

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Prepared by the
Students' Association
Building Management Team

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Introduction

This Employee Health and Safety Handbook is based on the policies included within our health and safety management system.

The practical guidance contained within this handbook is intended for use by all those who are employed by the Association.

Health and safety is of prime importance to the Association, and we will seek to conduct our business in such a way as to avoid harm to our employees and all others who may be affected directly or indirectly by our activities.

This handbook supplements our health and safety management system documentation. It outlines the responsibilities and arrangements for ensuring your health and safety at work. The aim is to help you work safely and avoid accidents by providing a framework within which a safe method of work can be established. It is therefore important that you read the advice given here before you start work in the Association.

Accident prevention is rooted in personal experience, tidiness and forethought, but safety within University of St Andrews Students Association does require constant vigilance and care. Remember that a little planning and thought can save a great deal of trouble and regret. Always seek expert advice when in doubt.

You are required to sign and return the declaration issued with this handbook stating that you have read the handbook and are satisfied as to your and the Association's responsibilities with respect to health and safety.

This handbook will be reviewed annually and supplementary information distributed to all employees. Suggestions for inclusion, corrections and revisions for future editions of this handbook should be sent to your line manager.

Health and Safety Policy Statement

University of St Andrews Students Association aims to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of our employees while they are at work and of others who may be affected by our undertakings. This general policy statement provides a commitment and intent to comply with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

To ensure the principles of health and safety are clearly understood throughout the Association, we will be committed to:

- complying with relevant health and safety laws and regulations, voluntary programmes, collective agreements on health and safety and other requirements to which the Association subscribes;
- setting and monitoring of health and safety objectives for the Association;
- effective communication of and consultation on health and safety matters throughout the Association;
- assessing the risks to the safety and health of our employees and others who may be affected by our activities and implementing controls to minimise those risks;
- preventing work-related injuries, ill health, disease and incidents;
- providing and maintaining safe plant and equipment and implementing safe systems of work.
- the safe use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.
- providing and maintaining a safe working environment with safe access, egress and welfare facilities.
- providing the necessary training to our employees and others, including temporary employees to ensure their competence with respect to health and safety.
- providing suitable and sufficient information, instruction and supervision for employees.
- continually improving the performance of our health and safety management.
- devoting the necessary resources in the form of finance, equipment, personnel, and time to ensure the health and safety of our employees and seeking expert help where the necessary skills are not available within the Association.
- an annual review and when necessary, the revision of this health and safety policy.
- making this policy available to relevant interested external parties, as appropriate.

Please note that a signed copy of the Health and Safety Policy Statement, which demonstrates our commitment to health and safety, is available at our main business address.

Organisation and Responsibilities

General Responsibilities

The following individual post(s) have been allocated overall health and safety responsibilities within the terms of our policy:

- Mr. David Whitton (General Manager) vicariously via Mr Chris Clarke (Deputy GM Operations).
- Day to day responsibility for ensuring the policy is put into practice and consultation with employees is delegated to: Mr Phil Hulse (Building Manager).

Responsible Persons

It is important that health and safety standards are maintained and improved. Where necessary specific roles within the Association have been allocated additional responsibility for health and safety. Where this responsibility is specific to a subject area, the details of the responsible person are communicated to employees in writing or verbally as required.

These Responsible Persons will also be required to monitor their areas of control as well as the performance and activities of all persons under their control to ensure that acceptable standards are maintained. They will ensure:

- The objectives and guidance outlined within our health and safety management system is fully understood and observed by persons under their control.
- Responsibilities for health and safety are clearly defined and allocated/delegated to the appropriate levels within their areas of responsibility.
- The health and safety policy statement will be brought to the attention of all employees under their control, making them aware of all hazards and the means of controlling those hazards.
- Any changes to the health and safety policy or our arrangements are brought to the attention of all persons under their control.
- That no items of machinery, equipment or substances are used unless the hazards associated with them have been identified, risk assessed and effective controls put into place.

Employees Shall:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions.
- Co-operate with management to meet the employer's legal duties and work in accordance with the Association's procedures.
- Not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interest of health, safety or welfare and refrain from actions (or inactivity) which might endanger themselves, or others.
- Demonstrate their commitment to health and safety by their behaviour and co-operate in the investigation of accidents and incidents.
- Use all equipment safely, including that provided for their personal protection and report to management any defects in equipment or other dangers at once, or as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Comply with all safety instructions or procedures and not undertake any tasks that they are not trained and authorised for.

