

The Workplace Regulations

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 apply to most workplaces. These Regulations consolidate and expand many of the old requirements laid down in the Factories Act 1961 and Offices Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963.

The Approved Code of Practice details the requirements of the Regulations. These include:

Maintenance

The workplace and equipment should be maintained in an efficient state and in good repair (for reasons of safety). There should be a system of maintenance for equipment and devices in use in the business where necessary.

Ventilation

There should be a sufficient quantity of fresh or purified air to ventilate enclosed workplaces. Fresh air supply rate should not normally fall below 5 to 8 litres per second per occupant.

Temperature

If a room is used for more than short periods, then a reasonable temperature must be maintained. This will vary between 13 and 30°C, with more manual tasks requiring a temperature towards the lower end of this scale. Thermometers must be placed around the workplace to monitor this. Where uncomfortable temperatures are not avoidable, precautions must be taken such as provision of special clothing, regular breaks and a suitable rest room.

Lighting

There must be suitable and sufficient in every workplace, and where possible, this should be natural. Lighting should be sufficient so that people can move

around the building safely. Emergency lighting must be provided where failure of normal lighting would cause danger. Staircases should not contain shadows, and glare and dazzling lights should be avoided.

Cleanliness

Workplaces, and the furniture and fittings must be kept clean, and should be constructed so that they are capable of being cleaned. Waste should not be allowed to accumulate, and suitable bins must be provided for this purpose.

Space

Workrooms should have enough free space to allow people to get to and from workstations and to move within the room, with ease. The total volume of the room, when empty, divided by the number of people normally working in it should be at least 11 cubic metres. This rule does not apply to retail sales kiosks, attendants' shelters, machine control cabs etc.

Workstations

Workstations should be suitable for the work that is to be carried out, and the worker that is likely to operate from there. Suitable seats are required where necessary and there should be sufficient space around the workstation to enable the work to be carried out in a safe manner.

Floors

Protection from falls and falling objects should be provided where reasonably practicable. If there is a significant risk that a person could fall from a height of 2 metres or above, a secure fence should be provided.

Windows

Windows and glazed doors should be of safety material where danger could occur i.e. usually where the glazing is below shoulder level in doors and below waist level in windows. Large areas of glass that could be walked into should be

marked. Provision should be made so that window cleaning can be carried out safely e.g. tilt and turn windows; fixing points for harnesses.

Traffic Routes

Safe routes should be organised for vehicles and pedestrians. Floor and traffic routes should be of sound construction and should have adequate strength and stability taking account of the loads placed on them and the traffic passing over them. They should be free from holes, bumps or obstructions that could cause a person to slip, trip or fall.

Escalators

Escalators and moving walkways must function safely, be safely maintained, and have safety devices and emergency stop controls.

Sanitary Conveniences and washing facilities

Toilets must be well ventilated and kept clean. They must have washing facilities with hot and cold water, soap and a means of drying hands. Showers may be needed in exceptional circumstances. The number of facilities required is referred to in the Approved Code of Practice referred to below.

Drinking Water

Employees must be provided with a supply of wholesome drinking water and cups. Non-drinking water must also be marked.

Clothing

A space must be provided for wet outdoor clothing to be able to dry out during the day. Changing facilities should be provided where specialist clothing is worn.

Rest facilities

These should be suitable and sufficient to take a break and to eat meals, where meals are regularly eaten in the workplace. There should be separate facilities

for non-smokers and smokers. Facilities are required for pregnant and nursing mothers to rest.

Further information

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

- 📖 The Approved Code of Practice on The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare)
- 📖 Regulations 1992 ISBN 0 7176 0413 6;
- 📖 British Standard BS6262:1982 code of practice for glazing in builders. (HMSO);
- 📖 Ergonomics at Work IND(G)90L 1990 (HSE); Ventilation of the Workplace EH22(rev) ISBN 0 11 885403 8.