



# Health and safety training

What you  
need to know



*This leaflet explains the importance of health and safety training to owners and managers of businesses. It gives advice on who may need training, what form the training may take and how to organise it.*

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## WHY IS HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING IMPORTANT?

Occupational accidents kill over 300 people and injure over one million every year. Over two million people suffer illnesses caused by, or made worse by, their work.

Preventing accidents and ill health caused by work is a key priority for everyone at work. As the owner or manager of a business you know that competent employees are valuable.

Providing health and safety information and training helps you to:

- ◆ ensure your employees are not injured or made ill by the work they do;
- ◆ develop a positive health and safety culture, where safe and healthy working becomes second nature to everyone;
- ◆ find out how you could manage health and safety better;
- ◆ meet your legal duty to protect the health and safety of your employees.

Effective training:

- ◆ will contribute towards making your employees competent in health and safety;
- ◆ can help your business avoid the distress that accidents and ill health cause;
- ◆ can help you avoid the financial costs of accidents and occupational ill health. Don't forget that your insurance doesn't cover all these costs. Damaged products, lost production and demotivated staff can all result.

The law requires that you provide whatever information, instruction and training is needed to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of your employees (see 'The Law' on page 8 for more details).

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## WHAT IS TRAINING?

**T**raining means helping people to learn how to do something, telling people what they should or should not do, or simply giving them information. Training isn't just about formal 'classroom' courses.

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## WHO NEEDS HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING?

**YOU DO!** Whether you are an employer or self-employed, are you sure that you're up to date with how to identify the hazards and control the risks from your work? Do you know how to get help - from your trade association, your local Chamber of Commerce, or your health and safety enforcing authority? Do you know what you have to do about consulting your employees, or their representatives, on health and safety issues? If not, you would probably benefit from some training.

**YOUR MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS DO!** If you employ managers or supervisors they will certainly need some training. They need to know what you expect from them in terms of health and safety, and how you expect them to deliver. They need to understand your health and safety policy, where they fit in, and how you want health and safety managed. They may also need training in the specific hazards of your processes and how you expect the risks to be controlled.

**YOUR EMPLOYEES DO!** Everyone who works for you, including self-employed people, needs to know how to work safely and without risks to health. Like your supervisors, they need to know about your health and safety policy, your arrangements for implementing it, and the part they play. They also need to know how they can raise any health and safety concerns with you.

Some employees may have particular training needs, for example:

- ◆ new recruits need basic induction training into how to work safely, including arrangements for first aid, fire and evacuation;

- ◆ people changing jobs or taking on extra responsibilities need to know about any new health and safety implications;
- ◆ young employees are particularly vulnerable to accidents and you need to pay particular attention to their needs, so their training should be a priority. It is also important that new, inexperienced or young employees are adequately supervised;
- ◆ some people's skills may need updating by refresher training.

Your risk assessment should identify any further specific training needs.

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## HOW CAN I DO IT?

Firstly, you should show your commitment so the people being trained recognise that the training is important. Providing training needn't be a great burden, but you do need to think ahead and prioritise. You may have appointed somebody to give you 'competent assistance' (see 'The Law' on page 8) and they should be able to help. Try the following five-step approach:

### **STEP 1 Decide what training your organisation needs**

- ◆ Identify the skills and knowledge needed for people to do their job in a safe and healthy way. Compare these against people's current skills and knowledge and identify the gaps.
- ◆ Review your experience of injuries, near misses or cases of ill health.
- ◆ Look at your risk assessments to see where information and/or training have been identified as factors in controlling risks.
- ◆ Consult employees or their representatives for their views.
- ◆ Consider awareness training needs for directors, managers and supervisors, including:
  - how you manage health and safety;
  - who is responsible for what;
  - the cost to the business if things go wrong;
  - how to identify hazards and evaluate risks; and
  - the hazards encountered and measures for controlling them.

**STEP 1**

### **STEP 2 Decide your training priorities**

- ◆ Does the law require you to carry out specific training (eg first-aid training)? See 'The Law' on page 8 for more details.
- ◆ Top priorities would include those where lack of information and/or training might result in serious harm, and those which benefit the largest numbers of staff.
- ◆ Consult employees or their representatives for their views.
- ◆ Training for new recruits and for people changing jobs or taking on new responsibilities should always be a priority.

**STEP 2**

## STEP 3

### STEP 3 Choose your training methods and resources

Don't forget that though there are many external trainers who can help you, much effective training can be done 'in house'.