Health and Safety Assistance:

To assist us in our undertaking we have an agreed Memorandum of Understanding with University of St Andrews EHSS (Environmental Health and Safety Services) to provide competent advice and guidance.

Management and Legal

Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses

Introduction

An accident is defined as an unplanned, unexpected and undesired event which occurs suddenly and causes injury or loss, and a near miss is an unplanned event that has the potential to cause injury or loss.

Key Facts

According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) during 2020/21:

- 123 people were killed at work (21/22)
- 80 members of the public were killed as a result of safety failures at work
- Over 800,000 workers are suffering from work related stress, depression or anxiety
- 470,000 workers are suffering from work related Musculoskeletal disorders
- 500,000 workers have reported a work-related injury

Hints and Tips

- Ensure you understand your organisation's health and safety policy and objectives. Know the emergency arrangements of your organisation.
- Ensure you understand the control measures specified in the organisation's procedures and risk assessments.
- Ensure you have received suitable information, instruction and training in the task you are carrying out.
- Ensure you wear all personal protective equipment that is specified for the task you are to carry out.

Do

- Observe any safe system of work for the task.
- Report any accidents, incidents and near misses.
- Make sure you know where the accident book is, or how to report one.
- Make sure you know the arrangements for emergencies and first aid.
- Use equipment according to manufacturers' instructions.



Don't



- Leave actions for another person to carry out.
- Make unauthorised modifications to equipment or use equipment with unauthorised modifications.
- Deviate from approved safe system of work.

Competence and Training

Introduction

Competency and training should be related to functions, jobs or processes undertaken in the workplace. Clear standards should be developed, as this will allow those carrying out the work, as well as those supervising to know whether they possess the necessary competency. Training helps people acquire the skills, knowledge and attitudes to make them competent in the health and safety aspects of their work.

Key Facts

The Health and Safety Executive states that:

The combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge that a person has and their ability to apply them to perform a task competently. Other factors, such as attitude and physical ability, can also affect someone's competence.

In reality, only an assessment of the individual can demonstrate competence. Competence does not solely depend on any particular skills, training or qualifications. It is universally acknowledged that competence is critical in ensuring suitable health and safety standards are maintained. Competent employees are expected to act in a manner that is reasonable depending on their levels of knowledge, skills and training.

Competence in Health and safety should be seen as an important component of workplace activities, not an add-on or afterthought

Hints and Tips

- Co-operate with your employer in developing a personal development plan that fits your training needs and requirements.
- Remember that competence is a combination of things such as technical training, attitudes and behaviours as well as experience and knowledge of the equipment or processes.
- Do not operate machinery or attempt anything that you do not have the competence, skills or abilities to do or if you have not been trained.
- Training does not have to be delivered in a 'classroom' setting with a teacher standing up front. A lot of vocational training, also known as on-the-job training, can be carried out in the workplace as work is actually being undertaken.

Do

- Ensure that you have a personal development plan in place for your role.
- Bring to your employer's attention, any areas you feel where you lack knowledge or skill.
- Notify your Supervisor or Line Manager if you witness a lack of competence or training somewhere within your workplace.



Don't

- Think that once trained, you may never require further training in a particular subject or discipline.
- Assume that having received training on one piece of equipment or particular process, you are then competent to do everything within your workplace.



Emergency Procedures

Introduction

An event can be considered to be an emergency if it requires a rapid and variable response in order to minimise loss e.g., explosions, chemical spills, security/terrorist threats etc.

Key Facts

Fire is not included in these procedures. All potential emergency situations should be considered - consider the worst-case scenario for each potential event. Loss can be minimised by taking a practical approach.

Terrorism and National Emergencies.

The threat level indicates the likelihood of a terrorist attack in the UK. There are 5 levels of threat:

- low - an attack is unlikely
- moderate - an attack is possible but not likely
- substantial - an attack is a strong possibility
- severe - an attack is highly likely
- critical - an attack is expected imminently

The level is set by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre and the Security Service (MI5). The current threat level applicable is widely publicised in the media. Threat levels don't have an expiry date. They can change at any time as different information becomes available to security agents.

Hints and Tips

- Being aware of the emergency procedures will help you respond to emergencies. Know the control measures.
- Ensure you have adequate instruction, information and training to deal with emergency procedures, especially where you have a key role.
- Get involved in preparation of emergency procedures.

