

Health and Safety Policy

We have developed and maintain a health and safety policy relevant to our activities. It is made available to all employees through our Employee Handbook and is regularly reviewed and updated before being passed to our board for approval.

Our policy is included below:

Introduction

We recognise that it has a primary responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its employees at work and that this duty of care extends to other people whilst they are on the Company's premises.

We aim to provide working conditions which comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and any accompanying regulations and provides staff with practical instruction on health and safety during their induction.

Our health and safety arrangements are designed to ensure that health and safety factors are fully taken into account at all levels of the Company's operations. The overall responsibility for health and safety rests at the highest level of management, although all employees regardless of position or seniority have an obligation to safeguard the health and safety of themselves and fellow employees.

Employees and members of our Associate pool are required to familiarise themselves with, and abide by, the prevailing Health and Safety procedures in client premises and other such locations where they are engaged in activity on behalf of us.

It is the Company's objective to reduce any accidents to an absolute minimum.

Failure to comply with the Health and Safety Policy may result in disciplinary action.

Policy

We will ensure that management and staff are aware of and accept their individual and collective responsibilities in the care of health and safety of themselves and others.

All members of management and staff are expected to co-operate in the carrying out of this policy and we will encourage full participation of all employees in matters concerning health and safety within the company.

Our general policy is to:

Identify and eliminate or control any situations likely to be hazardous to health and safety or cause damage to persons and/or equipment

Consult with employees on matters affecting their health and safety

Provide and maintain safe equipment

Ensure safe handling and use of substances

Provide information, instruction and supervision for employees

Ensure all employees are competent to complete their tasks and to give them adequate training

Prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health

Maintain safe and healthy working conditions

Review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals

Responsibility for Health and Safety Matters

The overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy, and health and safety matters generally, rests with the Managing Director.

The Managing Director shall ensure:

Risks assessments are undertaken on all company activities with findings documented

Approve actions required to remove/control risks

Ensuring actions are completed

Assessments are reviewed every six months or when the work activity changes, whichever is soonest

Day to day responsibility for maintaining this policy and its promotion throughout the team is delegated to the Office and HR Manager, who is identified on the organisation chart. They will:

be required to do all that is reasonably practicable to meet the health and safety standards laid down in this policy and in legislation, and to ensure all employees are aware of the policy and its requirements under the guidance of senior management

identify any necessary preventative and protective measures and prioritise the actions necessary to comply with the relevant legislation

ensure that all staff are aware of the procedures relating to accident or sickness

The additional responsibilities of the Office and HR Manager shall include:

Maintaining the Employee Handbook, which includes safety requirements

Ensuring that all new members of staff are aware of this policy and its requirements

The systematic assessment of all risks to staff, visitors and others using the company's premises

Maintaining safety signs and instructions where installed on our premises

Provide training and re-training where necessary for staff on health and safety matters

Support the Managing Director when investigating accidents

Advise team leaders on safety policies

Oversee safety inspections by the Health and Safety Executive and ensure our premises comply with the minimum requirements

Co-operate with the local Fire Authority and take adequate steps for fire prevention

Ensure all staff are made aware of the Safety Regulations in the event of a fire

Ensure active participation by employees in the landlord's regular fire drills and that alarm systems are checked on a regular basis by the landlord's representatives

Provide a First Aid box and ensure the First Aider keeps it adequately stocked at all times

Ensure that all staff are made aware of their responsibility to contact the emergency services when required

Maintain records of accidents in the Accident Book

Carry out reporting procedures relating to Health and Safety as required by Statute and the Health and Safety Executive and other authorities

Implement and enforce the company's no smoking policy

Implement recommendations of risk assessments identified within the company

Additional Areas for Consideration

Safe Handling and Use of Substances

Owing to the nature of our business, there is no requirement to use or store substances hazardous to health over and above small quantities of kitchen cleaner and the like. Should this situation change, the Managing Director will ensure appropriate procedures/facilities for storage and handling are prepared and that all affected employees are trained in safe working with them.