- ◆ Choose your methods, for example:
  - giving information or instruction;
  - coaching or on-the-job training;
  - training in the 'classroom';
  - open and distance learning;
  - in groups or individually; and
  - computer-based or interactive learning.
- ◆ Consider who can help you, by providing information, materials, training courses etc. You could try for example:
  - industry or national training organisations;
  - trade unions;
  - further education colleges;
  - private training organisations;
  - independent health and safety consultants;
  - employer bodies (eg Chambers of Commerce); and
  - qualification-awarding bodies (eg City and Guilds, Business Technology Education Council (BTEC), the Royal Society of Arts (RSA)).
- ◆ You may be able to get a government-assisted loan to help meet some of the costs of training if you have no more than 50 employees. Contact your local Business Link (England), Business Shop (Scotland) or Business Connect (Wales).

## **STEP 4 Deliver the training**

- ◆ Ensure the information is easy to understand and try to use a variety of training methods to deliver your message.
- ◆ Ensure the trainer has enough time to prepare themselves, their resources and the venue - preparation is particularly important for people who are not experienced trainers.

**STEP 4**

## **STEP 5 Check that the training has worked**

- ◆ Do your employees understand what you require of them?
- ◆ Do they now have the knowledge and skills needed to work safely and without risk to health?
- ◆ Are they actually working as they have been trained?
- ◆ Has there been any improvement in your organisation's health and safety performance?
- ◆ What feedback are you getting from line managers and the people who have been trained?
- ◆ Is further information and/or training needed?
- ◆ Was the most suitable training method used?
- ◆ What improvements can be made?
- ◆ Has there been a change in behaviour and practice?

**STEP 5**

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## THE LAW

The ***Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974*** requires you to provide whatever information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of your employees.

This is expanded by the ***Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999***, which identify situations where health and safety training is particularly important, eg when people start work, on exposure to new or increased risks and where existing skills may have become rusty or need updating.

You must provide training during working hours and not at the expense of your employees. Special arrangements may be needed for part-timers or shift workers.

You need to assess the risks to your employees while they are at work and to any other people who may be affected by the way you conduct your business. This is so that you can identify the measures you need to take to comply with health and safety law, which includes training and the provision of information.

Like many employers, you may not be in a position to provide this training on your own, in which case you will need competent help. If at all possible, you should appoint one or more of your employees. However, if there is no one with the relevant knowledge, experience and skills in your organisation who can be relied on to deal effectively with health and safety training, you need to enlist someone who has from outside. In some circumstances you may need a combination of internal and external help. *Need help on health and safety?* (INDG322) is a free leaflet from HSE giving guidance on when and how you can get advice on health and safety.

The ***Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977*** and the ***Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996*** require you to consult your employees, or their representatives, on health and safety issues.

Representatives appointed under either of these sets of regulations are entitled to time off with pay for training in their duties.

There are a number of other regulations which include specific health and safety training requirements, eg asbestos, diving and first aid.

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## WHAT ABOUT SELF-EMPLOYED PEOPLE?

If a person working under your control and direction is treated as self-employed for tax and national insurance purposes, they may nevertheless be treated as your employee for health and safety purposes. You may need therefore to take appropriate action to protect them.

If you do not wish to employ workers on this basis, you should seek legal advice. Ultimately each case can only be decided on its own merits by a court of law.

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## HOW ELSE CAN HSE HELP?

HSE has published some training resources. A suitable starting point is *Effective health and safety training: A trainer's resource pack* (HSE Books 2001 ISBN 0 7176 2109 X). This includes a series of practical activities that you can use to help train your staff in:

- ◆ health and safety policies, culture and systems;
- ◆ roles in health and safety;
- ◆ assessing and controlling risks; and
- ◆ managing change and improvement.

You may also like to look at:

*Managing health and safety: An open learning workbook for managers and trainers* (HSE Books 1997 ISBN 0 7176 1153 1). This publication, aimed principally at managers, explores in detail the process of managing health and safety. The five sections cover key aspects of the process, each containing information and structured activities.

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the references listed in this publication, their future availability cannot be guaranteed.

### **Further information**

HSE priced and free publications are available by mail order from HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA

Tel: 01787 881165 Fax: 01787 313995

Website: [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk) (HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.)

For information about health and safety ring HSE's InfoLine

Tel: 08701 545500 Fax: 02920 859260

e-mail: [hseinformationservices@natbrit.com](mailto:hseinformationservices@natbrit.com) or write to HSE

Information Services, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly

CF83 3GG. You can also visit HSE's website: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.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 of 15 from HSE Books, ISBN 0 7176 2137 5. Single free copies are also available from HSE Books.

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