Do

- Ensure you read and understand the necessary risk assessment.
- Follow good working practises.
- Know the potential consequences of emergencies.
- Try and remain calm if an emergency arises.



Don't

- Assume it can't happen to you or any of your colleagues.
- Panic if emergency situations arise.
- Do anything which could affect the health and wellbeing of yourself or anyone else.



Risk Assessment

Introduction

A risk assessment is the process of identifying the risks from an activity or workplace and assessing the potential impact of each risk i.e., what could go wrong, as well as identifying possible control measures that would reduce or eliminate the risk.

Key Facts

Risk assessments are a legal requirement as per the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

A suitable and sufficient risk assessment should help prevent accidents and ill health and therefore could save lives and reduce the likelihood of compensation claims or legal action.

You have a duty to comply with all Students' Association Risk Assessments.

Risk Assessments only need to be recorded if there are five or more employees although writing them down, irrespective of the number of employees, does demonstrate you have covered all the necessary points.

You should always be aware of the hazards and risk around you.

Hints and Tips

- Ensure you are aware and fully understand any Risk Assessments that are relevant to your duties at work and any tasks that you undertake.
- There should be a Risk Assessment carried out for all work equipment and work activities. Ensure that you know what control measures are in place to protect you.
- Co-operate with your line managers when they are carrying out and implementing Risk Assessments.

Do

- Get involved in the Risk Assessment process.
- Implement the control measures stated in the Risk Assessment e.g., Wear PPE.
- Report any Risks or Hazards which have gone unreported to your line manager.
- Inform your line manager if the process steps are different from that on the risk assessment.



Don't

- Carry out work unless an adequate Risk Assessment has been carried out.
- Assume your line manager has considered all the risks.
- Ignore the Risk Assessment - it exists for a reason.
- Alter the Risk assessment without notifying your manager and team.



People



Driving at Work

Introduction

Risks associated with driving will always be present. Although these cannot be completely controlled an employer has a responsibility to take all reasonable steps to manage these risks, as they would in a workplace, down to as low a level as is reasonably practicable.

Key Facts

Reported road casualties in Great Britain 2021:

- Fatalities 1608
- Seriously Injured 26,701
- Slightly Injured 100,000

Thousands of people die each year in road accidents. Around one third of fatal and serious road crashes involve someone who was at work. Business drivers are far more likely to be involved in accidents than people driving privately.

A number of people are struck by moving vehicles on motorway hard shoulders each year, either because they stayed inside their vehicle whilst awaiting assistance or remaining close to their vehicle. This results in around 250 deaths and major injuries each year.

Hints and Tips

Plan journeys in advance. Do not be tempted to adjust satellite navigation systems (sat-navs) whilst driving.

If there is a risk of getting stranded during periods of poor weather, either postpone your journey if possible or ensure you carry additional provisions such as water, snack foods, a blanket and a torch.

If you do breakdown on a motorway, pull your vehicle as far to the left on the hard shoulder as possible and angle your wheels towards the verge. Put your hazard warning lights on and side lights if visibility is poor. Get everyone out of your vehicle safely (via the nearside doors if you can) and stand as far away as possible, even if that means climbing over a crash barrier or standing in the rain.

Do

- Ensure you hold relevant levels of insurance for the type of driving you are doing.
- Carry out daily levels checks.
- Plan your journey and leave yourself plenty of time.
- Remain courteous to other road users at all times.



Don't

- Drive for more than 2 hours without taking a short break.
- Drive if under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Allow yourself to be provoked into losing your temper by other motorists.
- Use your handheld mobile phone whilst driving.



First Aid

Introduction

First aid is the care given before emergency medical help arrives, it can often mean the difference between life and death.

Key Facts

A first aider is someone who has undertaken training and has a first aid qualification.

An appointed person is the person who takes charge when someone is injured or falls ill, including calling an ambulance if required but does not give first aid treatment.

First aid can save lives and prevent minor incidents from becoming major incidents. First Aid at work covers the arrangements you must make to ensure this happens.

It does not matter whether the injury or the illness is caused by work, first aid cover is still required.

Hints and Tips

- If asked to be a first aider, ensure that you are comfortable with this and are given the appropriate training.
- As your employer we have to ensure there are sufficient first aid kits in the premises.
- All mobile workers should have access to first aid kits.
- Familiarise yourself with first aid signage and location of first aid kits.

