harmful


Irritant


Sensitising


Carcinogenic


Mutagenic


Toxic for reproduction


Corrosive

Signs & Signals

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Reporting health and safety accidents and incidents

Following any accident or medical incident it is important to record all of the details relating to the situation. The information contained in the accident or incident book can help employers to identify accident trends, so they can then improve practices and procedures on the site to prevent further similar incidents.

These records may also be required for insurance and/or investigative purposes.

Reporting procedures

Accident and incident reports need to include at least the following information:

- day, date and time of incident
- location of incident
- how you were alerted to it
- what you saw
- what you were told
- what happened
- what action you took
- whether first aid was required
- whether the emergency services were called
- what the result was
- details of any injuries
- details of any witnesses
- any descriptions of property or people

These reports need to be made as soon as possible after the incident has finished, while the events are still fresh in your mind.

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013

For serious accidents, incidents and near misses at work, **the employer** or the designated 'responsible person' is required by law to notify their local authority, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or the Incident Contact Centre. This can now be done online.

The first person on the scene assisting a casualty may not be directly responsible for completing the RIDDOR report, but they must ensure that their supervisor, manager or the health and safety officer within the company receives the correct information contained within the accident or incident report. Security operatives need to know the site's procedures for reporting medical incidents and must adhere to them.

NI

RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997.



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Keeping personal information safe

The Data Protection Act/GDPR, covers any information related to a person or 'data subject' that can be used to directly or indirectly identify them. It can be anything from a name, a photo and an email address to bank details, social media posts, biometric data and medical information. It will also introduce 'digital rights' for individuals. As a security operative, it is vital that you keep all personal information safe. This can be done by:

- following all organisational procedures
- following assignment instructions
- maintaining confidentiality of information
- using social media in a responsible way; this includes having the highest levels of security settings on your accounts
- not wearing anything identifiable outside the workplace
- demonstrating personal vigilance, e.g. not completing surveys
- not discussing work issues outside the workplace
- not discussing work information with colleagues

Personal Information

