



States of Guernsey

Health and Safety Executive

# Health and Safety in the Workplace

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General Guide-HSE-SoG-(Rev 08/23)

# About the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

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The Health and Safety Executive in Guernsey (HSE) is the regulator for workplace health and safety in Guernsey and Alderney.

The Health and Safety Executive works collaboratively with other regulators, States of Guernsey services and agencies to regulate businesses and protect the Bailiwick community.

As a regulator, HSE aim to prevent workplace fatalities, injury or ill health.

We achieve this using a variety of methods to influence change and help people manage risks at work. These include:

- providing [advice, information and guidance](#)
- raising awareness in workplaces by influencing and engaging
- operating permissioning and licensing activities in major hazard industries
- carrying out targeted inspections and investigations
- taking enforcement action to prevent harm and hold those who break the law to account

The fundamental principle of health and safety legislation is that those who create risks are best placed to control them. We take into account the impact on the economy, by ensuring any action we take is proportionate, targeted, consistent, transparent and accountable.

In Guernsey, HSE regulates all work activities, including:

- quarries
- farms
- factories
- waste management
- construction
- services
- retail
- hospitality
- healthcare
- scaffolding

**Employers and the self-employed** have legal duties under The [Health and Safety at Work \(General\) \(Guernsey\) Ordinance, 1987 as amended](#), this extends to all businesses.

**Employees** also have legal duties under The [Health and Safety at Work \(General\) \(Guernsey\) Ordinance, 1987 as amended](#), to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

When taking enforcement decisions HSE are required to follow their [Enforcement Policy Statement](#). The appropriate use of enforcement powers, including prosecution, is important, both to secure compliance with the law and to ensure that those who have duties under it may be held to account for failures to safeguard health, safety and welfare.

If there is no specific Guernsey legislation applicable, HSE Guernsey will use [UK legislation, approved codes of practice and guidance](#) as the appropriate standard to benchmark health and safety compliance.

# About this booklet

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This guide has been produced to provide a brief introduction to some of the main concerns in workplaces. It will be especially valuable to those setting up businesses and managing small firms and organisations.

This booklet does not give definitive legal advice, it is meant to help give you an overview of some hazards and risks you may encounter. You are not bound to follow this booklet but you must make sure you are doing enough to discharge your duties under [Health and Safety at Work \(General\) \(Guernsey\) Ordinance, 1987 as amended](#).

It is possible that not all of the topics covered in this booklet will apply to you or your business, but it will help you to identify work hazards, assess the risks to employees and others and decide on actions to reduce or eliminate the risks.

Sections 1-5 are relevant to all businesses and cover ways of organising your business to improve the management of health and safety. The latter sections discuss particular hazard and precautions.

There is also a website that gives advice and documents that may be downloaded. HSE is also contactable at the address below.

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Tel: 01481 220010

Email; [hse@gov.gg](mailto:hse@gov.gg)

 [www.hse.gov.gg](http://www.hse.gov.gg)

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# 1. THE LAW

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## The Health and Safety at Work (General) (Guernsey) Ordinance, 1987

This section provides a brief introduction to the current laws. Further guidance is available from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The Ordinance requires you to ensure [so far as is reasonably practicable](#), the the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees and others who may be affected by what you do, or fail to do.

You have duties towards people who:

- Work for you, including casual & work experience workers, part-timers, trainees and subcontractors
- Use workplaces you provide (i.e. you are a landlord)
- Are allowed to use your equipment
- Visit your premises (customers & contractors)
- May be affected by your work (public, other workers, your neighbours)
- Use products you make, supply or import
- Use your professional services (e.g. designers)

Part 1 of the Ordinance sets out the general duties which employers have towards employees and members of the public.

**Section 1(2)** defines the duty of an employer to his employees including;

- Provide & maintain plant and systems of work that are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health.

- Arrangements for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles & substances.
- The provision of information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of his employees.
- The provision & maintenance of a working environment for his employees that is, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe, without risks to health and adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for their welfare at work.

**Sections 1(3) & (4)** require all employers with 5 or more employees (or in prescribed cases) to prepare a written health and safety policy and bring this to the attention of his employees.

**Section 3** imposes a duty of those in control of premises which are used as places of work by individuals other than their employees to ensure these areas do not pose a risk to those using them (e.g. contractors).

**Section 4** Applies to those in control of factories, growing properties, quarries and any premises with plant capable of producing ionizing radiation to prevent any noxious or offensive substances being emitted to the atmosphere.

**Section 5** determines duties on designers, manufacturers, importers and suppliers of various articles for use at work, fairground equipment and substances to ensure that health and

safety issues are considered at all times from initial design stages to end user.

**Section 6** requires employees to take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by the way they work. Employees must also co-operate with their employer or any other person with legal requirements, for example by following a safe system of work or wearing the personal protective equipment provided.

**Section 7** requires that no person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided for health, safety or welfare to comply with the legal requirements.

**Section 8** specifies that employers must not charge for anything done or provided to comply with health and safety legislation. This includes personal protective equipment.

**Section 9** specifies what incidents, injuries and conditions must be reported to the Executive, and the timeframe this must be done in.

**Section 10** describes the duties to keep records of accidents, incidents and diseases.

**Part 2** of the Ordinance allows for the creation of Approved Codes of Practice (ACoP). These offer practical guidance on good practice and give advice on how to comply with the law.

Currently ACoPs exist for

- Guernsey Construction (Design and Management)
- Legionella
- Gas safety
- Diving at work
- Diving
- Ionizing radiations.
- Asbestos.

These are available online at

<https://www.gov.gg/hse>.

### Other Laws enforced by HSE.

There is a wide range of other laws that are enforced by the HSE, including:

*The Explosives (Guernsey) Law 1905 ( & subsequent amendments of 1914, 1951).;*  
*Loi relative aux Huiles ou Essences Minerales ou autres substances de la meme nature, 1924 ("Petroleum Law");*  
*Loi ayant rapport a l'Emploi de Femmes, de Jeunes Personnes et d'Enfants, 1926 ( Child and Young Persons protection),*  
*The Control of Poisonous Substances Regulations, 1995,*  
*The Public Highways Ordinance, 1967 (scaffolds & other structures on the public highway);*  
*The Safety of Pits Ordinance 1973;*  
*The Health & Safety at Work (Freight Containers Safety Convention) Ordinance, 1992;*  
*The Employers Liability (Compulsory Insurance) (Guernsey) Law, 1993,*  
*Gas Safety (Guernsey) Ordinance, 2006;*

### Enforcing the Law.

The legal requirements are enforced by the Guernsey Health and Safety Executive on behalf of the Employment and Social Services Department.

## What to expect when an Inspector visits your business

### During the visit

The inspector may look at how you manage your employees, and how you ensure anyone who may be affected by your work, healthy and safe.

They may also give you advice on health and safety or make sure you are providing suitable welfare facilities, such as running hot and cold water and toilets.

While the inspector is with you, they may:

- Ask you about your workers and what they do.
- Look at any possible health risks arising from the work you are doing.
- Look at any machinery or other equipment that you have.
- Ask to see records or other documents.
- Take photographs.

The inspector will want to know about:

- The main health and safety issues in your workplace.
- Your own knowledge or experience of health and safety.

The inspector may also talk to you about things like safety standards, guidance and everyday practices in your industry.

### Your workers

The inspector may ask to speak to your employees or their representatives during the visit.

### What if there's something wrong?

An inspector may take enforcement action if they find you're breaking the law during the visit.

They may also prohibit an activity they consider dangerous immediately if s/he is of the opinion that an activity carried on (or likely to be carried on) by or under the control of that person involves (or will involve) a risk of serious personal injury.

### After the visit

After the inspector has finished looking round your workplace, they might:

- Offer advice (either verbal or in writing)
- Write a Formal Letter of Advice
- Give you an improvement notice
- Give you a prohibition notice
- Prosecute you for breaching health and safety laws

### Advice

The inspector may give you advice, verbally or in writing, about some improvements you could make to health and safety in your workplace.

### Formal Letter of Advice

A Formal Letter of Advice (FLA) is a letter that tells you about health and safety laws you may have broken. It also explains how you've broken them.

A FLA will tell you what you need to do to stop breaking the law.

The inspector will only give you a FLA in accordance with the [HSE's Enforcement Management Model](#). This means the inspector thinks you have broken the law seriously enough for them to write to you about it.

HSE will give you a specified time frame to make any changes. Failure to follow any advice may be used as evidence of continued breach of health and safety laws.