Information, Instruction and Supervision

A Health and Safety legislation poster is displayed in the staff kitchen

Accidents, First Aid and Work-Related Ill Health

The first aid box is kept in the kitchen area

All accidents and cases of work-related ill health are to be recorded in the accident book. The book is kept in the first aid box in the Kitchen. Read the instructions provided in the Book to complete the report

Completed Report Forms should be handed to the Office and HR Manager for safe keeping

The Managing Director is responsible for reporting accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the enforcing authority

Monitoring

The Managing Director is responsible for investigating accidents and is responsible for acting on investigation findings to prevent a recurrence

Emergency Procedures Evaluation

Fire detection and protection equipment is provided by the landlord. The Office and HR Manager will notify the landlord in the event that any such equipment or systems become damaged or defective for any reason

Emergency evacuation tests are co-ordinated by the landlord

Fire Alarms are tested by the landlord's on-site representative every Tuesday at 11am

The Role of Employees

All employees are expected by law to take reasonable care of the health and safety of their fellow employees and visitors under their immediate supervision. All members of staff are expected to remain vigilant to hazards and accidents involving injury should immediately be reported to the Office and HR Manager.

Every member of staff must acquaint themselves with the rules governing health and safety. In addition, they shall:

Report any faulty or hazardous fixtures, fittings, furniture or equipment

Not attempt to repair faulty electrical equipment

Switch off electrical equipment before leaving the building

Report all accidents involving injury to the Office and HR Manager

Keep all emergency exits, stairs and corridors free of obstructions

Observe all rules and procedures relating to evacuation of premises during an emergency

Use of Kitchen Facilities

We provide certain facilities in the kitchen for the benefit of the staff. Although we will carry out the required risk assessments and comply with relevant health and safety legislation, every employee is expected to take reasonable care when using any equipment and to exercise a degree of common sense.

We will not be held responsible for injuries caused by the employee's own negligence when using the kitchen or the negligence of other employees.

You are required to assist in keeping the kitchen clean and tidy and to ensure a safe environment in the kitchen area for yourselves and your fellow employees and visitors.

Some tips for the use of the kitchen:

Any spillages must be cleared up immediately

Any defects or faults in equipment must be reported as they arise

All waste must be disposed of in the correct receptacle

Any items that are passed the manufacturer's 'sell by' or 'consume by' date must be disposed of

Emergency Procedures

Emergency situations include fire, electricity failure, bomb threat, gas leak, flooding, glass breakage or any situation that you consider could be hazardous to personnel or the building.

A copy of the Emergency Evaluation Plan is available from the landlord's reception. It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure they are familiar with the plan and share the information with visitors.

In the event of an emergency during normal business hours, all employees are to follow the procedures set out below:

In the event of you finding a fire or any other circumstance which you consider to be a hazard:

Alert colleagues in the office immediately. Move away from the immediate vicinity - do not take any risks

If the alarm is raised, vacate the building immediately by the nearest exit, ensuring that any visitors are accompanied

Do not stop to collect personal belongings

Assemble at the Fire Point situated at far side of the carpark in front of the Innovation Centre

The emergency services will be automatically called via the monitoring station

The landlord's Fire Marshals will ensure that all areas are cleared and keep occupants informed of requirements

Stay together and seek out the most senior member of the group to give further instructions

Do not re-enter the building until the alarm or warning has ceased and you have been advised that it is safe to return

Alert to an Emergency outside of our premises:

On the sounding of a fire alarm or other appropriate warning, vacate the building immediately by the nearest exit, ensuring that any visitors are accompanied

Do not risk your personal safety in recovering any personal items or belongings

Assemble at the Fire Point situated at the far side of the carpark in front of the innovation centre

The landlord's Fire Marshals will ensure that all areas are cleared and keep occupants informed of requirements

Stay together and seek out the most senior member of the group to give further instructions

Do not re-enter the building until the alarm or warning has ceased and you have been advised that it is safe to return.

