

Health and safety

The health and safety of employees in the workplace is a major concern for employers and employees. Detailed laws have been created covering this area. All organisations that employ five or more people must have a written safety policy, which sets out:

- * who is responsible for workplace health and safety
- * arrangements that have been made for healthy and safety.

This policy must be communicated to all employees. Employees must comply with company procedures and arrangements for health and safety.

Every employer must carry out a risk assessment and then take health and safety measures in line with this assessment. Competent individuals must be given responsibility for health and safety arrangements. Emergency procedures must be set out. Employees must be trained and provided with clear information about risks and the steps to take in dealing with them.

The Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 is the most important Act in this area but it has recently been updated by a number of European Union Directives. In 1992 Health and Safety Regulations were set out in a set of measures, termed the 'six pack' - setting out rules and obligations for employers and employees.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations, 1994 set out clear rules for the handling, storage and recording of the use of dangerous chemicals.

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations, 1992, set out clear directions and requirements for the use of display screens on word processors, as a measure to prevent illnesses and headaches resulting from the use of such equipment.