



A Free Guide by P4P Compliance Management Limited

Simplifying Compliance

Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare



Contents

Introduction	2
The Working Environment.....	3
Health.....	3
Safety	5
Welfare	6
Conclusion.....	8

Introduction

This article has been produced to provide an overview of the Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations 1992 that came into force in the UK 1st January 1993.

Using plain and simple terminology, this document describes the absolute necessary requirements UK businesses need to know, to help them comply with current Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare laws.

It includes links to relevant sections of Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations 1992 itself.

The Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations applies to most workplaces offering goods and or services to individuals in the UK, except for:

- Construction firms working on construction sites
- Firms working in or on a ship
- Firms working below ground such as a coal mine

These organisations should follow other regulations, such as:

- The Quarries Regulations 1999
- The Health and Safety Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations 2002
- The Work at Height Regulations 2005
- The Construction Design and Management Regulations 2007

[The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#) requires businesses to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees, self-employed person, towards non-employees that use their premises, such as customers.

Businesses should ensure that workplaces are accessible to people with disabilities, including doors, passageways, stairs, lavatories, washing facilities, and workstations in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

The term Workplace is not restricted to factories, shops, offices, schools, hospitals, nursing / care homes, hotels or places of entertainment, but includes common parts of shared buildings, private roads and paths on industrial estates and business parks, and temporary worksites except workplaces involving construction sites.

Every employer should have a good understanding of the safety precautions and specifications contained in the Workplace Health Safety and Welfare Regulations 1992.

Failure to comply with these regulations can result in significant fines or legal action.

The Working Environment

The Workplace Health Safety and Welfare Regulations 1992 specify three main areas concerning health and safety in the workplace:

- Health
- Safety
- Welfare

Each area contains specific measures relating to health and safety concerns.

Health

Ventilation

Is required to be supplied to a workplace in the form of purified or fresh air. The extent of ventilation required will be determined by the work being performed and the equipment/plant installed.

In many workplaces, this can be achieved by opening windows to provide a comfortable, breathable atmosphere. However, workplaces with large amounts of vapour, dust or fumes may require mechanical ventilation systems.

Indoor Temperatures

All indoor workplaces must maintain a comfortable temperature.

Offices as a minimum should have a temperature of 16 °C, and working environments where physical work is performed should have a minimum temperature of 13 °C.

Working in Hot or Cold Environments

The risk of workers' health increases when required to work in hot or cold environments such as cold stress from working in freezer storage units or working outdoors in the open-air during winter.

Employers are required to perform risk assessments to workers' health if they're required to work in extreme hot or cold environments.

They need to consider two risk factors:

- Personal – workers body activity, the amount and type of clothing, and duration of exposure
- Environmental – workers ambient (immediate surroundings) temperature and radiant heat, if the work is outside, sunlight, wind velocity and the presence of rain or snow.

On identifying all risk factors to workers, employers must put measures in place to eliminate or mitigate risks posed by the effects of extreme hot or cold temperatures.



Lighting

Lighting levels in the workplace should be sufficient for workers to complete their tasks safely, and wherever possible the required lighting should be by natural light. Lighting should be maintained, to avoid risk to workers health and safety due to inadequate lighting levels or glare and reflection from computer screens avoiding eyestrain.

Cleanliness and Waste Materials

All workplace areas, furnishings, fittings and equipment should be kept clean and hygienic. This includes floors, walls, and ceilings.
All waste should be disposed of in suitable containers by an effective method.

Room Dimensions and Space

There should be sufficient space in the workplace for people to move about with ease.

The minimum amount of space per person is 11 cubic metres per person when empty of furniture and equipment. This is to be based on the actual height of the room or an average of three metres.

Workstations and Seating

Should be suitable and appropriate for the worker and for the work they do. Workers should be able to leave workstations easily and promptly in an emergency situation and must allow for any assistance required, such as for disabled persons. Seating should provide adequate ergonomic support for the lower back and footrests should be provided for workers who cannot place their feet flat on the floor.

Safety

Maintenance

The workplace, equipment, devices, and systems should be maintained so they are safe and in good working order for the health, safety and welfare of the workers and fully comply with the requirements of the regulations.

A formal system of maintenance should be in place for items such as emergency lighting, fixed equipment, windows, powered doors, escalators, and lifts etc. that may require hiring approved professionals.

Floors and Traffic Routes

Routes for traffic, pedestrian, vehicles, including stairs, fixed ladder, doorway, gateway, loading bay and ramps, should be of sufficient width and headroom, to allow people and vehicles to move around safely and with ease.