Stress in the Workplace

We recognise and accept our responsibility to alleviate any excessive pressure or demands placed on employees, which might cause them to suffer stress that may have a detrimental effect on their health. This does not include normal and reasonable pressures associated with a job, which an employee should be able to manage appropriately.

We will carry out regular risk assessments to identify, control or eliminate the risk of stress in the workplace. This will include:

monitoring workloads

monitoring working hours and overtime

monitoring holidays taken to ensure staff are taking their full entitlement

ensuring that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within the workplace

ensuring good communication between management and staff

providing additional support to employees by either referral to workplace councillors or specialist agencies.

In order for us to monitor stress, all employees are expected to do the following:

raise and report issues of concern to the Office and HR Manager

inform the Office and HR Manager of any concerns relating to excessive pressures and demands within the workplace

inform the Office and HR Manager of any stress related illness associated either with the workplace or outside the workplace (e.g. bereavement, separation etc)

Wellbeing and ongoing support

We provide Employee Assistance via the company's nominated Healthcare provider, which provides a 24-hours a day, seven days a week telephone service giving access to specialist information and advice, and a confidential telephone counselling service. All contact is confidential and free of charge to employees included within the scheme.

Working with VDUs

Under the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations, we are required to minimise the risks associated with working with VDUs, by ensuring that the workstation and the jobs are well designed. The regulations do not lay down technical specifications of the equipment to be used but do give some directions to protecting the user from related health problems.

In general, it is the way in which the VDU is used that causes the problems, rather than the VDU itself. In most cases these difficulties can be overcome by changing the design of the workstation or altering the way in which the job is carried out.

We must carry out a risk assessment of the workstation to enable us to identify the potential risks to our employee's health and to enable us to reduce the risks to the lowest possible level.

The workplace assessment should cover:

The Display Screen Equipment, including screen, keyboard and software for size, positioning, glare and suitability

Accessories such as mouse mats and wrist rests for suitability

Ergonomic design of the furniture to ensure desks are suitable for the operator and that chairs are adjustable

The working environment, including suitable lighting, heat and humidity

The task that is to be carried out, including the special needs of the individual operator

As with all risk assessments, reviews will be carried out at regular intervals or if there is a significant change in the job, the equipment or the individual carrying out the task.

Taking breaks

The Regulations have given no guidance on the frequency and duration of breaks, this is the responsibility of both us and the employee to monitor. The risk assessment should identify these issues, but clearly breaks need to be:

At regular intervals. Short frequent breaks are of more value than rare lengthy ones

Taken prior to the operator feeling stressed or fatigued. They are meant to give rest not recuperation

Taken away from the workstation, where this is possible

We will provide the user with relevant training and information to ensure that they use the equipment safely and avoid health risks associated with VDU work.

The training will include the need for good posture, proper use of the equipment, good housekeeping, eye tests and sensible reporting of other problems. This training should extend to those operators using laptops or PCs at home or away from the office.

Self – Employed Operators

The Regulations also put a duty on us to provide the same risk assessment, training and information to a self-employed person where equipment has been provided by the company.

Eye Tests

Employees, but not self-employed operators, can ask us to provide and pay for an eye examination. This is a test by an optometrist. There is also an entitlement to further tests at regular intervals; the optometrist doing the first test can recommend when the next should be. Where it is identified that you need 'special corrective appliances' exclusively for when using a VDU in the workplace, we are required to provide basic lenses and frames. You must provide a report from the Optometrist and prior authorisation must be given by your Line Manager. Claims up to a maximum of £50 can then be made through the standard Expenses Claim procedure. 'Special' corrective appliances (normally spectacles) are appliances prescribed to correct vision defects at the viewing distance used specifically for display screen work (normally within the range of 50-60cm). 'Normal' corrective appliances are spectacles prescribed for any other purpose, therefore this only applies where normal corrective appliances (existing or new) cannot be used and an eye and eyesight test has shown appliances to rectify vision for VDU work to be necessary.

