

Health and safety policy template

Every employer must have a health and safety policy. If you have five or more employees it must be written down, and you must share it with your staff. The duty is in section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974; a 1975 exception removes only the writing requirement for employers with fewer than five. The Health and Safety Executive says a policy should cover three areas: a statement of intent, responsibilities, and arrangements.

Download the policy ? PDF • edit the [bracketed] parts

The template

Replace each [bracketed placeholder]. Copy it from this page, or download the PDF above. Parts 1 and 2 are short on purpose; Part 3 is where your own business goes in.

Part 1. Statement of intent

[Company name] is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of everyone who works for us and anyone affected by our work. We will: prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health by managing the risks in our workplace; provide clear instruction, information, training and supervision so that people can do their work safely; consult our employees on matters affecting their health and safety; provide and maintain safe equipment and a safe place of work; and review this policy at least once a year and whenever our work changes.

Signed: [name], [most senior person, for example Managing Director]. Date: [date]. Review due: [date].

Part 2. Responsibilities

Overall and final responsibility for health and safety: [name, role]. Day-to-day responsibility for putting this policy into practice: [name, role]. Our competent person, appointed to help us meet our health and safety duties: [name, role, or external adviser]. Responsible for specific areas: [fire safety - name]; [first aid - name]; [risk assessments - name]; [training records - name]; [premises and equipment maintenance - name].

All employees must: co-operate with supervisors and managers on health and safety; take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others; not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety; and report health and safety concerns to [name or role] promptly.

Part 3.1 Risk assessment

We identify the hazards in our work, assess the risks, put controls in place, record the significant findings and review the controls. Assessments are carried out by [role], are kept at [location] and are reviewed [annually] and after any accident, near miss or significant change. Specific assessments are completed for [display screen equipment, manual handling, lone working, work-related stress, new and expectant mothers, young workers].

Part 3.2 Training and information

Every new starter receives a health and safety induction on their first day covering fire procedures, first aid, accident reporting and the risks of their role. Job-specific training is given before a task is carried out unsupervised and is repeated [when the risk changes / every X years]. Training takes place in working hours and is free. Records are kept by [role] at [location]. The health and safety law poster is displayed at [location] [or: each worker is given the leaflet].

Part 3.3 Consultation

We consult employees on health and safety through [team meetings / elected representatives / trade union safety representatives]. Anyone may raise a concern at any time with [role] and will be told what has been done about it.

Part 3.4 Accidents, first aid and ill health

The first aid kit is kept at [location] and checked [monthly] by [role]. Our appointed person for first aid is [name]; trained first-aiders are [names]. All accidents, near misses and cases of work-related ill health are recorded in the accident record at [location] and reported to [role], who investigates and decides whether a report is required under RIDDOR.

Part 3.5 Fire and emergencies

The fire risk assessment is carried out by [name or organisation], recorded in full and reviewed [annually]. Escape routes are checked [daily] by [role]. Fire alarms are tested [weekly], extinguishers are serviced [annually] and an evacuation drill is held [every six months]. The assembly point is [location]. Fire wardens are [names].

Part 3.6 Equipment, premises and substances

Equipment is maintained by [role] and faults are reported to [role] and taken out of use until fixed. Electrical equipment is visually checked by users and inspected or tested at intervals based on risk by [name or contractor]. Hazardous substances are assessed before use and stored at [location]. Workstations used with display screens are assessed when a person starts, when they move and when they report a problem.

Part 3.7 Home, lone and off-site working

The same standards apply wherever our people work. Anyone who works from home completes a workstation self-assessment. Anyone who works alone or off site follows the check-in arrangements at [location]. Driving for work is covered by [the driving policy].

Using it well

- Name people, not departments. The whole point of Part 2 is that a specific person knows a task is theirs.
- Appoint a competent person. The law requires you to appoint one or more competent people to help you meet your duties. HSE says it can be you, and that someone competent inside your workforce is preferable to an outsider.

- Write Part 3 from your risk assessment. The arrangements should match the risks you actually found. Delete headings that do not apply and add the ones that do.
- Share it. HSE's wording is that you must share the policy, and any changes to it, with your employees. Record that each person has seen it.
- Review it on a date. A policy signed by a director who left two years ago tells an inspector everything they need to know.

The duties behind each heading, with the reporting deadlines and record periods, are in the health and safety handbook for small businesses. A ready-made individual assessment is the stress risk assessment.

A free template from CoDash - codash.co.uk/templates. Edit it to match how your company actually works, and take advice on anything unusual.