Do

- Know who your first aiders are and where they are located.
- Know how to contact the first aider.
- Ensure that any first aid situation is reported to first aider.



Don't

- Try to give someone first aid if you have not had any training.
- Remove anything from the first aid kit without permission from first aider.
- Move first aid kits.
- Panic if faced with first aid situation, remain calm and contact first aider.



Lone Working

Introduction

The Health and Safety Executive identifies Lone Working as 'those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision'. This means that many businesses, including ours will have people working for them classed as 'Lone Workers'.

Key Facts

Just by the nature of them being lone workers, does not increase the risks to employees and consequently, lone working in itself is not against the law. However, the law requires employers and others to think about and deal with any health and safety risks before anyone works alone.

All risks to lone workers must be assessed and steps taken to avoid or control risks where necessary.

As an employee, you have responsibilities to take reasonable care of yourself and other people affected by your work activities and to co-operate with your line manager in helping them to meet the Students' Associations own legal obligations.

Hints and Tips

- If your work does not base you in one particular place each day, always prepare a daily schedule so that someone knows where you are and what you are doing.
- Pre-determine a contact strategy with a designated 'contact person' and ensure they are aware of what to do if they cannot get in touch with you.
- If you have any medical conditions which might cause black-outs, fainting, dizzy spells etc, notify your Supervisor or Line Manager immediately. It would be advisable to check with your Doctor or other healthcare professional whether lone working is suitable given your medical condition.

Do

- Make sure someone knows what work you are doing and any travel plans you might have
- Feel comfortable leaving any situation you consider threatening or intimidating
- Ensure you are sufficiently experienced and fully understand the risks and precautions.



Don't

- Take un-necessary risks when you are working alone.
- Keep quiet about any issues you think might compromise your safety - always discuss issues with your Supervisor or Line Manager.



Equipment and Materials

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health

Introduction

Some substances used in the workplace may be hazardous to health, such as chemicals, fumes, dusts, or bacteria.

Key Facts

COSHH is the law that requires employers to control substances that are hazardous to health. Hazardous substances cause harm by getting into our bodies by either:

- inhalation
- skin absorption
- ingestion
- injection.

Good control measures will match the nature of the exposure risk, for example good ventilation will reduce risk of inhalation. Most businesses use substances, or products that are mixtures of substances. Some processes create substances which could cause harm to employees, contractors and other people.

Some substances will re-act if mixed together so this should be avoided in use and storage.

All hazardous substances will have an information sheet called a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) which provides key facts about each substance.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) risk assessments on all hazardous substances are completed; speak to your line manager if this applies to your role.

Hints and Tips

- Only use the smallest amount required of any substances - the more you use the bigger the risk.
- Replace lids and tops on all hazardous substances and store them effectively. Ensure that areas in which you are using substances are well ventilated.
- Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that has been identified to protect you from exposure to substances.
- Make sure all spillages are cleared up at the earliest opportunity and reported to the relevant people.

Do

- Keep hazardous substances in a secure, well-ventilated store or metal cabinet.
- Make sure chemicals are kept apart in the designated stores.
- Label all containers and clearly identify hazards, such as irritant, corrosive, toxic etc.
- Wear appropriate clothing when handling hazardous substances.



Don't

- Use chemicals from unmarked containers or decant them into other containers.
- Eat, drink or smoke near hazardous substances.



Electrical Installations and Fixed Equipment

Introduction

Electricity is invisible and silent, but it can easily be a killer if not treated with respect. A mild electric shock could be enough to throw you off balance and make you fall from a height.

Key Facts

Electricity, fire and drowning/asphyxiation accidents accounted for around one in twelve fatalities to workers but fewer than one in a hundred non-fatal injuries to employees (RIDDOR).

Around 1,000 electrical accidents at work are reported to HSE each year and about 25 people die of their injuries.

The main hazards are:

- Contact with live parts causing shock and burns.
- Faults which could cause fires.
- Fire or explosion where electricity could be the source of ignition in a potentially inflammable or explosive atmosphere.

The 17th Edition of the Wiring Regulations came into force in 2008, amended 2011; these regulations are also published as British Standard BS7671.

All electrical equipment and installations must be regularly tested, inspected and maintained regularly.

Hints and Tips

- Where possible, use 110V supply and/or equipment. Where this is not possible, use a Residual Current Device (RCD).
- Even low level voltages can be dangerous.
- Remember that electricity can arc i.e., "jump" across considerable distances.
- Even if working live can be justified, many precautions are needed to make sure that the risk is reduced.
- Ensure you understand the control measures that your line manager has undertaken before agreeing to work on live electricity.