There should be adequate separation between pedestrians and vehicles including doors or entrances. Where required set speed limits, one-way systems, route markings and signage.

Floors and traffic routes must be suitable and strong enough for the loads placed on them and for the traffic expected to use them.

The surfaces should be even, not have holes, and kept free of obstructions or substances which may cause a person to slip, trip or fall.

A handrail should be provided on at least one side of every staircase, and access between floors should not be by ladders or steep stairs.

Falls into Dangerous Substances

The consequences of falling into dangerous substances are so serious that a high standard of protection is required.

Dangerous substances contained in tanks, pits or other structures should be securely fenced off or covered.

The obligations of employers in relation to falls are now covered by the [Work at Height Regulations 2005](#)

Windows, Transparent / Translucent Doors, Gates and Walls

Windows, transparent or translucent surfaces in doors, gates, side panels, walls or partitions should be of safety material or be adequately protected against breakage. They should be marked or incorporate features to make it apparent.

Openable windows, skylights and ventilators should be capable of being opened, closed, or adjusted and cleaned safely. When open, they should not pose any risk to anyone, in or around the workplace.

Doors and gates should be suitably constructed for their purpose and fitted with safety devices where necessary. In particular special provision must be made to prevent sliding doors coming off their tracks and upward opening doors from falling back.

Doors and gates which swing both ways and conventionally hinged doors on main traffic routes should have a transparent viewing panel.

Power-operated doors and gates must have safety features to prevent people being injured as a result of being struck or trapped.

They must also have a readily identifiable and accessible control switch so that they can be stopped quickly in an emergency.

Escalators and Moving Walkways

Should operate safely and be fitted with appropriate safety devices. They must be fitted with one or more emergency stop controls that are easily identifiable and easily accessible.

Welfare

Sanitary Conveniences and Washing Facilities

Suitable and sufficient sanitary conveniences and washing facilities must be provided and be easily accessible

They should be kept clean and be adequately ventilated, well-lit and have hot and cold water, soap and clean towels or other means of cleaning or drying.

If required by the type of work, showers must be provided. Men's and women's areas should be separate unless each convenience is in a separate room with a lockable door and is for use by only one person at a time.

Drinking Water

Adequate supply of clean high-quality drinking water must be supplied with Suitable cups or an upward drinking jet.

Water should only be provided in refillable enclosed containers where it cannot be obtained directly from a mains supply, and bottled water or water dispensing systems can be used as secondary water sources.

Accommodation for Clothing and Changing Facilities

Workers should have easy access, adequate space to change in private and be able to securely store their own clothes, special clothing and for workers requiring Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

The facilities should be readily accessible, ensure the privacy of the worker, be of sufficient capacity, have seating and as far as is reasonably practicable, allow workers for drying clothing such as raincoats.



Facilities for Rest and to Eat Meals

Suitable and sufficient, accessible rest facilities and meal areas should be provided for workers to use during breaks, have suitable access and seating adequate for disabled workers and in a place where PPE is not required to be worn.

These areas should be kept clean, have seats with backrests and tables for the number of workers likely to use them at any one time to prepare hot food and drink such as a microwave oven.

Suitable rest facilities should be provided for pregnant women and nursing mothers, situated near sanitary facilities and where necessary, include the facility to lie down.

Conclusion

The Workplace Health Safety and Welfare Regulations 1992 ensure the welfare, health and safety of all employees and other persons.

The Regulations Cover:

- Display Screen Equipment (DSE)
- Ventilation and Windows
- Maintenance of Equipment
- Lighting
- The Workplace Environment Risks of slips, trips and falls
- Falling objects
- Workers Facilities

Business owners and employers are required to maintain the workplace and contents to ensure the working environment is safe, healthy, and free from risk. They must also ensure full compliance with detailed requirements of the regulations.

Failure to comply with these regulations can result in significant fines or legal action.

Image Credits

Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare cover image by freepik.com

Working in Hot or Cold Environments image by Aleksandar Littlewolf

Facilities for Rest and to Eat Meals image by Tommy Stock Project

Disclaimer

P4P Compliance Management Limited strives to provide the most current and accurate information through diligent research at publication. However, some details may understandably become outdated over time.

This guide is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.

We make no guarantees about the completeness, accuracy, reliability, suitability, or availability of any information, products, services, or related graphics in this article.

All images used in this article are purchased, free stock, or CC0 licensed and accredited to the artist where possible.