

## **HEAD OFFICE SAFETY POLICY**

### **OFFICE SAFETY**

#### **GENERAL MATTERS**

Management will provide plant, equipment advice and training necessary to ensure that safe systems of work are adopted.

Supervision will be such that no unsafe practices are condoned.

Any defects observed in equipment, must be reported without delay to the Office Manager for remedial action to be taken to effect a repair or replacement. Employees in having the legal duty to co-operate with their employer, **MUST** bring to their manager's notice any dangers that they have observed such as dangerous electrical equipment, etc.

All employees must always maintain a clean and tidy work-area. Bag up waste material or use a proper waste receptacle.

A sufficient number of sanitary conveniences must be provided in convenient locations and maintained in clean condition. Each sanitary convenience must be provided with washing facilities as described below;

Washing facilities must :-

- a. Be of sufficient number.
- b. Be located in the immediate vicinity of sanitary conveniences.
- c. Include hot & cold (or warm) water (preferably running water), soap and towels.

Drinking water must be provided on all workplaces. The supply must be conspicuously marked and cups made available (unless a drinking fountain is provided).

Where special clothing is required for work, changing facilities must be provided.

Rest facilities must be provided which :-

- a. Protect non-smokers from discomfort caused by tobacco smoke.
- b. Include provision for the preparation and consumption of meals.
- c. Include the means for boiling water.

#### **FIRE SAFETY**

Properly store and dispose of all materials that may be fire hazards, including cleaning fluids, photocopier inks, and oily or solvent-soaked rags.

Emergency Fire Exits and routes to Fire Fighting Equipment must kept clean.

## **ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES**

All electrical appliances and equipment must be periodically inspected by a competent person and a log kept showing the result of each inspection and action taken to remedy any defects noted.

Use caution when operating hot plates, stoves, coffee pots, etc. Turn off all appliances when not in use.

Never overload circuits.

Beware of electrical leads lying across floors. These should be positioned clear of access routes.

Employees are not permitted to use their own electrical equipment, including Radios.

## **FLOOR SURFACES**

Watch out for loose carpeting and tiles. Wipe up spills. Pick up pencils and other objects that might cause a slip.

Report and defects to the Office Manager.

## **CHAIRS**

Keep all 4 legs of your chair on the floor. Tilting back often results in overbalancing and a fall.

Periodically inspect chairs that tilt for broken springs, loose screws and defective welds.

Be sure footed when climbing - use a hop-up or step-ladder/ pulpit steps.

## **TELEPHONE WIRES**

Beware of telephone leads lying across the floor. Catching your heel on a lead can cause a fall.

## **STAIRWAYS AND WALKWAYS**

On stairways, use handrails and take one step at a time. Report worn treads and broken or loose stairs and handrails to the office manager.

Avoid obstructing your vision with large loads; DO NOT store boxes, etc. where people might trip.

## **LIGHTING**

Use as much light as you need to get the job done safely and correctly.

Report dusty or out-of-order lights promptly to the office manager.

## **DOORS**

Approach solid doors from the side away from the hinges. This will enable you to step out of the way if someone comes through.

Doors in corridors/thoroughfares should be provided with glazed view panels which should enable persons approaching the door to have a clear view of the opposite side.

Designated Fire Doors must remain in the closed position where marked with the appropriate sign.

Fire extinguishers or wedges must not be used to prop open a fire door.

## **FILING CABINETS**

Fill bottom filing cabinet drawers first to prevent the cabinet from tipping.

Avoid overloading top drawers. This can cause the cabinet to fall.

Close one drawer before opening another to prevent the cabinet from tipping.

Close drawers gently. Use handles to avoid pinching fingers.

## **SHELVES AND STORAGE CABINETS**

Stack objects neatly inside cabinets, not on top.

Keep frequently used items within easy reach.

Do not overload cabinets, especially those that are not bolted to the floor or wall.

Store heavy or breakable items on lower shelves.

## **TIPS FOR PHOTOCOPIER USE**

Avoid physical contact with toners or other chemicals. If you must add toner, wear rubber gloves and an apron if possible.

Keep document cover down during copying.

## **USE OF SHREDDERS**

Avoid close contact of loose clothing to prevent entanglement within the shredder. Don't lean over the slot whilst wearing ties or other loose fitting clothing.

Switch off power before attempting to removed jammed materials - shredder blades are very sharp!

## **DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT**

### Possible Health Effects

The most common complaints are tiredness, eye strain or irritation of the eyes and difficulties in focusing. These symptoms are often no different from those experienced in any demanding clerical task. Such complaints can be overcome by better seating and display lighting.

During spells of concentrated work, the blink rate may decrease which may lead to discomfort, particularly if the user is wearing contact lenses.

There is no evidence that using DSE causes eye damage but because of the demanding visual task, poor vision becomes more apparent.

Those persons wearing spectacles should experience no particular problems and the use of tinted lenses is not considered necessary. Complaints of glare can usually be resolved by improving lighting conditions.

The majority of bifocal wearers can operate DSE but the repeated tilting of the head backwards to bring the screen into the appropriate field of view can cause discomfort.

