



Occupational Safety & Health Newsletter



NHSF, Workplace Health & Wellbeing Unit, HR, Issue 14

WORK POSITIVE^{CI} HSE

As part of the development of the HSE’s policy on preventing/managing stress in the workplace, the National Health and Safety Function have worked in partnership with key stakeholders to adapt a framework enabling managers to protect their staff by proactively managing these risks. Work Positive^{CI} is a completely confidential psychosocial risk management process that helps management identify ways to improve employee health, safety and wellbeing. The Work Positive^{CI} framework has been endorsed by the States Claims Agency and the Health and Safety Authority and will;



- Identify and measure psychosocial risk
- Provide actionable feedback
- Assist Managers to comply with HSE Policies, frameworks and current legislation

The South East Community Healthcare (SECH) organisation with a staff of 4,117 are currently piloting WPCI until the 31st of March 2019. The pilot will provide valuable feedback and opportunities for improvement prior to national rollout.

Chemical Safety in the Workplace.

Exposure to dangerous substances is much more common in workplaces than most people imagine. In healthcare settings staff can come into contact with several different chemical substances depending on the tasks.

The National Health and Safety Function (NHSF) aims to raise awareness of the risks posed by dangerous substances in the workplace and to promote a culture of risk prevention. To assist the NHSF have two chemical safety training modules now available on HSELand.



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Managing Health and Safety in Healthcare: Chemical Agents Hazards

which must be completed by Line Managers whose employees work with or are at risk of exposure to chemicals in their department/service.

Chemical Safety in the Workplace: this training module is statutory/mandatory for all employees who work with or who are at risk of exposure to chemicals. This is a 30 minute introductory course.

If you have identified hazardous chemicals in your department, an effective chemical management system is required to ensure the chemical agents are managed, handled and used safely in compliance with legislation and to reduce risk. In addition to these training modules, the NHSF has developed a campaign focusing on chemical safety management, including a step by step approach to managing hazardous chemicals in the workplace. A comprehensive resource pack with all supporting documentation necessary to implement your chemical management system is available [here](#).

LEVEL 1 AUDIT TOOL – REVISED

Auditing is an essential element of the HSE's Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) management system. The National Health and Safety Function have revised the [Level 1 Audit Tool](#) which can be completed at ward/department level. A copy of the revised Level 1 Audit tool is currently available for you to use at: www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing.

In 2018 the NHSF Audit and Inspection Team completed a total of 80 Level 1 Audits. Of these 80 audits 22 were first time audits with 58 of these repeat audits. Once completed each audit site is provided with an audit report that assesses overall performance, identifies inadequacies and provides a comprehensive Quality Improvement Plan for implementation. The results of OSH audits are fed-back to the relevant parties (manager/s) as soon as possible to allow corrective action to be taken.



Senior management should be committed to consider the audit findings, recommendations and take appropriate and timely action.

LONE WORKING

Lone workers are those employees who work by themselves without close or direct supervision and who are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance for example a public health nurse working in the community or a staff member working in an office late at night.

Working in the community or in a healthcare establishment has its own unique set of risks which need to be considered as part of the risk management process.

A line manager is required to carry out a risk assessment in consultation with employees, ensuring that all hazards associated with lone working are identified and appropriate control measures put in place to eliminate, minimise, or control the risks. Please refer to the [Prompt Sheet on Lone Working](#) to assist with the completion of this Risk Assessment (General Risk Assessment Form), both available at from www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing

For further information, please see [HSE's Policy on Lone Working](#) and [Fast Fact on Lone Working](#) or

Contact the [health and safety helpdesk](#) on 1850 420 420.

HSE Policy on Lone Working

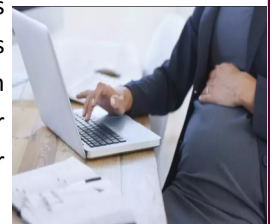


Date Approved: August 2017

PREGNANCY RISK ASSESSMENTS

Once an employee makes their manager aware of their pregnancy a medical certificate stating that she is pregnant must also be submitted.

The manager is required to conduct a specific risk assessment for pregnant employees. This risk assessment goes through a specific set of risks and must address all risks associated with their work which could potentially damage either the mothers health or that of her developing child.



All risk assessments must be completed in consultation with the employee and the necessary control measures identified to eliminate or minimise the risks. These **must be** documented and implemented in the [pregnancy risk assessment form](#). This risk assessment must be reviewed as the pregnancy progresses.

Should a pregnant, post natal or breastfeeding employee wish to rest they are entitled to avail of rest periods as indicated during risk assessment.

The National Health & Safety Function has developed a Safety Advisory/ Guidance Note to help you complete the Risk Assessment, available at: www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing

SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE WORKSHOP

In 2019, the NHSF is facilitating additional Safety Representative Workshops.