Practical Tips

Getting comfortable

Adjust your chair and VDU to find the most comfortable position for your work. As a broad guide, your forearms should be approximately horizontal and your eyes the same height as the top of the VDU

Make sure you have enough work space to take whatever documents or other equipment you need

Try different arrangements of keyboard, screen, mouse and documents to find the best arrangement for you. A document holder may help you avoid awkward neck and eye movements

Arrange your desk and VDU to avoid glare, or bright reflections on the screen. This will be easiest if neither you nor the screen is directly facing windows or bright lights. Adjust curtains or blinds to prevent unwanted light

Make sure there is space under your desk to move your legs freely. Move any obstacles such as boxes or equipment

Avoid excess pressure from the edge of your seat on the backs of your legs and knees. A footrest may be helpful, particularly for smaller users

Keying in

Adjust your keyboard to get a good keying position. A space in front of the keyboard is sometimes helpful for resting the hands and wrists when not keying

Try to keep your wrists straight when keying. Keep a soft touch on the keys and don't overstretch your fingers. Good keyboard technique is important

Using a mouse

Position the mouse within easy reach, so it can be used with the wrist straight. Sit upright and close to the desk, so you don't have to work with your mouse arm stretched. Move the keyboard out of the way if it is not being used

Support your forearm on the desk, and don't grip the mouse too tightly

Rest your fingers lightly on the buttons and do not press them hard

Reading the screen

Adjust the brightness and contrast controls on the screen to suit lighting conditions in the room

Make sure the screen surface is clean

In setting up software, choose options giving text that is large enough to read easily on your screen, when you are sitting in a normal, comfortable working position. Select colours that are easy on the eye (avoid red text on a blue background, or vice-versa)

Individual characters on the screen should be sharply focused and should not flicker or move. If they do, the VDU may need servicing or adjustment

Posture and breaks

Don't sit in the same position for long periods. Make sure you change your posture as often as practicable. Some movement is desirable, but avoid repeated stretching to reach things you need (if this happens a lot, rearrange your workstation)

Most jobs provide opportunities to take a break from the screen, e.g. to do filing or photocopying. Make use of them. If there are no such natural breaks in your job, your employer should plan for you to have rest breaks. Frequent short breaks are better than fewer long ones

It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that they follow the procedures, guidelines and information given by us and inform us if they need an eyesight test

All employees must read the following document - HSE Working with VDU-s - INDG36 (rev4) 04/13

Manual Handling

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 apply whenever there are risks to the health of our employees from manual handling activities. As the employer we are required to:

AVOID the need for hazardous manual handling as far as is reasonably practicable

CHECK whether an item needs to be moved at all. Can repair or maintenance be carried out in situ?

CONSIDER the use of mechanical aids

ASSESS the risk of injury from any manual handling that cannot be avoided

REDUCE the risk of injury from hazardous manual handling, as far as is reasonably practicable

All employees have responsibilities too which include:

Following appropriate safe systems of work provided for their safety

Ensure that any equipment provided for their use is used properly

Co-operate with us on all health and safety matters

Avoiding Manual Handling Activities

Avoidance is the best solution to manual handling as it is the equivalent of prevention and this is better than any cure.

By avoiding manual handling activities tasks are undertaken in a different way to eliminate or minimise handling. Solutions to avoiding manual handling tasks can range from very simple solutions to more complicated ones for example:

Simple solution: use a trolley to move stationary or a carry case on wheels for laptops

Medium solution: palletise materials so they don't have to be lifted manually and can be moved via a fork lift truck. This is not required within our business

Complex solution: arrange the layout of the workplace in a way which would minimise the amount of repeated handling (Note this does not eliminate manual handling altogether but does help to reduce it)

Prior to lifting or moving any object all employees should check whether it really needs to be moved. In many instances where loads need to be handled, total avoidance is not possible.