The possibility of eye damage, such as the forming of cataracts, has not been borne out by experience. The minimal radiation emitted by DSE is insufficient to cause any damage. The colour of the DSE display also appears to be irrelevant in determining symptoms.

### Epilepsy

A small number of epileptics suffer from fits triggered by visual stimuli. This form of epilepsy (photosensitive) occurs mainly in the 10-14 year age group. There is no reason to exclude epileptics from using DSE as such use is not the cause.

### Skin Rashes

Some cases of itching and redness of the face have been linked to DSE use. It has not been established DSE has caused any skin rash. Deposits of air contaminants onto the face can occur in electrostatic fields which may build up in offices with low humidity.

### Reproductive effects

Reports of increases in miscarriage and birth defects amongst female DSE users arose in Canada and the USA some years ago. Further studies have not confirmed these findings and investigations are continuing.

### Workstation Assessment

The Workstation Assessment form (contained in the Forms section of this manual) should be completed by DSE users and remedial action taken where required.

The Office Manager should be consulted as to the nature of action required.

## **CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH REGULATIONS (COSHH)**

These Regulations require that any substances likely to create a hazard to health must be assessed to determine the degree of hazard, and state the precautions which must be taken to prevent health risks.

Where a hazard assessment identifies the need for health surveillance, it will require records to be kept of such surveillance for a period of 40 years.

Where sub-contractors are engaged, it will be the responsibility of the appropriate supervisor to ensure that any hazardous material brought onto the premises has been properly assessed by the sub-contractor, and that the relevant control measures are being effected.

If any control measures require the use of exhaust ventilation, the ventilation plant must be thoroughly examined every 14 months. If the control measures require the use of respiratory protective equipment, this must be regularly inspected and records maintained (excluding disposable respirators).

Records of all such inspections must be kept for at least FIVE YEARS.

Schedules of Hazardous Substances are contained in the Forms section of this manual and should be displayed in each workplace. It is necessary for these Schedules to be displayed for the information of all operatives. The full assessment records are available on request from SWSC.

With the majority of most substances used in office work, it will be possible to produce an assessment from the manufacturer's product data sheets. If there is any doubt on the possibility of a hazard from any substance brought into the workplace, assistance should be sought from a reliable source.

If working in a workplace where there is a likely hazard from production of fumes or dusts, the responsibility for providing information under the COSHH Regulations rests with the producer of the likely hazard. However, the appropriate manager must request information on the nature of the likely hazard.

## **MANUAL HANDLING OPERATIONS**

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 require that every employer shall, so far as is reasonably practicable, avoid the need for employees to undertake any manual handling operations which involve a risk of their being injured. Only if this cannot be achieved may manual handling be considered, subject to a suitable and sufficient assessment being carried out.

Where there is a foreseeable risk of any injury to employees from carrying out manual handling activities, the responsible manager/supervisor must carry out an assessment of any risk on the form provided in the 'Forms' section of this manual. Employees involved in the manual handling operation must be informed of the risk and of the control measures required to be taken by them.

Except under special circumstances, no manual handling assessment will generally be required for loads of 25kg (56lbs) or under for men and 17.5kg (38lbs) for women.

For work activities with variable weights, such as the unloading of vehicles, employees may be trained to assess the manual handling risks involved and the control measures to be adopted.

When carrying out any manual handling, consider whether any special PPE may be required (e.g. gloves, aprons, safety shoes etc.) and whether any mechanical devices can be utilised (e.g. trolleys, hoists, lifting tongs, vacuum handles etc.)

The following list of weights gives the suggested action required to enable manual handling operations to be carried out safely.

N.B.

Mechanical handling must be considered BEFORE carrying out any manual handling operation.

<b>LOAD</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<20kg (44lbs)	Repetitive lifting - usually within the capability of persons with no known medical conditions
20 - 25kg (56lbs)	Occasional lifting - usually within the capability of persons with no known medical condition.
25 - 35kg (56-75lbs)	Specific training required to be able to overcome lifting problems.
35-50kg (75-112lbs)	Within the capability of 2 well trained persons in an ideal environment.
>50kg (112lbs)	Mechanical handling required.

When carrying out manual handling assessments, the criteria shown below must be considered:-

The Tasks	The Loads
holding loads away from the trunk?	heavy?
twisting?	bulky/ unwieldy?
stooping?	difficult to grasp?
large vertical movements?	intrinsically harmful (sharp/ hot)?
strenuous pushing or pulling?	
long distances?	
unpredictable movement of loads?	
repetitive handling?	
insufficient rest or recovery?	
a work rate imposed by an activity?	

It is also important to consider the working environment, individual capability and other factors. For example, are there:-

constraints on posture?	poor floors/ ground conditions?
variations in levels?	hot/cold/humid conditions?
unusual capability requirements?	poor visibility conditions?
poor visibility conditions?	any health conditions to be considered?

When carrying out any manual handling activity, no person must risk injury through attempting to lift heavy loads. Always seek assistance.

