
	<h1>Frequently Asked Question</h1>				
Ref: 016:04	RE: Health & Safety information for new employees				
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Note:	<p><i>This information/advice has been issued in response to frequently asked questions around a specific topic and may not cover all issues arising, should you require more specific advice please contact the Health & Safety Help Desk. The management of any occupational safety and health issue(s) remains the responsibility of local management.</i></p> <p>For further Health and Safety information relating to COVID-19 please refer to the following website. A Returning to the Workplace Safely Risk Assessment Prompt Sheet is also available for employees returning after COVID-19.</p>				

The HSE's Safety Management Programme centres on the requirements of Health & Safety Legislation with the aim of identifying hazards, assessing the risks from the hazard and eliminating/reducing those risks to a reasonable level by developing, implementing and reviewing the effectiveness of controls.

What legislation governs Health & Safety?

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 and associated legislation govern the area of health & safety.

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 requires employers, including the HSE to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that their activities are managed and conducted in such a way as to ensure the safety, health and welfare of staff, patients, visitors and others.

The aim is to prevent injury and ill health of employees while at work and others who are not employed but may be exposed to health and safety risks as a result of our work activities.

What are my responsibilities?

Under this legislation both Employers and Employees have responsibilities and duties. **An employee must:**

- Comply with safety and health legislation
- Take reasonable care to protect his or her own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by his or her acts or omissions at work
- Ensure that he/she is not under the influence of an intoxicant to the extent of endangering his or her own safety, health or welfare at work or that of any other person

- If reasonably required by the Employer, submit to any appropriate, reasonable and proportionate tests, by or under the supervision of a registered medical practitioner who is a competent person, as may be required by Regulations made under the 2005 Act
- Co-operate with the Employer and any other person to enable them to comply with health and safety legislation
- Not engage in improper conduct or other behaviour such as violence, bullying or horseplay, which could endanger his or her safety, health and welfare or that of any other persons
- Where safety and health training related to a particular task is required by the employer or by safety and health legislation, attend and undergo, as appropriate any reasonable assessment of the training
- Following training and instruction, correctly use any article or substance, protective clothing and equipment provided for use at work

An employee is required to report to the Employer, or other appropriate person, as soon as they become aware of any instance:

- Where work being carried on, or likely to be carried on, in a manner which may endanger his/her safety, health or welfare of that of another person
- Of any defect in the place of work, the systems of work or any article or substance likely to endanger him/her or another person
- A breach of safety and health legislation likely to endanger him/her or another person which comes to his/her attention

See Corporate Safety Statement for the duties of the Employer.

Where would I find health & safety information?

The Safety Statement specifies the manner in which the HSE will secure and manage the safety, health and welfare at work of its employees and others.

The HSE's Safety Management programme is detailed through a series of Safety Statements and policies including:

- The HSE Corporate Safety Statement
- Site Specific Safety Statements
- Department Safety Statements and risk assessments

Risk Assessments should be in written form and the necessary control measures to eliminate or minimise the risks documented in the Safety Statement. Managers have a duty to ensure risk assessments are undertaken in consultation with employees. All employees have a role to report hazards to their Line Manager.

Please note that each employee is responsible for familiarising themselves with the safety statements and risk assessments pertaining to the area in which they work.

What are some typical Workplace Hazards?



As an HSE employee these are some examples of typical workplace hazards and control measures necessary to deal with these hazards which you may encounter; please note that this is a non-exhaustive list and policies should be referred to for further details as appropriate.

Four Broad Categories of Hazards:

- Physical e.g. Manual Handling, Display Screen Equipment
- Chemical e.g. Exposure to Anaesthetic Gases
- Biological e.g. Risk of exposure to infectious diseases, Sharps / inoculation injuries
- Behavioural/Human e.g. Risk of exposure to Violence and Aggression

Control Measures and Advice for Workplace Hazards

Inoculation Risks

Always identify the risk and examine the control measures in place e.g.

- Sharps policy/safe work practices – employees aware of procedures
- Use Needle safe system and devices
- Sharps awareness training for staff and records to be maintained
- Supervision of policy by all employees
- Use of appropriate sharps bins
- Incident/Accident reporting & Incident investigation and follow up
- For further advice and support contact your local Occupational Health Service

Refer to Sharps policy for full details at www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing.

Contaminated Sharps

In summary the user of the Sharp:

- Is responsible for safe disposal
- Must not to re-sheath needles
- Should dispose of sharp at point of use
- Not to use an overfilled sharps bins

Manual Handling

Principles of Safer Manual Handling:

- Think before you lift
- Keep the load close to your waist
- Adopt a stable position
- Ensure a good hold on the load
- At the start of the lift, modern flexion (slight bending) of the back, hips and knees is preferable to fully flexing the back (stooping) or the hips and knees (squatting)
- Don't flex your spine any further as you lift
- Avoid twisting the trunk or leaning sideways, common especially while the back is bent
- Keep your head up while handling
- Move smoothly
- Don't lift more than you can easily manage
- Put down, then adjust (if necessary)

The principles listed above are recommended by the Institute of Occupational Medicine for the Health & Safety Executive (UK) and are for guidance only.