The aim of the workshop is to improve the networking of our safety representatives and enhance their knowledge regarding their role. This in turn will enable safety representatives to support their work colleagues and continue to improve/implement the HSE's health and safety management programme. If you are a safety representative and are interested in attending an upcoming workshop

To Book or for more information: Please email: lily.conway@hse.ie

RISK ASSESSMENT WORKSHOP FOR MANAGERS

Are you a HSE Manager who would like to learn more about risk assessment?

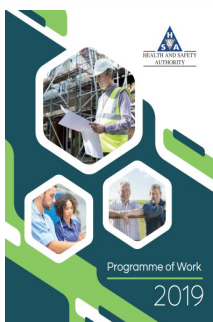


As a manager you are responsible, under Section 19 of the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 2005, for identifying workplace hazards and undertaking risk assessments.

The National Health and Safety Function can facilitate a half day Risk Assessment workshop to help boost your competence and confidence in this area. During this workshop you will receive a practical understanding of the HSE's hazard identification and risk assessment process.

To Book: Please log your request for a workshop through the [Health and Safety Helpdesk](#)

HEALTH AND SAFETY AUTHORITY (HSA) - PROGRAMME OF WORK 2019



In the Programme of Work 2019, the HSA will focus primarily on three priority sectors, one being health and social care. The document can be viewed at the following link: [HSA Programme of Work 2019](#).

Their aim is to address the **high rates of non-fatal injury and absence** relating primarily to:

- work related violence and aggression,
- stress and
- musculoskeletal disorders, all of which are potential hazards within the Health Sector.

As staff with line management responsibility it is important that:

- risk assessments are completed with regard to your working environment and work tasks
- all incidents should be recorded in the NIMS system as soon as possible after the incident and records should be updated if any new information comes to light
- completion of all mandatory/statutory health & safety training to ensure competence of staff.

To support you to manage these potential hazards for your staff, the National Health & Safety Function has developed significant [policies, guidance](#) and [risk assessments guidance and templates](#).

In addition you can contact the [helpdesk](#) to access further support from our Health & Safety Advisors.

The HSA have also released their [Strategy Statement 2019-2021](#), which aims to enable "healthy, safe and productive lives and enterprises" for all employees. The documents sets out the HSA's Strategic priorities for the next three years and can be reviewed at www.hsa.ie.



WORK AT HEIGHTS - FAST FACT

A new [Working at Heights - Fast Fact](http://www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing) is now available on the Health and safety website page at: [www/hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing](http://www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing).

WHAT IS WORKING AT HEIGHTS?

Working at a height is work in any place including a place at, above or below ground level, where a person could be injured by falling from that place (except a staircase in a permanent workplace and sitting on a chair). In healthcare working at height is more common than you would think, see examples below:

- using a kick stool or stepladder in a stock-room or to access overhead shelving
- order picking using a fork-lift truck with an integrated platform
- changing/hanging curtains in bays
- changing lamps or ceiling tiles
- using trestles and ladders to paint or clean
- erecting or working on a ladder/scaffold



The guidance in this fast fact will provide you with hints and tips on the safe use of equipment and the DO's and DONT's of such equipment. This should be reviewed with your staff to ensure that they are familiar with the safety implications of working from a height. A Risk Assessment Prompt Sheet for the Use of Kick Stools & Step Ladders at low levels is available to assist with the risk assessment process for work at heights go to: www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing.

LEARN & SHARE: SLIP, TRIP AND FALL INCIDENT

A HSE employee who sustained serious muscle injuries to her lower back, was awarded damages of €1m. The court heard that the employee, who worked in a Community Hospital in Dublin, noticed an elderly lady on the steps and went to warn her of the dangerous conditions because of snow and ice. As she did so she slipped, fell and hit off a number of steps. Unfortunately she subsequently suffered severe injuries and will require lifetime support for pain and will be unable to work.

The court heard that before the accident, a security guard who was concerned about the state of the steps went to a shop to buy rock salt, but it was sold out. Another security guard tried to clear the ice and snow with boiling water. The security guards placed warning signs in the area and later in the day, the steps were gritted.

Delivering judgment, the judge said legislation places an onus on employers to ensure all exits and entrances should be kept clear. The employer had, the judge said, failed in its duty of care (High Court, 2014).

This judgement in this case illustrates the need for prevention. Managers are required to prepare for such weather conditions that would result in a risk of injury to staff and others. Please ensure an appropriate risk assessment is carried out in relation to slips, trips and falls in your workplace. For further information please see the following:

[General Risk Assessment Form](#)

[Safety Advisory Guidance Note](#)

[Slips, Trips and Falls - Fast Fact](#)