### Improvement notice

An improvement notice will tell you:

- What's wrong
- Any changes you need to make to put things right
- How long you have to make those changes

HSE will give you a specific timeframe to make any changes. You commit a criminal offence if you don't make the changes in the timeframe we give you.

### Prohibition notice

A prohibition notice orders you to stop doing something until you have made it safe to continue.

This could be, for example, keeping workers off a roof until you fix any unsafe scaffolding. You commit a criminal offence if you don't comply with a prohibition notice.

### Prosecution

HSE can prosecute you for breaking health and safety laws or for failing to comply with an improvement notice or a prohibition notice.

The courts can fine you or in some cases send you to prison.

## 2. Managing Health & Safety

Management of health and safety plays a key part of an organisation's success and makes good business sense.

A continuous commitment to health and safety policies and training will often result in increased productivity and savings by reducing:

- Minor accidents
- Machine downtime
- Long-term illness
- Absenteeism
- Insurance claims and premiums
- Time and money spent on investigations

### Health and Safety Policy

Your business must have a health and safety policy, and if you have 5 or more employees, it should be written down. The policy is a plan that states how you intend to manage your health and safety responsibilities.

It should include:

#### **Statement of intent**

Which sets out your commitment to health and safety and what the company wishes to achieve

#### **Organisation Section**

Identifying who is responsible for what

#### **Arrangements Section**

What you will actually do to meet the commitments of your statement of intent.

#### **Risk Assessment**

A risk assessment is the first part in a successful risk management programme.

It is a tool to assist the duty holder in identifying and controlling those hazards with the ability to cause *real* harm.

A **hazard** is anything that may cause harm, such as chemicals, working from a ladder, asbestos, electricity etc.

The **risk** is the chance, whether high or low, that someone might be harmed by the hazard and how serious that harm could be.

### **Stages of Risk Assessment**

1. Identify the hazard
2. Decided who might be harmed & how
3. Evaluate the level of risk and decide on the precautions needed.
4. Record your findings and implement them
5. Review and update you assessment as and when necessary

You must bring your findings to the attention of your employees.

Remember that some workers may have particular requirements (e.g. young workers (under 18). Pregnant or nursing women, people with disabilities) which may require specific consideration in the risk assessment.

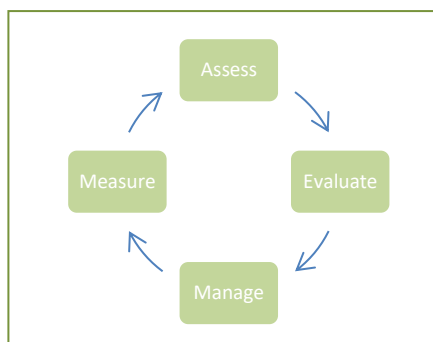
Most risks must be reduced **so far as is reasonably practicable. (SFAIRP)**

This involves weighing a risk against the trouble, time and money needed to control it. Thus, SFAIRP describes the level to which we expect to see workplace risks controlled.

More detailed information and templates to carry out risks assessment are available by request from our offices or by download from: [Risk assessment: Template and examples - HSE](#)



## Risk Management Process



### Training

Everyone who works for you needs to know how to work safely and without risk to their health. This includes contractors and self-employed people.

You must give your workers clear instructions and information, as well as adequate training and supervision.

[Provide information, training and supervision: Overview - HSE](#)

Make sure you include employees with particular training needs, for example new recruits, people changing jobs or taking on extra responsibilities, young employees and health and safety representatives.

Training isn't just about attending formal courses, although that can be an important part. It means helping your employees understand how to do something, and what they should or shouldn't do as well as giving them information to help them do their job correctly and safely.

You need to take into account your employee's capabilities, existing training, knowledge and experience.

All new employees will require a basic induction to the workplace, which will include what hazards are present, first aid provisions, fire and evacuation procedures, the company's health and safety policies and how to work safely for their specific job.

Any one changing job, or taking on extra responsibilities will also need to be trained up to cover the health and safety arrangements for their new role.

Some training can be given in-house, by experienced and competent employees either in groups, (e.g. tool box talks) or individually by supervised on-the-job training.

Some jobs will need formal qualifications from external providers, for example, operators of fork lift trucks, hi-ab cranes, first-aid, asbestos awareness, legionella management.

There are a wide range of course providers in Guernsey to help you meet your training needs as well as many online H&S specialists.

### Safeguards

Do your employees now understand what is required of them?

Are they actually working as they have been trained?

What feedback are you getting from line managers and the employees?

Are you seeing an improvement in your health and safety performance?

Can you make any more improvements?

You must record the training your employee has received, even in-house training.

For formal qualifications you may wish to take photo copies of the awards (e.g. course certificates, CSCS cards) and keep them on their personal training file.

This will also help you to identify when any 'refresher' training is required.

## 3. Accidents & Emergencies

By thinking about what might happen and planning how to deal with a possible emergency, you are more likely to be able to respond quickly and effectively in an emergency, whether it's a simple accident, or a major incident.

You need to be able to plan for a reasonably foreseeable incident. This might need to be a written emergency plan if a major incident at your work is possible.

### Plan for what might go wrong:

Accidents, dangerous occurrences, occupational diseases, explosions, flood, poisoning, electrocution, fires, chemical spills?

### Tell people:

- What might happen, and if it does, how the alarm will be raised.
- What to do including: how to get to safety, how to call the emergency services, where to get rescue equipment.
- Who will be in control of the incident and those who will be key individuals, such as first aiders.
- Essential actions such as emergency plant shut down or making processes safe.

### First Aid

Quick action in the event of injuries or sudden illness in the workplace may save a life. It is important that employers ensure employees get immediate attention in these circumstances.

All businesses must have an appropriate level of first aid treatment available. This is determined by the number of employees and the level of risk within the organisation.

In some instances trained first aiders will be required. However, the

minimum standard is one Appointed Person, who will take charge when someone is injured or falls ill and is responsible for checking the First Aid box is maintained.

An appointed person must be available at all time, so cover for holidays, sickness, shifts etc. may involve appointing more than one.

First Aid boxes should be available and appropriately stocked.

Approved training courses are strongly recommended for staff.

### After an Accident or Serious Incident.

1. Treat any injuries and deal with the immediate emergency.
2. Make the area/premises safe.
3. If required notify the HSE by the quickest means possible.
4. Record any injuries in your accident book.
5. If applicable complete an accident report form and submit to HSE within 7 days.

See [www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid](http://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid).

### CHECKLIST

- ✓ Always keep access ways for emergency services and escape routes clear.
- ✓ Label critical items like shut off valves, electrical isolators and fire fighting equipment.
- ✓ Make sure your emergency plans cover all eventualities (night working, shifts, weekends, bank holidays)
- ✓ Test emergency equipment on a regular basis.
- ✓ Have a system to account for staff and visitors in the event of an evacuation.

*Further information on what must be reported to HSE is available in the booklet "Reporting an Injury, disease or Dangerous occurrence" available from our website and offices.*

## 4. The General Working Environment

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**Comfortable work environments lead to a happier and healthier workforce.**

The following information will guide you on some of the facilities and standards that should be achieved in order to comply with your duty to provide a reasonable standard of welfare for workers and visitors.

### Space Requirements

Work rooms need enough space to allow people to get to and from their workstations and move about the room with ease. The number of people comfortably working in a room at any time will depend on room size but also space taken up by furniture, equipment & fittings.

As a general guide, when the volume of the room is divided by the number of people in it, the sum should be at least 11 cubic metres (When calculating, any height over 3m should be counted as 3m)

### Thermal Comfort.

Temperatures in workrooms should provide reasonable comfort without the need for special clothing.

An acceptable environment depends on air temperature and also relative humidity, air movement, nature of the work, the individual and clothing worn.

Temperatures should normally be at least 16°C, unless the work includes physical effort (where 13°C is the minimum). These temperatures only apply to inside workplaces.

To ensure thermal comfort you may wish to consider some of the following measures:

- Reduce draughts

- Provide mechanical ventilation where fresh air is insufficient
- Shade windows
- Insulate hot plant or pipes
- Re-evaluate dress codes
- Provide local heating/cooling devices where comfortable temperatures can not be achieved.

### Cleanliness, Floors & Gangways

Every workplace, including its furniture, furnishings and fittings should be kept clean. Good housekeeping is needed to clear refuse, trade waste and dirt regularly.