Safe Stacking and Storage Policy

By safely storing and stacking equipment and goods the risk of manual handling injuries from the lifting of loads can be eliminated or reduced. Heavy goods should always be stored or located at waist height for easier access and in order to avoid stooping and reaching for the item. Items should always be stored and stacked in a manner which reduces the likelihood of injuries from falling equipment.

The following procedure should be followed by all employees when storing and stacking goods within our premises:

DO

Place equipment/goods on a firm level base i.e. shelf or suitable cabinets

Ensure that properly constructed racking systems are used when needed and secure to the floor or wall if possible

Place heavier items at waist level

Use the correct container for the job and ensure that regular inspections for damage are carried out. Replace any defective containers as appropriate

Ensure all stacked items and boxes are stable and are not likely to fall. Boxes and goods of a uniform size should be stacked together. If there are varying sizes of boxes and goods heavier items should be stored on a level floor

DON'T

Allow items to stick out from shelves or other storage systems onto walkways

Exceed the safe load of shelves or flooring

Lean heavy stacks against walls

Remove items by throwing items from the top of the pile or by pulling out items from the bottom of the stack

No-Smoking Policy

This policy applies to your employment, and all other organisations or company sites that you may be asked to work at from time to time. It is intended to enforce Health and Safety legislation and The Health Act 2006 in England & Wales and to promote a healthy and safe working environment for all workers and others.

Smoking is prohibited in:

All enclosed and substantially enclosed premises in the workplace. (Smoking is only permitted in unenclosed designated areas. Clear signs will be displayed to ensure that it is understood that smoking is only allowed in designated areas away from buildings)

All Company vehicles at all times and to any vehicle that is being used on the Company's business

You are also required to comply with the smoke free policies of clients and customers when visiting their premises on Company business

Day to day responsibility for policy implementation and review rests with the Health and Safety Representative. All staff, however, are obliged to adhere to and support the implementation of the policy.

Any breach of these rules will be considered a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in accordance with our disciplinary procedures. Those that do not comply with the no-smoking regulations may also be liable to a fixed penalty fine and possible criminal prosecution.

The NHS offers a range of free services to help smokers give up. Visit smokefree.nhs.uk or call the NHS Smoking Helpline on 0800 022 4 332 for details.

Health and Safety is of critical importance to everyone in our organisation, led by our Managing Director and cascaded to all levels in the chart below:

Health and Safety is a line management responsibility held by everyone in the business, both for their own safety and the safety of those they work with or the public. Leadership comes from the very top of the business with support and guidance from our Office and HR Manager who has delegated responsibility for corporate knowledge of the subject.

Everyone has access to this leadership and support when fulfilling their health and safety responsibilities as set out in our policy.

Apprentice Specific Work Environment

The employer has the primary responsibility for the health and safety of the apprentice and should be managing any significant risks. As the training provider, we will take reasonable steps to satisfy ourselves that the employer is doing this.

This does not mean trying to second guess an employer's risk assessment or risk control measures, and we are not required to carry out our own workplace assessment.

We can rely on past experience, for example, if the employer is familiar to us and they have a good track record on health and safety. We will keep checks in proportion to the environment:

- For low risk environments, such as an office or shop, with everyday risks that will mostly be familiar to the apprentice, simply speaking with the employer to confirm this should be enough. This can be part of any wider conversation on placement arrangements that may take place.
- For environments with less familiar risks, like light assembly or packing facilities, we shall talk to the employer to find out what the apprentice will be doing and confirm the employer has arrangements for managing risks, including induction, training, supervision, site familiarisation, and any protective equipment that might be needed.
- For higher risk environments such as construction, agriculture or manufacturing, we shall discuss with the employer what the apprentice will be doing, the risks involved and how these are managed, satisfying ourselves that the instruction, training and supervisory arrangements have been properly thought through.

We shall check the apprentice knows how to raise any health and safety concerns.