

Health and Safety Policy

If you employ more than four people, by law, (Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 section 2(3)) you must produce a written policy for health and safety within your business.

A policy is broken down into three parts:

- a) “ **A General Statement of Intent**” – which outlines the organisation’ s overall philosophy in relation to management of health and safety.
- b) “ **Organisation**” (**People and their duties**) – This will outline health and safety responsibilities and who is responsible for each arrangement within the organisation. It should detail how accountability is fixed so as to ensure that delegated responsibilities are undertaken? How is the policy implementation monitored? It should also include individual job descriptions having a safety content; details of specific safety responsibilities; and role and function of the safety officer and a management chart clearly showing the lines of responsibility and accountability in terms of health and safety management.
- c) “ **Arrangements**” (**Systems and Procedures**) – This part of the policy deals with the practical arrangements by which the policy will be effectively implemented. These include: safety training; safe systems of work; environmental control; safe place of work; house keeping; internal communication/participation; fire safety and prevention; first aid procedures and accident reporting. The findings of your Risk Assessments will form the basis of this part.

The health and safety policy statement does not need to record the full details of all procedures. The policy statement can refer to other documentation such as

risk assessments, training programmes, emergency instructions, etc. .However, the policy statement should record the arrangements and procedures for how these matters are managed.


How you set out your health and safety policy is up to you. There is no set length, but the size may vary depending upon the size, scope and complexity of the business. The policy should be put together by people in your business, and should be written in a language that is easy for all employees to understand. Make use of employees' knowledge, as they' re usually the most familiar with working practices and hazards in their workplace. It may be necessary to seek help from a health and safety consultant if you have a complex workplace.


The health and safety policy and any revision of it must be brought to the attention of your employees. Revisions may be needed in the light of experience, new hazards, organisational changes, or new legislation. The effectiveness of your policy should be monitored using spot checks, checklists, audit inspections, management reports, accident investigation reports, etc.

Further information

If you still need advice, you will find the following HSE publications very useful:

HSE free leaflets (Available by mail order from HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 2WA tel: 01787 881165.)

 *Starting your Business – Guidance on preparing a health and safety policy document for small firms* INDG324. The leaflets are available in priced packs of 5 from HSE Books, ISBN 0 7176 1799 8. Single free copies are also available.

 *An introduction to health and Safety: Health and safety in small firms* INDG259 HSE Books 1998.

📖 *Good Health is Good Business: Employers' guide* MISC 136 HSE Books 1999.

📖 *Managing health and safety: five steps to success* INDG275 HSE Books 1998.

📖 *Consulting employees on health and safety: A guide to the law* INDG232 HSE Books 1996.

📖 *RIDDOR explained. Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995*, HSE Books 1999. Also available in priced packs; ISBN 0 7176 2441 2.

📖 *Five steps to information, instruction and training* INDG213 HSE Books 1996. Also available in priced packs; ISBN 0 7176 1235 X

📖 *Five steps to risk assessment* INDG163(rev1) HSE Books 1998. Also available in priced packs; ISBN 0 7176 1565 0.

📖 **HSE priced publications**

📖 *Essentials of health and safety at work*, HSE Books 1994 ISBN 0 7176 0716 X.

📖 *Health risk management – A practical guide for managers in small and medium-sized enterprises*. HSG137 HSE Books 1995 ISBN 0 7176 0905 7.

📖 *Management of health and safety at work: Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation 1999 Approved Code of Practice and guidance* L21 (Second edition) HSE Books 2000 ISBN 0 7176 2488 9.