- Floors and gangways must be kept clean, dry and not slippery.
- Level, even surfaces maintained without holes or broken floor boards.
- Designated storage for items to stop thoroughfares becoming obstructed.
- Suitable footwear and/or working platforms provided where needed.
- Gangways and roadways well marked and kept clear.
- Steps, corners and obstacles clearly marked ( i.e. black & yellow diagonal stripes)
- Floor opening ( e.g. vehicle pits) kept covered when not in use, with edges clearly marked.

### Lighting

Lighting must be sufficient to allow people to move around safely. If required, extra local lighting should be provided at individual workstations and where there are particular risks, such as stairwells. Lighting and the light fitting should be properly installed and maintained so as not to create any hazard.

In addition:

- Provide good general illumination without glare.
- Lights and windows should be regularly cleaned
- Fluorescent tubes should not flicker
- Specially constructed fittings should be installed for flammable or explosive atmosphere (e.g. during paint spraying)
- Light colour wall finishes improve brightness.

### Design for Good Health.

Ensure:

- Adequate space for easy movement and safe machine adjustment
- Seats and benches are at sensible heights and lifting aids are available to reduce back injuries
- Seats are of suitable design , construction and dimension with back rest to support the small of the back and where needed a footrest
- Machine controls and instruments are designed and arranged for best control and posture
- Special tools and good design of work areas to reduce hand/forearm injury from repetitive movements
- Engineering controls, such as local exhaust ventilation is installed to reduce health risks from dangerous substances and noise.

### Hygiene & Welfare

The number of toilets required depends on the number of people expected to use them.

One toilet is sufficient for up to 5 persons should it be for mixed use, or women only. If the toilet is only for the use of men, and a urinal is provided, one toilet to every 15 men is acceptable.

Separate facilities must be provided for men and women unless the facilities

are in a room with a door capable of being locked from the inside.

Toilets must be kept clean and in orderly condition. They do not have to be within the workplace, but if possible should be located within the building. Toilet paper should be provided in a holder or dispenser. In the case of conveniences that will be used by women, suitable means should be provided for the disposal of sanitary dressings.

Sufficient washing facilities with clean hot and cold, or warm running water, soap and towels, ( or dryers) should be provided. They should be large enough to allow effective washing of the face, hands and forearms.

Where work is especially dirty, strenuous or may result in contamination of the skin by harmful or offensive materials, the provision may have to be increased (i.e. include showering facilities).

### Smoking

Smoking in the workplace is prohibited by Guernsey law.

The Smoke (Prohibition in Public Places and Workplaces) (Exemptions and Notices) (Guernsey) Ordinance 2006 is administered by the Office of Environmental Health and Pollution Regulation who may be contacted on telephone (01481) 221161

Contact the Health and Safety Executive for more information and advice regarding welfare arrangements at work including provision for pregnant and nursing mothers, drinking water, changing facilities and workplace ventilation.

## 5. Managing Health

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Work related ill health, or occupational ill health, is any illness or condition suffered because of the hazards a person is exposed to at work.

The most common work-related health problems are:

- Muscle and joint disorders
- Noise related hearing loss
- Stress
- Lung diseases(i.e. asthma)

People at work can encounter a wide range of substances and environments capable of damaging their health.

Individuals usually suffer as a result of long-term exposure to the damaging conditions. For example repeatedly lifting excessive loads, prolonged exposure to dust, high noise levels from machines or excessive pressure, high workloads or bullying at work.

Employees should be encouraged to report any problems as soon as possible, but this should not be the only method of identify potential problems.

For certain health issues, such as noise induced hearing loss, working with lead, and vibration white finger/HAVs, contact dermatitis health surveillance will be appropriate. This will involve pre-employment checks and questionnaires and employees undergoing medical examinations at appropriate intervals to check no conditions are developing.

### **Work related Stress.**

Whilst pressure is an accepted element of work which helps us to keep motivated, excessive pressure may lead to stress, undermining performance destroying workplace morale and can

make people ill, which is costly to employers.

Six main areas have been identified which may give risk to work-related stress if not correctly managed.

**Demands-** workload, work patterns and the work environment

**Control-** How much say the employee has in the way they do their work.

**Support-** the degree of encouragement, resources, investment and mentoring that is received from the organization, line managers and colleagues.

**Relationships-** including promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behavior

**Role.** If the individual understands their role in the organization and whether the organisation ensure that person does not have conflicting roles.

**Change-** How the organization is managed and communications within it.

The UK HSE has developed a series of management standards to explain these areas more fully and help you identify where there are any areas from improvement within your organisation.

### **Noise.**

Excessive noise exposure accelerates the normal hearing loss we experience with age. As it happens gradually, it may not be noticed by the individual. Additionally, there are less obvious side affected of increased pulse rate, blood pressure and breathing rate indicating excessive noise also causes stress.

If you think noise may be a problem in your workplace, the first step is to arrange for a noise survey to be undertaken by a competent person who can advise you on the findings and anything you need to do to control the risks.

The level of risk is not only from the noise level, but how long employees are exposed to the noise on a daily or weekly basis.

Protection against noise at its source is the best remedy. Below is a sequence of actions will reduce exposure.

### **INDIVIDUAL HEARING PROTECTION SHOULD BE A LAST RESORT.**

- Introduce a low noise purchasing policy for new equipment and machinery
- Design the machine and process to produce less noise
- Enclose noisy machined with sound insulating panels or other engineering controls such as exhaust silencers.
- Ensure all machinery is subject to regular maintenance as wear and tear increases noise levels.
- Reduce the duration of exposure by job rotation or providing a noise refuge.
- Get operators in noisy areas to wear ear protection.
- Health surveillance may be appropriate in some cases.

**If people have to shout to be heard when they are two metres apart, or closer, you probably have a noise problem.**

### **Display Screen Equipment**

If not correctly managed, working with computer screens and other display screen equipment can lead to upper limb disorders or back pain, stress or visual fatigue.

Employers should ensure a competent person assesses each individuals working with this equipment and their work stations:

- Ensuring the workstation meets the minimum requirements

- Ensuring equipment, furniture, the work environment, and software meets minimum requirements
- Provide additional equipment such as wrist rests, document holders etc. if identified as necessary by the assessment
- Plan for breaks or changes of activity
- Provide training and information

Employers must also ensure these steps are taken for homeworkers.

### **Hand-Arm Vibration (HAVs)**

The effects of exposure to HAV can be extremely debilitating and irreversible, such as “vibration white finger”

Employees can be exposed by use of a wide range of tools such as strimmer’s, chainsaws, breakers etc.

Symptoms are wide ranging, but can include numbness and tingling in the fingers, blanching (whiteness) of the fingers from effects on circulation, reduction in the sense of touch and a loss of dexterity.

There are several steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of exposure to excessive vibration levels:

- Introduce new equipment and machinery.
- Identify existing hazardous machines and tools.
- Develop a system of work that does not involve high vibration tools.
- Ensure tools are adequately maintained to reduce vibration.
- Limit the time employees spend using vibrating tools by rotating tasks.

You should provide your employees with information on the risk and the signs and symptoms to look for. They must be encouraged to report any signs early on so further damage can be avoided and they can be removed from the particular work activity. In this event, reassess the working practice.



## 6. Safe Use of Hazardous Substances

Hazardous substances exist in many forms and can cause both short- and long-term health effects.

They include liquids, aerosols, dusts, and fumes. These hazardous substances are used in the workplace and can affect workers from many different backgrounds such as car sprayers, bakers, cleaners, welders, hairdressers, and many others.

Hazardous substances are not always the chemicals you might expect. Flour, grain, hay, latex and wood dust are some of the most common substances responsible for occupational asthma. Even prolonged daily contact of the hands and forearms with water (2+ hours) may cause dermatitis.