Do

- Use safe isolation procedures at all times.
- Use adequate signage when working with electricity.
- Assume cables are present when digging in the street.
- Inspect electrical equipment before use.
- Test and certificate the circuit on completion of work.



Don't

- Work on live electricity unless it is unavoidable.
- Assume the electricity is 'dead'.
- Do the job unless you're trained and competent to do so.
- Forget water and electricity don't mix.



Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres

Introduction

Many workplace activities involve the use of substances which, because of its properties or the way in which it is used, could harm us through fire or explosion. Dangerous substances might include petrol, Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG), paints, varnishes and solvents. It can also be dusts which, when mixed with air, can create an explosive atmosphere. Dangerous substances can be found in most workplaces.

Key Facts

- Each year many people are killed or suffer burns from fire and explosion.
- These are caused by uncontrolled ignition of flammable chemicals and other materials they work with.
- Work with flammable and dangerous substances increases the risk of fire and explosion and should be approached with caution.
- Local authority fire and rescue services attended over 25,000 fires in Scotland in 2020-21.
- As a result, there were over 500 casualties and many deaths.

Hints and Tips

Dusts - can be produced from many everyday materials such as coal, wood, grain, sugar etc. A cloud of dust in the air can explode violently if ignited.

Gases - such as LPG, methane etc. These are usually stored in cylinders and bulk containers. Uncontrolled releases can readily ignite or cause the cylinder to become a missile!

Explosive Atmospheres - is a mixture of dangerous substances (gas, dust, vapour etc.) and air under atmospheric conditions.

Do

- Understand what dangerous or potentially explosive substances are being used in your workplace and how the risks are being controlled.
- Know where any explosive atmospheres may occur in your workplace.
- Ensure you only access high risk areas if you are competent and authorised to do so.



Don't

- Use any dangerous or potentially explosive substances unless trained to do so.
- Enter an explosive atmosphere unless authorised.
- Introduce additional heat or ignition sources to high risk areas.



Lifting Equipment

Introduction

Lifting equipment includes any equipment used for the lifting or lowering of loads, whether that is goods or people. The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) cover a wide range of equipment including cranes, fork lift trucks, hoists and mobile elevating work platforms. They also cover lifting equipment such as slings, chains and hooks.

Key Facts

Although as an employee you do not have specific duties under LOLER, you still have general duties to take reasonable care of yourself and others who may be affected by your actions. You also have an obligation to co-operate with others.

Accidents involving lifting equipment are frequently caused by misuse or neglect of equipment.

Under LOLER, Students' Association Management must ensure that lifting equipment undergoes regular examination by a competent person.

Hints and Tips

- If travelling with a load, ensure it is carried in the lowest position possible. Do not consider raising the load whilst moving.
- Do not use lifting equipment to lift people, unless it has been adapted specifically for the purpose. i.e. Lifting someone on the forks of a fork lift truck should be avoided unless the forks have been fitted with a carrying cage.
- If you spot any damage to lifting accessories such as frayed edges to straps/ ropes, damaged wires or stretched hooks/eyes, inform the person controlling the lift immediately.

Do

- Visually inspect lifting equipment prior to use.
- Plan all lifts in detail, prior to executing them.
- Ensure that everyone involved in lifting operations understands their role in the lift.
- Protect ropes and slings from sharp edges where they may get damaged.



Don't

- Use lifting equipment that looks worn or damaged.
- Exceed maximum load limits on lifting equipment or lifting accessories.
- Let familiarity with repetitive lifting operations make you become complacent.



Manual Handling

Introduction

Manual handling operations means any transporting or supporting of a load (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving thereof) by hand or by bodily force.

Key Facts

Bad backs affect people of all ages.

Poor handling techniques when you are young will contribute to problems in later life. Once you damage your back, you are three times more likely to suffer injury again.

Musculo-skeletal disorders arising from work injuries are estimated to cost the economy around £3 billion per annum and account for 30 million lost working days.

Hints and Tips

- Follow appropriate systems of work developed for your safety. Make proper use of equipment provided for your safety.
- Co-operate with your employer on health and safety matters.
- Inform your employer if you identify any hazardous handling activities. Ensure that any lifting activities you get involved in do not put others at risk.