The following precautions should be taken when lifting:-

Stand firmly, close to load, feet about 304mm (12") apart, one foot slightly ahead of the other.

With back straight, bend the knees. Keep chin tucked in.

Obtain a firm, diagonal grip. Keep load close to body.

Lift up by straightening legs and move off.

When lowering load, keep the back straight, bend legs.

Avoid trapping fingers by placing the load askew on suitable packing.

#### MAC - Manual Handling Assessment Charts

HSE, in conjunction with the Health & Safety Laboratory, have devised the MAC system to assist health and safety inspectors to assess the most common risk factors in lifting and lowering, carrying and team handling operations. Employers may also find the MAC useful to identify high-risk manual handling operations and help them complete their risk assessments.

The MAC is not appropriate for some manual handling operations, such as those involving pushing and pulling. Although its use does not comprise a full manual handling risk assessment, it can be a valuable aid.

Copies of the MAC booklet (INDG383) can be obtained from HSE Books (01787 881165).

**LIFTING PRACTICE**

Do not risk injury through attempting to lift heavy loads. Always seek assistance.

The following precautions should be taken when lifting:-

Stand firmly, close to load, feet about 304mm (12") apart, one foot slightly ahead of the other.

With back straight, bend the knees. Keep chin tucked in.

Obtain a firm, diagonal grip. Keep load close to body.

Lift up by straightening legs and move off.

When lowering load, keep the back straight, bend legs.

Avoid trapping fingers by placing the load askew on suitable packing.

**PORTABLE ELECTRICAL APPLIANCE TESTING**

Section 2 of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 requires employers to provide and maintain plant and equipment that is, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health. The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 imposes more explicit duties in this respect and has resulted in the need for the employers to carry out regular inspections and testing of equipment. These guidelines are intended to explain the requirements in regard to portable appliances.

The term 'portable' is used in its broadest sense and encompasses equipment, apparatus and appliances which are essentially movable or transportable and which are connected to an electrical supply by way of a flexible cable. Examples of such equipment are:

Drills	Kettles	Microwave Ovens	Lighting Towers
Heaters	Fans	Typewriters	Computers
Photocopiers	Fax Machines	Radios	Grinders
Televisions	Saws	Extension Leads	Lead Lamps
etc.	etc.		

The table below shows typical periods for checking, inspecting and testing of portable electrical appliances, but should only be used as a minimum standard. Where harsh working conditions are present it may be necessary to introduce a more rigorous programme.

Use	Visual Inspection	Full Inspection & Test
Commercials/ Office	3-6 Months	Annual
Industrial	Before each use	6 months
Construction	Daily	3 months
Premises used by public	Daily	Annual
Equipment Hire	Before Issue & on return	Before issue

Visual inspections should be carried out by a competent person as follows:-

- i). Visually check the equipment for signs of damage to the appliance, its connecting lead and the plug (including the security of the cable cord grip).
- ii). If the check reveals damage or inadequate temporary repairs to the lead or plug, the equipment must be taken out of use.

A full inspection & test must be carried out by an electrically skilled, trained and competent person with a knowledge of the function and safety requirements of the article under inspection. Further information regarding the content of the full inspection and test may be obtained from the Consultancy.

All portable electrical appliances must be identified, marked and logged in a register. The log should contain information of the appliance characteristics (name, model, date of purchase, serial no. etc.), inspection and test results, details of repairs and date of next inspection and test.

A test label may then be applied with a date for next inspection and test.

### **SAFE USE OF LADDERS**

***Ladders must only be used for access or as a workplatform after the site manager has assessed the operation and determined that no suitable alternative is available. Where their use is necessary, it will only be permitted if three points of contact can be maintained (ie. at least one hand must be holding the ladder at all times).***

All ladders in use **MUST BE SECURED** so as to prevent slipping:-

- a). At the top on both stiles- or if this is impracticable:-
- b). At or near the base on both stiles - or if this is impracticable:-
- c). Using recognised anti-slip devices, or:-
- c). A person must foot the ladder (standing on the bottom rung).

All access ladders must extend at least 5 rungs (1.10M) above a landing place or an alternative hand-hold provided for a user when ascending or descending.

The safe angle at which a ladder should be used is 75 degrees or 1 out and 4 up.

Timber ladders must not be painted so as to obscure defects.

Landing places should be provided at not more than 9m intervals when using a series of vertical ladders.

Where ladders pass through openings, these must be kept as small as is reasonably practicable.

Only one person should use a ladder at a time.

All ladders must be frequently inspected for damage, paying particular attention to splits or cracks, excessive warping and missing or defective rungs.

Written records of these inspections must be kept and accompany the equipment to every place of use.

### **STEP LADDERS**

Step Ladders must be of suitable height for the intended task.

Steps ladders must be in a good condition - check all steps and restraints.

Avoid the need to stand on the top of the step ladder unless it has been specifically designed for this purpose. If this is necessary, a second person must assist to foot the ladder to prevent overturning.

Do not use step ladders as supporting trestles for scaffold boards etc.

Step ladders may only be used where an assessment has been carried out and reveals that no safer reasonable alternative is available