### **RULES FOR THE WORKPLACE**

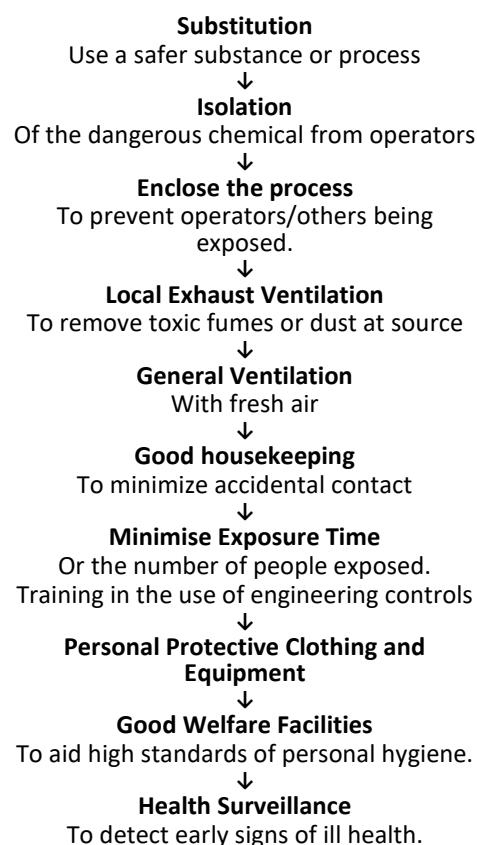
- Don't smoke, eat or drink in chemical handling areas and do not keep food there
- Don't siphon or pipette by mouth. Use a pump or manually primed siphon.
- Don't transfer contamination (e.g. putting pencils etc in mouth) Wash your hands before leaving the workplace.
- Keep dangerous materials in a locked place, which only approved persons have access to. Maintain a record of their use and a stock list.

Before using a potentially hazardous substance, consider its possible ill effects and find out how it can be handled and used safely. Employers must ensure they have identified all hazardous substances and assess their use. Where applicable you should refer

to the information on the container labels and the Safety Data Sheets which your supplier is legally obliged to provide with the product.

You need to consider the storage and handling and disposal of the substances as well as its "normal" use in the workplace.

This list shows the order that you should address controlling risk from hazardous substances. You may need a combination of control measures.



Persons using the hazardous substances must be advised of the risks and be thoroughly trained in the precautions and methods required to prevent injury or ill-health.

For further information see [Control of Substances Hazardous to Health \(COSHH\) - HSE](#).

## 7. Slips and Trips.

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A very large proportion of reported accidents in Guernsey every year are attributable to slips and trips. They are also responsible for a number of injuries caused to the public when on work premises, and in causing secondary injuries.

Injuries can range from mild bruising to fractured bones, and these can have very serious conditions for certain groups of people, such as the elderly.

To reduce this risk, you should ensure floors and walkways are:

- ✓ **Well lit**
- ✓ **Unobstructed**
- ✓ **Even and with non-slip surfaces**
- ✓ **Kept in a good state of repair**
- ✓ **Cleaned, as far as possible, when access is not required. (If this is not possible, they should be dried immediately after cleaning.)**
- ✓ **Cleaned with appropriate substances for the floor material (as otherwise slippery residues may accumulate.)**
- ✓ **Cleaned as soon as possible if any accidental spillages occur.**

Individual factors at your workplace, (e.g. the amount of pulling, carrying, pushing or rushing about) will impact on how you need to look at the risk.

### Issues to consider.

- Are anti-slip mats provided in wet floor areas, particularly entrances? Do they present a trip hazard in themselves?
- Is appropriate protective footwear given to staff (such as non-slip, or with an appropriate tread)
- Are there emergency spill cleanup procedures? Do staff know them?
- Are any rugs or mats securely fixed or have non-slip backings, and without curled up edges?
- Is rubbish regularly cleared and not allowed to build up?
- Are changes in floor level avoided where possible and where not, indicated with high visible tread nosing or appropriate markings on slopes?
- Are hand rails provided on slopes, stairs and steps
- Do steps/stairs have uniform risers and treads, i.e. the same size step and vertical lift?
- Are contractors adequately instructed and supervised to ensure that they do not create slip and trip hazards?
- Are outside pathways and steps etc., adequately maintained and cleaned?
- Are they flat, secure, without potholes and cleaned of leaves and algae?
- Are heavy, bulky or dangerous items frequently carried?

For further information see [Slips and trips - HSE](#).



## 8. Machinery Safety & Lifting Equipment

Machines are used across a very wide range of industries and vary greatly in the amount of risk posed to operators.

As part of the duties under Section 1(2) of the Ordinance, the employer must ensure that plant and equipment is well maintained and without risks to health.

Injury is normally caused by moving parts and can result in seriously debilitating injuries and even fatalities.

**All dangerous parts of machines MUST be guarded.**

Dangerous parts should be out of reach or there should be a safeguard to eliminate or reduce the danger before someone comes in to contact with them. Guards must be strong enough, to withstand the environment they are in, and if fixed they should not be too easily removed (i.e., a tool is required).

If frequent access to parts is needed, interlocked guards are more suitable. The motor will not start before the guard is in position and if the guard is opened, the machine stops.

Occasionally a trip system such as photoelectric safety systems, pressure sensitive mats or automatic guards may be more suitable. However, the inertia or 'wind-down' time of the machinery must be considered and specialist advice is likely to be required.

There are a wide range of guards available, and you should contact the supplier or manufacturer of your machinery for further advice.

### Lifting Equipment

If you provide or have control of lifting equipment at work, you must make sure that it is safe. As well as having a

routine maintenance and visual inspection scheme, **the duty holder must have all lifting equipment and associated gear Thoroughly Examined every year (or every 6 months in the case of equipment which lifts people)**.

Thorough Examinations are detailed inspections performed by an independent, competent and trained person. If you do not have this system in place, your insurance company will be able to organise this for you.

This requirement applies to all lifting equipment i.e., forklift trucks, work-savers, tail lifts, tower cranes, bath hoists, scissor lifts, stair lifts, passenger and goods lifts, and their lifting accessories (hooks, chains, shackles etc)

### Machinery Operator's Checklist

EVERYTIME check that:

- You know how to stop the machine before you start it.
- All fixed guards are correctly fitted and all mechanical guards are working correctly.
- All materials are clear of working parts of the machine.
- The surrounding area is clean, tidy and free from obstructions.
- You must tell your supervisor immediately if you think your machine is not working properly.
- You are wearing the appropriate protective clothing and equipment.

### NEVER

- ✗ Use a machine unless you are authorised and trained to do so.
- ✗ Attempt to clean or maintain a machine in motion. Switch it off and unplug it.
- ✗ Use a machine with a danger sign or tag attached. These signs should only be removed by an authorised, competent person who is satisfied of the machine's or process's safety.
- ✗ Wear dangling chains, loose clothing, gloves, rings, or long hair which could get caught up in moving parts.

## 9. Electricity

### Electrical Safety

Incidents involving electricity can lead to fires, explosions and burns as well as electrical shocks.

The use of electrical safety in the workplace is covered by The Safety of Employees (Electricity) Ordinance 1956, as well as the main The Health and Safety at Work (General) (Guernsey) Ordinance.

The following considerations must be made.

Ensure installations are safe by providing adequate socket outlets, fitting circuit breaks and providing emergency switches where needed.

All electrical installations should be inspected and periodically tested by a competent person.

Mains switches are easily accessible and clearly identified, and everyone knows how to use them in an emergency.

Portable electrical equipment should be subject to periodic inspections and testing by a competent person. Records should be kept. See [Maintaining portable electrical equipment HSG107. Table 1 for suggested maintenance intervals.](#)

Any repairs to electrical equipment must only be undertaken by competent people, with proper training and experience.

Where possible low voltage equipment should be used, especially in high-risk premises such as construction sites.

Suspect or faulty equipment must be taken out of use immediately, put in a

secure place and labeled "do not use" until attended to by a competent person.

All employees should be observant for signs of potential failures, e.g. scorching on plugs or wall sockets, frayed cables or cables with wiring exposed.

### Portable Appliance Testing (PAT).

For low risk environments such as offices, much equipment will not require PAT, only visual examination. However, as some faults cannot be seen visually all earthed equipment should have occasional combined PAT and visual inspections.

### Electrical Shock

Voltage as low as 50V can cause a current to flow between two points in the body sufficient to stop normal signals between body and the brain. This can cause the heart to stop, prevent the person from breathing and cause muscle spasms. Spasms may cause the individual to continue to hold the point of contact, or cause a secondary injury by falling, or being thrown.

Electrical burns occur when a current passes through the body and heats tissue along the length of current flow. This can result in deep burns, often requiring major surgery which may be permanently disabling. People may receive thermal burns if they get too near hot surfaces or if they are near an electrical explosion.

Electrical burns may penetrate the tissue, **any individual with an electrical burn must go to hospital regardless of how trivial the burn looks.** There is no way to tell how bad the burn is on the inside from the way it looks on the outside.

# 10. Work at Height

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Falls from height continue to be a major cause of serious injury and fatalities.