Do

- Avoid or reduce manual handling activities where possible.
- Use mechanical aids where provided.
- Tell your employer if you have any history of back trouble.
- Make sure your travel route is clear before lifting any objects.



Don't

- Attempt to lift an object without assessing its weight first.
- Carry objects over long distances.
- Stoop when picking anything up - bend your knees.



Personal Protective Equipment

Introduction

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is equipment or clothing that should be worn to protect you from known hazards in the workplace. The most commonly seen items of PPE are probably safety helmets and safety shoes but other forms can include protective gloves, hearing protection and safety glasses or goggles.

Key Facts

PPE should only be provided if the risks cannot be reduced by more robust means as it only protects the user and not those working within the vicinity.

PPE may sometimes restrict the movement or the sensory perception of some users. This should be taken into account during the risk assessment process.

Where more than one item of PPE is required to be worn simultaneously, that must be compatible with each other and should not compromise your protection.

Hints and Tips

- Always wear protective equipment in the manner it is designed to be worn, it will offer less protection otherwise.
- Always ensure that you look after your PPE. Keep it clean and in good condition and always store it properly when not in use. If it's left lying around it could be damaged or get dirty rendering it ineffective when you require it.
- If PPE is uncomfortable to wear or you feel it is ineffective in any way, bring your concerns to the attention of your immediate supervisor or manager.

Do

- Wear protective equipment when it has been issued to you.
- Store your personal protective equipment securely when not using it.
- Report defects or loss of your protective equipment.



Don't

- Share your protective equipment with colleagues, especially dust- masks, hearing protection or safety glasses.
- Wear protective equipment if it appears damaged, broken or worn out.
- Leave PPE lying around where it can get damaged or dirty.



Work Equipment

Introduction

Work equipment includes any machinery, appliance or tool that is used to carry out a task. Examples include lifting equipment, machinery, hand tools, protective equipment and computer hardware.

Key Facts

The only one of our senses that can detect electricity is touch and coming into contact with live electricity can result in a variety of experiences, from a mild tingle to severe injury or even death.

A set of regulations known as the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 applies to work equipment in the workplace. These are often referred to as PUWER.

Removing or bypassing guards installed for your safety is a common cause of injury with work equipment.

Hints and Tips

- Never take short cuts by using equipment inappropriately, like using a screwdriver instead of a chisel.
- Consider the risks to other people working near you or to members of the public if you work outside.
- If an electrical machine you are working on develops a fault, isolate the machine (switch it off), then report the matter to your supervisor or line manager.
- Do not attempt or carry out maintenance activities unless you are trained and authorised to do so.

Do

- Ensure the equipment is suitable for the task.
- Carry out visual inspections before using any equipment.
- Report any damage or defects to equipment.
- Follow all safety procedures.
- Request further training if you feel inadequately experienced to operate the equipment.



Don't

- Use equipment unless you are adequately trained, experienced and authorised to do so.
- Ignore safety warnings. They are there for a reason.
- Use equipment if it is damaged or appears to be unsafe.



Workplace and Environment



Fire Safety

Introduction

A wide variety of flammable substances are found in most workplaces ranging from the obvious such as petrol, chemicals and gasses, to the less obvious such as packaging materials, waste paper and even some dusts. When fires occur, people can suffer burns but around 50% of injury and death in fires is from the inhalation of smoke.

Key Facts

For fire to exist, you must have oxygen, fuel and heat. These three things are sometimes referred to as 'The Fire Triangle'. Given sufficient fuel, a fire will double in size every minute it burns and could totally engulf the average sized domestic house within just 4 minutes.

In 2020-21 Scottish Fire and Rescue Services attended over 85,000 incidents of which over 55% were false alarms. As a result of this, the legislation has changed and in the event of an alarm activation, a lot of premises will now need to make a positive report of a fire before the Fire Service will attend.

Under guidance up to this point, certain buildings would receive an automatic deployment of machines based on the assessed risk of that particular venue; this will no longer be the case.

Specific statistics for 20/21: 53 fatalities, 44 in dwellings (not workplace), 75% fatal casualties were males, 1000 non-fatal fire casualties, 300 non fire fatalities (road traffic accidents and others).

The Students' Association must carry out a fire risk assessment which includes routine training, dry drills and so on. If you haven't received any sort of training as part of your induction, you must raise this with your line manager.

