

Health and Safety Law

What you should know as a Contractor



Your health, safety and welfare at work are protected by law.

Your employer and your host company have a duty to protect you, train you and keep you informed about health and safety.

You have a responsibility to look after yourself and others.

If there is a problem, discuss it with your employer or the safety representative of your host company.

This leaflet is a brief guide to health and safety law. It does not describe the law in detail, but it does list some of the key points.

Your employer and your host company have a duty under the law to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, your health, safety and welfare at work.

Your employer must consult with you or your safety representative on matters relating to your health and safety at work, including:

- any change which may substantially affect your health and safety at work, eg in procedures, equipment or ways of working;
- the employer's arrangements for getting competent people to help him/her satisfy health and safety laws;
- the information you have to be given on the likely risks and dangers arising from your work, measures to reduce or get rid of these risks and what you should do if you have to deal with a risk or danger; and
- the planning of health and safety.

In general, your employer's duties (a shared responsibility with your host company) include:

- making your workplace safe and without risks to health;
- ensuring plant and machinery are safe and that safe systems of work are set and followed;
- ensuring articles and substances are moved, stored and used safely;
- giving you the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary for your health and safety.

In particular, your employer (and your host company) must:

- assess the risks to your health and safety;
- make arrangements for implementing the health and safety measures identified as being necessary by the assessment;
- record the significant findings of the risk assessment and the arrangements for health and safety measures;

- draw up a health and safety policy statement, including the health and safety organisation and arrangements in force, and bring it to your attention;
- appoint someone competent to assist with health and safety responsibilities,
- co-operate on health and safety with other employers sharing the same workplace;
- set up emergency procedures;
- provide adequate first-aid facilities;
- make sure that the workplace satisfies health, safety and welfare requirements, eg for ventilation, temperature, lighting, and sanitary, washing and rest facilities;
- make sure that work equipment is suitable for its intended use, so far as health and safety is concerned, and that it is properly maintained and used;
- prevent or adequately control exposure to substances which may damage your health;
- take precautions against danger from flammable or explosive hazards, electrical equipment, noise and radiation;
- avoid hazardous manual handling operations, and where they cannot be avoided, reduce the risk of injury;
- provide health surveillance as appropriate;
- ensure that appropriate safety signs are provided and maintained;
- report certain injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the appropriate health and safety enforcing authority (see box below for who this is)

As an employee you have legal duties too. They include:

- **taking reasonable care for your own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what you do or do not do;**
- **co-operating with your employer and your host company on health and safety;**
- **correctly using work items provided by your employer and your host company, including personal protective equipment, in accordance with training or instructions; and**
- **not interfering with or misusing anything provided for your health, safety or welfare.**

If you think there is a health and safety problem in your workplace you should first discuss it with your employer, or your host company. You, your employer or your host company can get information on health and safety in confidence by calling HSE's Infoline telephone service on 0845 345 0055.

If you think your employer or your host company is exposing you to risks or is not carrying out legal duties, and you have pointed this out without getting a satisfactory answer, you can contact the enforcing authority for health and safety in your workplace. Health and safety inspectors can give advice on how to comply with the law. They also have powers to enforce it. HSE's Employment Medical Advisory Service can give advice on health at work. Your employer can give you their names and addresses. You can get advice on general fire precautions etc from the Fire Brigade or your fire officer.