Ideally, work at height should be avoided: Can you find a different method? However, this is often not possible and many jobs around the workplace may be done using ladders, trestles or scaffolds. You must ensure there is a safe means of access and a safe system of work. This should be appropriate to the nature of the work. The next section covers some of the access methods.

Scaffolds are not covered in this general guide as they should only be designed, erected, altered and dismantled under the direction of a competent person and by competent and experience workers.

Use fans, barriers, warning notices and 'lookouts' to prevent items are falling on to people below. NOTHING should ever be thrown from height to the ground.

**You must first try to AVOID and then PREVENT a fall, before using measures that will MINIMISE or LIMIT the consequences of a fall from height.**

## Ladders

Secure ladders from slipping by tying them at the top. Alternatively secure them at the side. A second person "footing" the ladder to stop slipping is effective only with ladders less than 6m long.

Ladders should extend at least 1 m above the landing place or the highest rung in use.

Think of a way to carry tools and materials so that both hands are free to

grip the ladder and maintain three points of contact at all times. Make sure the ladder footing is firm and level. Never use bases such as oil drums or planks.

Extending ladders should overlap by three rungs at least.

Check your ladders regularly for defects.

Ensure your ladder is at a stable angle. 75° is ideal.

Ensure employees are not overreaching. The navel/belt buckle should always remain between the ladder stiles and both feet should be on the same rung.

These principles apply to stepladder work as well.

## Roof Work.

If you, your employees or contractors need access to repair, clean, inspect or replace roofs you should:

Make sure you have a safe system of work that everyone is aware of.

Don't carry out roof work in bad weather, such as high winds. Monitor the weather continually.

Fix warning notices near fragile roofs (asbestos cement, glass etc.)

Make sure edges are protected by permanent guard rails or a parapet. This also applies to flat roofs.

When on a fragile roof, never walk on the valley gutters, roof ridges or purlins unless there is something to stop you falling through the roof.

Use crawling boards on fragile or pitched roofs.

Where there are no permanent protection measures installed temporary guardrails and toe boards must be installed, or anchorage points for safety belts in a work positioning system.

If the roof edges are not protected, consider using work equipment to prevent people falling, i.e. cherry pickers, scissor lifts, but ensure users are trained and competent to use.

Airbags, safety nets & fall arrest equipment will also minimize injury but installers/users must be trained, equipment set up correctly and there must be rescue procedures in place.

Be aware of other hazards that may be present (i.e., fumes from flue outlets.)

See [Health and safety in roof work at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg33](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg33)

### Mobile Scaffolds

Use the manufacturer or supplier's instruction sheet to calculate the maximum height allowed in relation to the base dimension. This includes the outriggers if they are fitted. The base: height ration is often 1:3

Erect and dismantle towers using approved erection methods such as "advance guard rail system" or "through the trap [3T] method.\*

Towers must rest on firm, level ground with the lock castors or base plates correctly supported.

Install outriggers when advised to do so in the instruction manual.

Be aware of activities or conditions that will affect the tower stability, such as sheeting, and exposure to winds, loading with equipment, using the

tower to hoist materials or support chutes.

Provide a safe way to get to and from the work platform from inside the tower.

Provide suitable edge protection where necessary.

Never use a tower to support ladders or other access, in weather that may destabilize it, if it is broken or missing parts or if it has incompatible components.

When moving the tower, reduce the height to a maximum of 4m and check there are no obstructions above and that the ground is clear.

The tower must be inspected by a competent person after assembly, after any event that may have affected the stability and if more than 2m high, every 7 days. (if less than 2m high, then this is reduced to suitable intervals based on usage)

Remember to erect barriers at ground level if towers are used in public area.

*\*Available from the Prefabricated Access Suppliers and Manufacturers Association (PASMA) and from the HSE Construction Information Sheet #10.*

### Other Work at Height.

Cover floor openings, such as cellars, stairwells, vats and pits, or put a fencing around them.

Fit safety hoops or rest stages on long stretches of fixed ladders.

Do not use a forklift truck for access unless it is fitted with a proper, inspected and approved cage to secure to the forks.

See [Work at height - HSE](#) for comprehensive guidance.

# 11. Manual Handling

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Manual handling means transporting or supporting a load by hand or bodily force. It includes lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving loads. A load can be an object, person or animal.

The law sets out how employers must deal with risks from manual handling:

- avoid hazardous manual handling, [so far as reasonably practicable](#)
- assess the risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided
- reduce the risk of injury from hazardous manual handling to as low as reasonably practicable

The weight of a load is important, though the law does not set specific weight limits.

In some cases, you must [provide information](#) about the weight and position of the centre of gravity of each load, if there is a risk of injury and it is reasonably practicable to do this.

Wherever it is possible you must minimize the amount of manual handling employees need to do and consider:

- Can the workplace be reorganized in a more logical fashion to reduce how much/often an item needs to be moved?
- Is automation, mechanisation possible? (Ensure that if you choose these methods that you are not introducing more risk)
- Can you use handling aids to help?

If operations cannot be avoided, then they need to be properly assessed.

Most situations will only need a few minutes observation to work out a way to make the activity less physically demanding and risky.

If the lifting operation is more complicated, (e.g., involving twisting movements, long distances, repetitive nature) then the assessment should be recorded.

Ask your employees for input. They do the job and often know what the main problems are and have ideas for solving them.

When assessing the load, you should also consider the shape, size and composition as well as its weight, as this affects how easily it can be handled.

Some assessments can be generic, but where there are relevant individual factors, such as stature, age, outstanding injuries, returning to work after illness or injuries, disability, then you may need to complete an individual risk assessment.

See [Manual handling at work - Musculoskeletal disorders - HSE](#).

## Reducing Risk-Points to consider

- Train staff in proper lifting techniques, and make sure that these are used.
- Breaking load in to smaller parts.
- Providing mechanical assistance if necessary
- Provide a safe system of working. job rotation to avoid repetition.
- Encourage staff to report symptoms early as this will identify where control measures may need review.
- Provide handles or other aids to ensure a firm hold.
- Provide protection for hands and feet.
- Keep environment clear of obstructions and well lit.

## 12. Flammable Liquids & Compressed Gas Cylinders

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The use and storage of flammable liquids is covered by the Loi relative aux Huiles ou essences Minerales ou autres substances de la meme nature, 1923 (as amended).

Storing large quantities of these substances may require a license. This advice applies to non-licensable amounts.

See [Flammable liquid safety](#) for licensing information.

Consider the following points to make sure you are working safely.

- V** VENTILATION: Store, dispense and use flammable liquids where there is plenty of fresh air so any vapours will disperse rapidly.
- I** IGNITION Ensure there are no obvious ignition sources, such as sparks from electrical equipment, welding and cutting tools, exposed flames, smoking materials etc. Treat any container or drum with flammable liquids in the same way you would a full one, there may be residues or vapours left.
- C** CONTAINMENT. Use lidded containers and catchment trays to stop accidental spillages. Have Absorbent material at hand to quickly soak up spills. Staff must be aware of spill procedures.
- E** EXCHANGE. Can you exchange the substances for less flammable ones, or non-flammable liquids?
- S** SEPARATION Store flammable substances well away from other

processes and general storage areas. Store the substances safely. A metal cupboard or bin for quantities between 5 and 50L should have a 30-minute fire resistance. Larger amounts should be stored in banded areas with 1 hour fire resistance.

### Compressed Gas Cylinders.



### Basic Precautions

Ensure the cylinders are designed and manufactured to the approved standard and have been inspected prior to service.

All employees should receive training and be able to carry out external visual inspection of the cylinder and attachments to check if they are damaged.

Ensure they are clearly marked to show contents and any associated danger signs

Securely restrain cylinders to stop them falling over.

Cylinders containing flammable gas should not be stored in a part of a building used for any other purpose and should not be vulnerable to impact hazards (e.g. fork lift trucks)

Protect cylinders from external heat sources.

Don't drop, roll or drag cylinders. Use suitable cradles, slings or clamps when lifting and moving.

## 13. Legionella

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Legionnaires' disease is a form of pneumonia caused by some Legionella bacteria and it kills about 13% of those infected.

People may get infected when they breathe in tiny water droplets (aerosols) or droplet nuclei (particles left after water has evaporated) contaminated with Legionella bacteria.

The risk of bacterial growth is compounded for any establishment containing any of these sources where the system is shut-down for extended periods of weeks / months and the water in the system is not routinely flushed and allowed to stagnate.