Hints and Tips

- If you work within the building, there is a comprehensive evacuation plan for use in the event of fire; make sure you know it and understand the role you are meant to play in it.
- In the event of fire evacuation, proceed directly to the nearest fire exit and leave the building. Do not try and rescue personal belongings or wait for friends; exit the building by the most direct route and in a calm manner.
- Do not overload plugs sockets and if you see evidence of scorching or burning to plugs, sockets or cabling, report it to your Supervisor or Line Manager immediately.
- Do not use lifts (if installed) and never allow yourself to get positioned so that your exit is compromised.

Do

- Make sure that all sources of heat are properly extinguished unless they need to be left on, such as a pilot light.
- Keep sources of ignition and fuel apart.
- Make sure you understand what to do in the event of an emergency.



Don't

- Leave any source of ignition unattended.
- Tamper with equipment provided for fire safety, such as extinguishers.
- Use a fire extinguisher to fight a fire unless you have been trained to use it.
- Endanger your own safety to fight a fire.



Noise at Work

Introduction

Protecting yourself from hearing damage while you are at work, should be a primary concern. There are two main causes of damage to hearing; Long term exposure to loud noise such as in a bar, nightclub and one off music event or exposure to one-off loud bangs or extreme noise, such as mine workers or shot-blasters in a quarry.

Key Facts

Noise becomes hazardous when it occurs at high levels or continues for a long time.

Annually there is an estimated 15,000 individuals who were suffering hearing problems which they believed to be work-related, according to the Labour Force Survey. And in the latest HSE review there is an approximate 1,000,000 workers across the UK exposed to excessive noise at work.

The Health and Safety Executive states that although hearing loss caused by work is preventable, you must realise that once your hearing has gone, it won't come back.

Although for many, total hearing loss is a result of damage, thousands of others suffer from tinnitus, a permanent ringing in the ears.

Hints and Tips

- As a rule of thumb, it should be possible to hold a conversation with someone around 1 metre away from you without shouting.
- As the staff member potentially in a frontline role, there is an obligation on you to do what is needed to protect your hearing. Make sure that any equipment or systems provided for your protection are used.
- Wear any hearing protection you are given and ensure it is worn properly. Your line manager should show you how to do this.
- Look after your hearing protection. If it gets damaged or worn out, ensure it is replaced immediately. If you detect any problems with your hearing protection, let your line manager know.

Do

- Take your breaks in a quiet place.
- Keep as far away from sources of extreme noise as possible.
- Have your hearing checked from time to time.
- Wear hearing protection if it has been provided for you.



Don't

- Work in a noisy environment for longer than you have to.
- Wear poorly fitting, damaged or dirty hearing protection.
- Think that one-off loud bangs will not cause you hearing problems.



Slips, Trips and Falls

Introduction

Slips, Trips and Falls are an unfortunate occurrence of day-to-day life and often seen as humorous events, but this is far from the truth. By taking a few simple precautions, you can significantly reduce the risks.

Key Facts

In Scotland in 2021, slips, trips and falls accounted for over 4000 injuries including 5 fatalities. This costed the country over £67 million and accounted for nearly one-third of all accidents in Scotland.

Anyone at work can help to reduce slip, trip and fall hazards through good health and safety arrangements. Effective solutions are often simple, cheap and can lead to other benefits.

Hints and Tips

- Make sure you know what to do with spillages.
- Make sure that leaks are reported as soon as identified. Play your part in cleaning regimes and schedules.
- Keep your work area tidy.
- Choose appropriate footwear for the tasks you are undertaking or the area in which you are working.
- Check that floor surfaces are in good condition and report defects.

Do

- Walk on designated walking routes if these are available.
- Wear footwear appropriate to the work you are carrying out.
- Report defects in floor surfaces to your Supervisor immediately.
- Keep work areas tidy and free from slip and trip hazards.



Don't

- Walk on uneven surfaces or where there have been fluid spills.
- Walk in poorly lit areas.
- Expect others to report defects - it is everyone's responsibility.



Stress

Introduction

Work Related Stress is defined as 'The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them at work'. Many outward signs of stress should be readily noticeable but as people react differently to different pressures, indications will vary between different people.

Key Facts

Over the period 2018/19-2020/21 there were an estimated 68,000 work-related ill health cases annually, including 33,000 new cases per year.

Stress can cause changes in those experiencing it. In some cases, there are clear signs that people are experiencing stress at work and if these can be identified early, action can be taken before the pressure becomes a problem. This may make it easier to reduce and eliminate the causes.

