

Successful **Health and Safety** Management

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Principles

Did you know that ...

Everyday people are killed at work and many others are injured. These accidents are costly to workers, their families and also companies because, in addition to the costs of personal injuries, there are far greater costs for damage to property or equipment, and lost production. Most employers need to have liability insurance cover for injuries and ill health to their employees. Good Health and Safety management can facilitate reduction in premiums.

Any Health and Safety inspectors visiting workplaces will want to know how Health and Safety is managed. Directors and managers can be held personally responsible for inadequate Health and Safety. The following five steps will help your company manage Health and Safety effectively.

Step 1: Set Your Policy

Events causing injuries and illness may also damage property and interrupt production. Identifying hazards and assessing risks, putting precautions in place and checking they are used protects people and safeguards production. Health and Safety policy should influence the selection of people, equipment and materials, the way work is done and how goods and services are provided. A written statement on the arrangements for implementing and monitoring policy shows that hazards have been identified and risks assessed, eliminated or controlled.

Step 2: Organise Your Staff

To make Health and Safety policy effective, staff must be involved and committed to making it work. This is often referred to as a 'positive Health and Safety culture', of which the following five 'Cs' are the essential aspects:

- Commitment in being clear about your intent to achieve excellence in Health and Safety
- Competence: training and advice for all staff, using specialists where necessary
- Control: monitor staff knowledge and awareness
- Co-operation: involve staff in the reviewing of problems and procedures
- Communication: regular discussion on Health and Safety and easy access to information

Step3: Plan and Set Standards

Planning is the key to ensuring that Health and Safety works. It is advisable to record plans in writing. Planning should provide for:

- Identification of hazards and risk assessment
- Compliance with the Health and Safety laws that apply to your business
- Consultation with staff, managers, neighbours and subcontractors

Standards set out how staff in your organisation deliver the policy and control risks. The standard must be 'measurable, achievable and realistic'. Existing industry-based standards can be adopted where applicable but, in some cases, organisations have to set their own, referring to measurable and realistic numbers and levels.

Step 4: Measure your Performance

As in other areas it is necessary to measure Health and Safety performance to judge success. There are two key components to effective monitoring:

- **Active monitoring** (before things go wrong): Regular inspection to ensure standards are being implemented and objectives are being met
- **Reactive monitoring** (after things go wrong): Investigating injuries, cases of illness, property damage and near misses - identifying why performance was substandard

Priority should be given where risks are greatest and information referred to people with authority to take remedial action, such as organisational and policy changes.

Step 5: Learn from Experience - Audit and Review

Audits, by staff or outsiders, complement monitoring activities by looking to see if Health and Safety policy, organisation and systems are actually achieving the right results. They should be concerned with the reliability and effectiveness of Health and Safety policy and pay particular attention to:

- The degree of compliance with Health and Safety performance standards (including legislation)
- Areas where standards are absent or inadequate
- Achievement of stated objectives within given time-scales

UK Legislation and Implementation

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) microsite "**Managing for Health and Safety**"¹ has advice for leaders, owners, trustees and line managers who need to put in place or oversee an organisation's health and safety arrangements. It contains four distinct elements:

- Core elements of managing for health and safety
- Are you doing what you need to?
- Delivering effective arrangements
- Resources, including a number of useful external links

It also introduces the Plan, Do, Check, Act framework.

The microsite should also help supervisors. Much of the information will be of interest to small and medium-sized firms. This approach to managing Health and Safety is tried and tested. It has strong similarities to quality management systems used by many successful companies. It can help you protect people and control loss.

Further information can be found in **Essentials of Health and Safety at Work**² and **Five Steps to Risk Assessment**³.

Why Manage Health and Safety?

Typically every working day in Great Britain a person is killed and over 6000 injured at work. Three-quarters of a million people a year take time off work because of what they regard as work-related illness. About 30 million workdays are lost as a result.

References

1. Managing for Health and Safety: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/managing/index.htm>
2. Essentials of Health and Safety at Work; 2006; HSE Books; ISBN 9780717661794
3. Five Steps to Risk Assessment; 2006, INDG163 (rev 2), HSE Books; ISBN 071766189X, <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf>

HSE publications are available from HSE Books and good booksellers. See also: <http://www.hse.gov.uk>

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