The Approved Code of Practice: The Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems in Guernsey contains practical guidance on how to manage and control the risks in your system.

### Identify and assess sources of risk

Carrying out a risk assessment is your responsibility. You may be competent to carry out the assessment yourself but, if not, you should call on help and advice from a competent person.

You or the person responsible for managing risks, need to understand your water systems. Identify whether they are likely to create a risk from exposure to legionella, and whether:

- the water temperature in all or some parts of the system is between 20–45 °C.
- water is stored or re-circulated as part of your system.
- there are sources of nutrients such as rust, sludge, scale, organic matter and biofilms.
- the conditions are likely to encourage bacteria to multiply.

- it is possible for water droplets to be produced and, if so, whether they can be dispersed over a wide area, e.g. showers and aerosols from cooling towers.
- it is likely that any of your employees, residents, visitors etc. are more susceptible to infection due to age, illness, a weakened immune system etc. and whether they could be exposed to any contaminated water droplets.

Your risk assessment should include:

- management responsibilities, including the name of the competent person and a description of your system.
- competence and training of key personnel.
- any identified potential risk sources.
- any means of preventing the risk or controls in place to control risks.
- monitoring, inspection and maintenance procedures.
- records of the monitoring results and inspection and checks carried out.
- arrangements to review the risk assessment regularly, particularly when there is reason to suspect it is no longer valid.

If you conclude that there is no reasonably foreseeable risk or the risks are low and are being properly managed to comply with the law, your assessment is complete.

You may not need to take any further action at this stage, but any existing controls must be maintained and the assessment reviewed regularly in case anything changes in your system.

The British Standards Institute have published a standard for [legionella risk assessment](#).



### Preventing or controlling the risk

If you identify a risk that you are unable to prevent, you must introduce a course of action i.e. a written control scheme, that will help you to manage the risk from legionella by implementing effective control measures, by describing:

- your system, e.g. develop a schematic diagram.
- who is responsible for carrying out the assessment and managing its implementation.
- the safe and correct operation of your system.
- what control methods and other precautions you will be using.
- what checks will be carried out, and how often will they be carried out, to ensure the controls remain effective.

### You should:

- ensure that the release of water spray is properly controlled.
- avoid water temperatures and conditions that favour the growth of legionella and other micro-organisms.
- ensure water cannot stagnate anywhere in the system, keep pipe lengths as short as possible and remove redundant pipework (often referred to as dead legs).
- avoid materials that encourage the growth of legionella.
- keep the system and the water in it clean.
- treat water to either control the growth of legionella (and other microorganisms) or limit their ability to grow.
- monitor any control measures applied.
- keep records of these and other actions taken, such as maintenance or repair work.

### Keeping records

Records should include details of the:

- a. person or persons responsible for conducting the risk assessment,

managing, and implementing the written scheme.

- b. significant findings of the risk assessment.
- c. written control scheme and details of its implementation.
- d. details of the state of operation of the system, i.e. in use/not in use.
- e. results of any monitoring inspection, test or check carried out, and the dates.

These records should be retained throughout the period for which they remain current and for at least two years after that period. Records kept in accordance with (e) should be retained for at least five years.

Under the Health and Safety at Work (General) (Guernsey) Ordinance, 1987, Section 9 and Schedule 2 Part I (9), some positive Legionella results must be **reported (online form)** to the HSE depending on the number of Colonies Forming Units (CFU) found:

**Between 0 and 99 CFU/L:** No requirement to report to the HSE; take corrective action (for example cleaning, flushing) and resample.

**Between 100 and 999 CFU/L:** Report to the HSE (e-mail is acceptable) with a list of remedial actions either taken or to be taken within a specific time frame.

**1000 CFU/L and above: RIDDOR** online report to the HSE with an IMMEDIATE plan of action and ongoing investigative/remedial action.

See The Approved Code of Practice: **The Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems in Guernsey** Checklist 2 for recommended inspection frequencies including:

- Hot water services
- Cold water services
- Shower heads
- Little used outlets and more



# 14. Asbestos

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Asbestos is the single greatest cause of work-related deaths in the UK. It can be present today in any building built or refurbished before the year 2000.

## What are the risks of exposure?

There is still potential for exposure to asbestos in a variety of workplaces.

Much asbestos cannot be easily identified from its appearance.

Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) can be inadvertently disturbed during maintenance, repair or refurbishment works on a building.

Drilling, cutting or other disturbance of existing ACMs can release asbestos fibers into the air which can then be inhaled.

The only way to be certain if a building or workplace has asbestos is to have an asbestos survey carried out by a competent person.

Asbestos was most commonly used as:

- A spray coating on steel work, concrete walls and ceilings, for fire protection and insulation
- Insulation lagging in buildings and factories, on pipework and for boilers and ducts. Asbestos insulating board, used as wall partitions, fire doors, ceiling tiles, etc.
- Asbestos cement products such as sheeting on walls and roofs, tiles, cold water tanks, gutters, pipe and in decorative plaster finishes 2
- Asbestos bituminous products such as roofing felt, gutter linings, damp proof courses, mastics and adhesives for floor tiles and wall coverings

- Textured decorative coatings, such as paints and ceiling plasters, used to produce visual effects.

The people most at risk from exposure include general maintenance staff, construction workers, plumbers, electricians, fitters, cabling engineers, computer installers, demolition workers and asbestos removal workers.

## Safeguards

Consider if there is likely to be ACMs in the workplace', e.g. based on age of building.

If you own or occupy a commercial building, or own or manage a rented domestic property, you will need to prepare an asbestos management plan in accordance with the [Control of Asbestos ACoP](#)

This involves obtaining an asbestos management survey, which will identify likely asbestos-containing materials and mark them on drawings to form an asbestos register.

As there is a positive duty to manage asbestos, your asbestos management plan will also identify any measures required to prevent the disturbance of materials, or their removal if they are in a poor condition.

You must use specialist asbestos removal contractors for work involving asbestos insulation, coatings and asbestos insulating board (AIB)

Manage in place those ACMs which are in sound condition e.g. make sure all asbestos is clearly identified (e.g. labels), sealed and protected against further damage.

You do not have to remove asbestos-containing materials if they are not damaged and do not pose risks to the persons within the building. You can simply manage them and review their condition regularly.

If asbestos containing materials are damaged, they may need to be removed and a competent asbestos surveyor or removal contractor should be consulted.

### **Building maintenance, repair and refurbishment workers**

Workers undertaking building maintenance are particularly at risk of exposure to asbestos fibres released when asbestos-containing materials are disturbed.

Before you carry out any maintenance, repair or refurbishment, on buildings built prior to 2000, you should check the asbestos register and management plan in a commercial building, or obtain an asbestos survey in domestic premises.

Provide this information to other employers (e.g. building contractors) who are likely to disturb any asbestos present, so that they can put in place appropriate control while the work is being done.

Ensure they understand the information, you may need to brief them verbally and show them around your site, if English isn't their first language ensure you present the information in a format they can understand.

If you are unsure about whether certain materials contain asbestos, you should presume they do and treat them as such.

Remember that the duty to manage is all about putting in place the practical steps necessary to protect maintenance workers and others from the risk of exposure to asbestos fibres - it is not about removing all asbestos

If you uncover any hidden material or dust which you suspect may contain asbestos, stop work and get advice (you may contact HSE on 01481 220010 for additional information on emergency decontamination).

### **Asbestos waste has restricted drop off/disposal times:**

Disposal must be booked in advance with Waste Services 01481 226263.

Bonded Asbestos can only be deposited 8am - 12pm Wednesdays and Fridays.

Fibrous Asbestos can only be deposited by appointment, call 245106 to arrange.

### **Migrant workers**

Some workers from overseas have a higher tolerance of asbestos risk due to attitudes in their home countries.

You must consider their English language skills, basic competencies and work experience) to ensure they have an understanding of what is expected of them before they are allowed to undertake any tasks that may include the removal/disturbance of asbestos.

Migrant workers must always be closely supervised until you are sure they are competent for the role they are expected to undertake.

See [www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos) and specifically [HSE - Asbestos: Asbestos essentials](#) for task specific information.

# 15. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE must be provided where necessary to ensure the health & safety of workers.

Employers must provide PPE free of charge if it is needed.

To stay safe, workers may have to wear PPE such as safety helmets, gloves, eye or hearing protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and harnesses.

