

## Health and safety in the workplace

### Health & safety legislation

Employers have a responsibility to make workplaces as safe as possible. The two main legal requirements are:



Section 7 (a) of the Act requires all employees to take reasonable care for their own Health and Safety at work and that of others who may be affected by what they do or fail to do. Under HASAWA, an employer must look at what risks exist in the workplace and record the risk assessment. Following this, he/she must:

- \* appoint employees to apply the Health and Safety measures needed
- \* set up emergency actions
- \* provide clear information and training to employees.

Health and Safety at Work Regulations legislation covers standards of care in these areas:

- \* the upkeep of the workplace, equipment and systems
- \* indoor ventilation, temperature and lighting
- \* cleanliness and the handling of waste materials
- \* room sizes and space
- \* floors and organisation of corridors
- \* windows and transparent doors, gates and walls
- \* ability to clean windows safely
- \* escalators and moving walkways
- \* toilets
- \* drinking water
- \* cupboards/coat racks for clothing and where people can change clothes
- \* facilities for resting and eating.

Safe work practice can only take place when the law is kept to. Health and Safety regulations require that employers appoint 'competent persons' to help them carry out risk assessments.

While this is the duty of the employer, UNISON carries out training so its representatives have the vital knowledge and skills to work on workplace Health and Safety committees.

UNISON Health and Safety representatives are trained so they have an understanding of:

- \* the work being assessed
- \* risk assessment and prevention of risk
- \* up-to-date Health and Safety measures
- \* identifying hazards at work.