Pregnant Employees

- Pregnant employees must notify their manager as soon as they are aware of the pregnancy
- A Pregnancy Risk Assessment must be completed by the Line Manager/Supervisor

The purpose of this pregnancy risk assessment is to ensure that you and your baby are not in any danger from your work activities. Refer to www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing for further details.

Chemical Safety

- Principles of prevention must prevail – the least hazardous, most effective chemical should be used
- All chemicals must have a chemical Safety Data Sheet
- Read instructions carefully – be aware of the hazards symbols
- Refer to chemical risk assessments
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment
- High standard of hygiene is required to avoid chemical contamination
- Stock rotation is required
- Store in accordance to manufacturer's instructions.

Refer to <http://www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing> for further details.

Security and safety measures may include

- Restricting access to certain areas
- Emergency alarms, panic buttons
- Security personnel
- Training in dealing with aggressive behaviour based on risk assessment

Refer to <http://www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing> for further details.

Are there other Policies, Procedures and Guidelines I need to be aware of?

A number of HSE National Policies have been developed to support the implementation of the safety and health management programme. All employees are required to work in accordance with these documents. All our [policies](#) can be found at the following link:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/safetywellbeing/healthsafetyand%20wellbeing/policies.html>

How do I communicate a Health & Safety issue or concern?

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, places a duty on the employer to consult his/her employees to promote and develop safety, health and welfare and to monitor the effectiveness of any risk control measures that may have been implemented.

Employees have a right to make representations and consult their Manager on matters relating to safety, health and welfare at work. Health and Safety issues should be discussed at local team meetings.

In some services/sites Health and Safety Committees have been established as the main forum for consulting with employees on matters relating to occupational safety, health and welfare. Other services have integrated Quality, Safety and Risk Committees. Details of such committees will be documented in the Site Specific Safety Statement.

What does a Safety Representative do?

The Act provides that employees at a place of work are entitled to select and appoint a Safety Representative to represent them in consultations with their employer on matters of safety, health and welfare. A Safety Representative may consult with and make representations to the employer on aspects of safety, health and welfare in the place of work. The employer is obliged to consider any representations made and so far as is reasonably practicable, take any necessary and appropriate action in response. Please refer to Site Specific Safety Statement for further details.

What is an Incident/Accident?

In accordance with the HSE's Incident Management Framework, an incident is defined as an event or circumstance which could have, or did lead to unintended and/or unnecessary harm. Incidents include adverse events which result in harm; near-misses which could have resulted in harm, but did not cause harm, either by chance or timely intervention; and staff or service user complaints which are associated with harm.

Incidents can be clinical or non-clinical and include Incidents associated with harm to:

- Patients, service users, staff and visitors
- The attainment of HSE objectives
- ICT systems and data security e.g. data protection breaches
- The environment

What are my responsibilities for Incident Reporting?

- You must inform your Supervisor/Line Manager at the time of occurrence or no later than the end of shift
- Your care must be prioritised
- As per local policy the incident form is completed, details recorded, the incident investigated and remedial actions implemented as appropriate

What are Emergency Plans?

Departments will have in place plans and procedures to be taken in the event of an emergency and in the case of serious and imminent danger. All employees should familiarise themselves with these and when required attend training and simulation drills.

What training can I avail of?

The provision of training is an important means of achieving competence and capability and helps to ensure safe working practices are adhered to. Managers are required to identify training needs that will help reduce the risk of incidents occurring.

Employees are entitled to time off from their work, where appropriate, and without loss of remuneration, to receive adequate safety, health and welfare training including information and instruction relating to the specific tasks to be performed by the employee. There are a number of Health and Safety Training programmes available and can be requested by completing a training request form on www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing

Where safety and health training related to a particular task is required by the employer or by safety and health legislation, attendance is mandatory.

Training is provided to employees:

- On recruitment or in the event of the transfer or change of task assigned to an employee
- On the introduction of new or changed work equipment or systems of work
- On the introduction of new technology
- Based on Risk Assessment

Where can I avail of Health and Safety Awareness Training?

You will find health and safety training programmes for your immediate use on HSElanD. Refer to the NHSF catalogue on HSElanD for full Health and Safety course list.

The “Your safety, health and welfare in healthcare” programme is mandatory for all staff. This programme should take approximately 2 hours to complete. You can access this programme by clicking [here](#). This programme is to be used in conjunction with local induction/familiarisation programmes, where you will be brought through safe work practices, processes, guidelines and risks relevant to your area of work.

All new employees must complete the COVID-19 induction module.

For more information on Display Screen Equipment (DSE) training refer to the FAQ: 013:00.

Think, Talk and Teach safety
It is your responsibility

Where can I find out more?

For further advice on Health & Safety related matters, you should contact your Line Manager in the first instance. Additional information can be obtained by visiting our web pages that are constantly being updated or by emailing or telephoning the HSE's national health and safety helpdesk. Details provided below.



Log your health & safety request at:

<http://www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing> or go to:

<http://pndchssdweb02.healthirl.net/Health.WebAccess/ss>

Alternatively contact the National Health & Safety
Helpdesk on 1850 420 420