PPE also includes respiratory protective equipment (RPE) to prevent workers breathing in dust, mist, gas or fume

Where possible, hazards should be controlled at their source. Employers must supply PPE where risks cannot be eliminated or adequately controlled.

Measures to protect groups of workers must be given priority over measures that only protect individuals.

## Safeguards

✓ PPE should only be used as a last resort.

✓ Employees must be primarily safeguarded by eliminating risks at source, through technical or organisational means or by collective protection.

✓ Measures to protect groups of workers must be given priority over measures that only protect individuals.

✓ PPE only protects the wearer.

✓ With PPE, theoretical levels of protection are seldom reached in practice.

✓ With PPE, actual levels of protection are difficult to assess.

✓ To cater for the physical differences in employees, more than one type or size of PPE should be available.

✓ In some cases, the individual wearing PPE psychologically feels more protected than he or she actually is.

✓ Demonstrations can be a vital part of PPE training.

✓ Employers must ensure workers have sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision on PPE use.

## Hierarchy of controls

PPE should be the last resort to protect against risks. Consider controls in the following order, with elimination being the most effective and PPE being the least effective:

1. Elimination – physically remove the hazard.
2. Substitution – replace the hazard.
3. Engineering controls – isolate people from the hazard.
4. Administrative controls – change the way people work.
5. PPE – protect the worker with equipment.

## Monitor and review

Check regularly that PPE is used – if it isn't, find out why.

Safety signs can be a useful reminder that PPE should be worn – many workplaces will often have signs at the entrance indicating what sort of PPE should be worn.

Take note of any changes in equipment, materials and methods – you may need to update what you provide.

See [www.hse.gov.uk/ppe](http://www.hse.gov.uk/ppe).

## 16. Vulnerable workers.

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**HSE defines vulnerable workers as those who are at risk of having their workplace entitlements denied, and who lack the capacity or means to secure them.**

This can include:

- Pregnant workers and new mothers
- Disabled workers
- Young people at work
- Migrant workers
- Lone workers
- Older workers
- Home workers

### **Pregnant workers and new mothers**

Once your worker has informed you in writing, you must complete an individual risk assessment and make any necessary changes to support them.

Where there is a risk, employers must:

- Adjust the working conditions and/or hours of work.
- Provide suitable alternative work.

### **Disabled workers**

As an employer you are responsible for the health, safety and welfare of all of your employees, whether they have a disability or not.

Disability is not always obvious so you might not realise a worker is disabled or they might choose not to tell you, particularly if their disability has no impact on their ability to do their job.

Workers do not have to tell you unless they have a disability that could foreseeably affect the safety of themselves or anyone else connected to their work. If they do not tell you and

there are no obvious indicators of any disability, you are not under any obligation to make workplace adjustments.

### **Young people at work**

Young people are likely to be new to the workplace and so are at more risk of injury in the first six months of a job, as they may be less aware of risks. They will often be vulnerable, as they may:

- lack experience or maturity
- not have reached physical maturity and lack strength
- be eager to impress or please people they work with
- be unaware of how to raise concerns

Young people need clear and sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision so they understand the importance of health and safety and can work without putting themselves and other people at risk. They may need more supervision than adults.

### **Migrant workers**

You should take account of the competence and needs of migrant workers before they start work by:

- considering their **English language skills and** basic competencies (for example literacy, numeracy, physical attributes, general health, relevant work experience), including whether they are new to the job
- checking they have the qualifications and skills required before they start at the workplace, including whether their vocational qualifications are compatible with those in Great Britain.
- Risk assessments and method statements may need to be translated into their language to help them understand a safe system of working.

### Lone workers

Think about who will be involved and which hazards could harm those working alone.

You must:

- train, supervise and monitor lone workers.
- keep in touch with them and respond to any incident.

When a lone worker will be at someone else's workplace you must ask that employer about any risks and control measures to make sure they are protected.

Risks that particularly affect lone workers include:

- violence in the workplace.
- stress and mental health or wellbeing.
- a person's medical suitability to work alone.
- the workplace itself, for example if it's in an isolated area.

### Older workers

Think about the activities older workers do, as part of your overall risk assessment and consider if any changes are needed.

Avoid assumptions by consulting and involving older workers when considering which control measures to put in place.

Changes you may consider include:

- allowing older workers more time to absorb health and safety information or training, for example through self-paced training.
- introducing opportunities for older workers to choose other types of work.
- designing manual handling tasks to eliminate or minimise the risk.

Do not assume that certain jobs are physically too demanding for older workers, many jobs are supported by technology, which can absorb the physical strain.

Think about how your business operates and how older workers could play a part in helping to improve how you manage health and safety risks.

This might include having older workers working alongside colleagues in a structured programme, to capture knowledge and learn from their experience.

### Home workers

You have the same health and safety responsibilities for homeworkers and the same liability for accident or injury as for any other workers.

Most of the time, risks to home workers will be low and the actions you should take to protect them will be straightforward.

This means you must provide supervision, education and training, as well as implementing enough control measures to protect the homeworker.

You should talk to your workers about their arrangements, as working from home may not be suitable for everyone. For example, some people may not have an appropriate place to work or may prefer to come into the workplace for wellbeing, mental health or other reasons.

See [www.hse.gov.uk/vulnerable-workers](http://www.hse.gov.uk/vulnerable-workers) for comprehensive guidance on vulnerable workers.

# 17. Work-related Stress

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Employers have a legal duty to protect workers from stress at work by doing a risk assessment and acting on it.

## What is stress?

HSE defines stress as ‘the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them’.

Workers feel stress when they can’t cope with pressures and other issues.

Employers should match demands to workers’ skills and knowledge. For example, workers can get stressed if they feel they don’t have the skills or time to meet tight deadlines.

Providing planning, training and support can reduce pressure and bring stress levels down.

Stress affects people differently – what stresses one person may not affect another. Factors like skills and experience, age or disability may all affect whether an worker can cope.

There are six main areas of work design which can effect stress levels. You should manage these properly. They are:

1. demands
2. control
3. support
4. relationships
5. role
6. change

Employers should assess the risks in these areas to manage stress in the workplace.

## Signs of stress

Stress is not an illness but it can make you ill. Recognising the signs of stress will help employers to take steps to stop, lower and manage stress in their workplace.

## How to help

- The earlier a problem is tackled the less impact it will have.
- If you think that a worker is having problems, encourage them to talk to someone.
- Provide employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to hours of work.
- Match employee skills and abilities to the job.
- Address employees’ concerns about their work environment
- Where possible, give employees some control over their work. Encourage employees to use their skills and initiative to do their work
- Consult employees over their work patterns/rosters/shifts

By talking to your workers and understanding how to identify the signs of stress, you can prevent and reduce stress in your workplace.

See [www.hse.gov.uk/stress](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress) for guidance on work related stress.

# 17. Dust Management

Regularly breathing dusts can cause serious lung disease which can have life changing consequences. It may mean permanent disability and early death.

Dust particles can be 100 times smaller than a grain of sand. You don't need to see them to breathe them in.

The HSE estimate that over 500 construction workers die from exposure to silica dust alone every year.

The amounts needed to cause this damage are not large.



The largest amount of silica someone should be breathing in a day after using the right controls is shown next to the penny.

Construction dust is a general term used to describe a range of dusts that are present on most construction sites.

**Silica dust** – created when working on silica containing materials like concrete, mortar and sandstone (also known as respirable crystalline silica or RCS).

**Wood dust** – created when working on softwood, hardwood and wood-based products like MDF and plywood.

**Other lower risk dusts** – created when working on materials containing very little or no silica. The most common include gypsum (eg in plasterboard), limestone, marble and dolomite.

Employers have a duty to ensure that the exposure of employees to substances hazardous to health is prevented or, if this is not reasonably practicable, adequately controlled.

## Prevention

Prevention of exposure to dust should be the first objective. Many forms of dust can be eliminated from the workplace by:

- Eliminating dust by using special cutting techniques rather than by grinding or sawing, or by using wet-cutting processes.
- Using less toxic materials.
- Using pellets rather than dusty powders.
- Using dust-suppressed materials and emulsions or pastes rather than mixing dry constituents.

## Choosing control measures

Control measures usually involve a combination of equipment and ways of working to reduce exposure. The right combination is crucial.