Your line manager has a duty to ensure that work does not make you ill and is responsible for understanding how to spot the signs of stress.

Hints and Tips

- If you think you are suffering from stress, talk to your line manager or HR department in the first instance and then speak with your GP.
- Try to avoid 'eating on the run' or avoiding meals altogether.
- Taking care of yourself physically will enable you to deal with stress-related problems more efficiently. A balanced diet, moderate exercise and adequate sleep will all help.
- Do not be embarrassed to seek professional help.

Do

- Take care of yourself physically by taking regular exercise, maintaining a balanced diet and getting sufficient sleep.
- Report any concerns you have to your line manager or HR department.
- Ensure you behave responsibly to yourself and others to minimise pressures.



Don't

- Be afraid to say no to unrealistic demands on your time.
- Ignore warnings of ill-health. Your GP will be familiar with the warning signs and can deal with them early.
- Tolerate bullying or harassment.



Working at Height

Introduction

Falls are the biggest cause of death and injury in Britain's workplaces. You don't have to fall far to be hurt; deaths and injury can occur from any height.

Key Facts

Even when safety guidelines are followed to the letter of the law, working at height will always involve some degree of risk. This is a fact borne out by HSE statistics: in 2018/19, 40 workers in the UK suffered fatal injury as a result of a working at height accident. This works out as an average of around three deaths per month – a figure which should be considered as unacceptable in twenty-first century Britain and an increase from the 2017/18 figure of 35.

In addition, the HSE reports that there were 44,400 non-fatal accidents involving falls from height. This figure is equivalent to 121 accidents per day.

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 applies to all work at height where there is a risk of a fall which could cause personal injury. The Work at Height (Amendment) Regulations 2007 applies to those who work at height providing instruction or leadership in caving or climbing by way of sport, recreation, team- building or similar.

Hints and Tips

- Follow the risk assessment and safe system of work as part of your role; follow the hierarchy for managing risks from work at height: avoid - prevent - reduce.
- Everyone uses ladders, however not everyone uses them safely - ensure you are a safe user.
- Choose the right equipment for the jobs and ensure the necessary control measures are in place.
- Where work at height is necessary you need to justify whether a ladder or stepladder is the most suitable access equipment compared to other access equipment options.
- Make your line manager aware of any medical conditions or medication which could increase the risks from working at height.

Do

- Wear adequate Personal Protective Equipment at all times.
- Comply with any procedures and signage.
- Inspect work at height equipment before use.
- Secure ladders.
- Maintain three points of contact when using ladders.
- Erect mobile tower scaffolds as you have been trained to do.
- Take care not to drop anything whilst at height.



Don't

- Work at height if you feel unsafe.
- Work at height if weather conditions will endanger your Health and Safety.
- Work on or near a fragile surface unless there are no other options and adequate precautions are in place.



Workplace Welfare

Introduction

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations cover a wide range of basic health, safety and welfare issues for work in or near buildings. They apply to most workplaces and detail minimum standards for ensuring a suitable working environment that is safe and without hazards to health.

Key Facts

Most workplaces have broadly similar hazards and welfare arrangements.

There should be fresh, clean air circulating, via windows or by properly maintained mechanical means. Windows should be able to be opened safely.

The temperature should be 16°C or more unless rigorous physical effort is involved. There is currently no maximum workplace temperature, although in most cases this will be about 25°C.

A suitable supply of drinking water should be provided.

Adequate toilets should be provided for the number of employees. Washing facilities should have running water, soap and a means of drying.

Hints and Tips

Rest areas should be readily accessible, clean and have suitable surfaces to place food upon. Seats should be provided for use during rest breaks.

Pregnant women and nursing mothers should have suitable rest facilities.

Workstations must have sufficient surrounding space and workers must be able to leave workstations swiftly if needed. Seating should be suitable for each worker and a footrest provided if needed.

Flooring should be suitable and not uneven or slippery.

Sufficient lighting should be provided, natural light where possible. Emergency lighting should be provided if an artificial light source could fail.

Do

- Raise any concerns about workplace facilities with your supervisor.
- Clean as you go and keep facilities and your workstation clean and tidy.
- Ensure that equipment is kept in good repair and maintained regularly.



Don't

- Obstruct traffic routes.
- Leave any waste materials lying around, put them in the appropriate place.
- Forget to wash your hands before eating or drinking, especially if you work in dusty or oily environments.