In order of priority a combination of control measures could include:

- (a) **Eliminate** use of a harmful products or substance and use a safer ones.
- (b) Use a safer form of the product, e.g. paste rather than powder. (**Substitute**)
- (c) **Change** the process to emit less of the substance.
- (d) **Enclose** the process so that dust does not escape.
- (e) **Extract** dust emissions near the source.
- (f) **Minimise** the number of workers that are at risk.
- (g) Apply suitable **administrative controls**, such as reducing the length of time that workers are exposed to dust.



(h) Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, coveralls and a respirator. PPE must fit the wearer.

The provision of PPE, if required, should be in addition to the measures above, not instead of.

If your control measures include some combination of, (a) to (h) above, make sure that the controls all work together.

Remember that PPE should only be considered as a control measure as a last resort.

### Local exhaust ventilation

Local exhaust ventilation (LEV) systems should be built into, and specially designed for, the machine or process that creates the dust.

Full details of LEV systems etc. can be found in HSG 258 Controlling Airborne Contaminants at work  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg258.htm>

### On-tool extraction

Removes dust as it is being produced. A type of LEV system that fits directly onto the tool. This 'system' consists of several individual parts – the tool, capturing hood, extraction unit and tubing. Use an extraction unit to the correct specification (ie H (High) M (Medium) or L (Low) Class filter unit).

### Dry Vacuuming

Using H and M class extraction units.

### Wet/damp cleaning & water suppression

Damping down with water or specialist fluids and granules before any sweeping can help control dust release.

**Cleaning Wipes** - Ideal for cables and other items where wash-down is not appropriate.

### Respiratory protective equipment (RPE)

Other methods may not always be appropriate or they might not reduce exposure enough. Often respiratory protection (RPE) has to be provided as well.

RPE must be:

- Adequate for the amount and type of dust. The general level for construction dust is an APF of 20. This means the wearer only breathes one twentieth of the amount of dust in the air.
- Suitable for the work – disposable masks or half masks can become uncomfortable to wear for long periods. Powered RPE helps minimise this.
- Fit the user. Face fit testing is needed for tight fitting masks.
- Worn correctly. Anyone using tight-fitting masks also needs to be clean shaven. Remember: RPE is the last line of protection. If you are just relying on RPE you need to be able to justify your reasons for this.

### Stop the spread (Do not)

Non-classified vacuums are not suitable for construction dusts, respirable and inhalable dusts.

Dry sweeping releases large amounts of respirable and inhalable dusts which can take many hours to settle.

Airline use in workshops releases significant quantities of dust.

See:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/dust/index.htm> for further guidance how to control exposure to dust at work.



## Further information and reading

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An extensive series of our most [frequently asked questions](#) and answers is available online that cover a wide array of information and guidance concerning health and safety law, information and guidance.

HSE publishes a comprehensive range of information and guidance on our website. You can find out what the health and safety law requires by searching under the relevant [topic](#) or [industry](#) section, and all of our [publications](#) are free to download. [HSE Books](#) provides information about orders for HSE publications, leaflets and posters.

If you think health and safety has to be complicated - it doesn't. The [Health and safety basics for your business site](#) will make it easier for you to comply with the law and manage health and safety in your business.

For many businesses, all that's required is a basic series of tasks. The site will take you through the steps and help you make sure you have done what you need to - and no more.

HSE is not a substitute for competent health and safety advice. If you do not have sufficient in-house expertise, you will need to engage a competent health and safety adviser or consultant.

If you have a specific question on how the health and safety law applies to a particular issue at your workplace, and you cannot find the answer on our website, then you can ask us for information by telephone. Lines are open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 16:30pm 01481 220010 or Email us at [HSE@gov.gg](mailto:HSE@gov.gg)

### Guernsey Health and Safety Executive publications

- Reporting an Injury Disease or Dangerous Occurrence
- Guide for Employers
- The Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance) (Guernsey) law 1993
- Guide for the Self Employed
- Guide for Employees
- Gas appliances (general information)
- Landlords: A guide to landlords duties (Gas appliances)
- Guide to Event Safety

### Guernsey Approved Codes of Practice

- Construction (Design and Management) 2020
- Safety in the Installation and Use of Gas Systems and Appliances 2010
- Ionising Radiations 2017
- L104 Commercial Diving Projects Inland / Inshore
- L105 Recreational Diving Projects
- Management of Exposure to Asbestos in Workplace Buildings and Structures 2013
- The Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems in Guernsey 2013

## General Health and Safety Information

- HSG17: Safety in the use of abrasive wheels
- HSG33: Health and safety in roof work
- HSG39: Compressed air safety
- HSG47: Avoiding danger from underground services
- HSG48: Reducing error and influencing behaviour
- HSG51: The storage of flammable liquids in containers
- HSG53: Respiratory protective equipment at work: A practical guide
- HSG65: Successful health and safety management
- HSG76: Warehousing and storage: A guide to health and safety
- HSG85: Electricity at work: Safe working practices
- HSG90: The law on VDUs: An easy guide: Making sure your office complies with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended in 2002)
- HSG97: A step by step guide to COSHH assessment
- HSG107: Maintaining portable and transportable electrical equipment
- HSG129: Health and safety in engineering workshops
- HSG136: Workplace transport safety: An employers' guide
- HSG139: The safe use of compressed gases in welding, flame cutting and allied processes
- HSG140: Safe use and handling of flammable liquids
- HSG141: Electrical safety on construction sites
- HSG150: Health and safety in construction
- HSG151: Protecting the public: Your next move
- HSG159: Managing contractors: A guide for employers.
- HSG168: Fire safety in construction
- HSG170: Vibration solutions: Practical ways to reduce the risk of hand-arm vibration injury
- HSG176: The storage of flammable liquids in tanks
- HSG177: Managing health and safety in dockwork
- HSG201: Controlling exposure to stonemasonry dust: Guidance for employers
- HSG210: Asbestos essentials: A task manual for building, maintenance and allied trades on non-licensed asbestos work
- HSG220: Health and safety in care homes
- HSG227: A comprehensive guide to managing asbestos in premises
- HSG229: Work-related violence: Case studies - Managing the risk in smaller businesses
- HSG253: The safe isolation of plant and equipment
- HSG256: Managing shift work: Health and safety guidance
- HSG258: Controlling airborne contaminants at work: A guide to local exhaust ventilation (LEV)
- HSG260: Sound advice: Control of noise at work in music and entertainment
- HSG261: Health and safety in motor vehicle repair and associated industries
- HSG262: Managing risks from skin exposure at work
- HSG263: Involving your workforce in health and safety: Good practice for all workplaces
- HSG270: Farmwise: Your essential guide to health and safety in agriculture

We are also able to provide a limited number of guidance documents in foreign languages, including Polish, Latvian, Portuguese, Chinese and Russian.

## Other Useful Organisations

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**Guernsey Occupational Safety & Health Association** (GOSHA), is a not for profit organisation run by volunteers to provide a forum for businesses, charities and other organisations to get together to share information, know-how and ideas on how to implement good, sensible health and safety practices in Guernsey workplaces. GOSHA members include specialist Health and Safety consultants covering training and development of staff, asbestos consultants, occupational health professionals, first aid providers, construction professionals, and specialists in fire management and consultancy. For information on guernsey training providers, consultants and membership, please visit [www.gosha.org.gg](http://www.gosha.org.gg)

**Institute of Occupational Safety and Health** (IOSH) is the chartered body for health & safety professionals, regulating the competence and conduct of its members as well as providing information and training. [www.iosh.co.uk](http://www.iosh.co.uk).

**The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents** (ROSPA) is a registered charity concerned with the prevention of accidents at work, at leisure, on the road, in the home and through safety education. [www.rosipa.com](http://www.rosipa.com).

**The Construction Industry Training Board** (CITB) is the industry training board for the construction sector in England, Scotland, and Wales. They help the construction industry attract talent and to support skills development. [www.citb.co.uk](http://www.citb.co.uk).

**Guernsey Fire and Rescue Service** in Guernsey embraces all aspects of firefighting and fire prevention as well as fire safety laws and standards. They provide advice and guidance on fire, surveys, fire risk assessments and maintenance. They also provide landlord advice regarding fire alarms and systems. See [www.gov.gg/fire](http://www.gov.gg/fire) or contact [firesafety@gov.gg](mailto:firesafety@gov.gg) and 01481 221111.

**Guernsey Water** offer information and guidance on water services including water quality, water saving, local water facilities, drinking water, drainage and responsible pesticide use. For further advice or in the event of a spillage, see [www.water.gg](http://www.water.gg) or contact [customer.service@water.gg](mailto:customer.service@water.gg) and 01481 229500.