

# GUIDELINES ON PREPARING YOUR SAFETY STATEMENT AND CARRYING OUT RISK ASSESSMENTS



HEALTH AND SAFETY  
AUTHORITY

**1**  
**Health and  
Safety Policy**

**2**  
**Identify  
Hazards**

**6**  
**Review and  
Update**

**SAFETY  
STATEMENT**

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**Assess  
Risks**

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**Record Your  
Findings**

**4**  
**Decide  
Precautions**

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# **GUIDELINES ON PREPARING YOUR SAFETY STATEMENT**

## **AND CARRYING OUT RISK ASSESSMENTS**



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**HEALTH AND SAFETY  
AUTHORITY**

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# INTRODUCTION

## "GOOD WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT NOT ONLY PROTECTS PEOPLE FROM HARM BUT ALSO CONTRIBUTES TO BUSINESS SUCCESS".

There is now considerable evidence, borne out by companies' practical experiences, that effective workplace health and safety management actually contributes to business success, whereas accidents and ill health have costs, often hidden and underestimated.

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations, 1993 aim to prevent accidents and ill health at work. They apply to all employers, employees and the self-employed. The workplace health and safety system required by these laws must be risk based in that the required safety measures must be proportional to the real risks involved. The health and safety measures put in place must be adequate to eliminate, control or minimise the risk of injury. Managing health and safety at work means being able to assess the real risks and putting the appropriate health and safety measures in place. The first step is to prepare a Safety Statement.

As an employer you are required to identify the hazards and assess the risks, otherwise known as carrying out a risk assessment, in the workplace you control, and to prepare a written safety statement. This statement must set out the health and safety measures you are implementing to protect your workers. In turn, your employees must co-operate with you so that you can achieve this. Consultation on health and safety matters, between yourself and your employees, must also be part of your health and safety management programme.

These guidelines are designed to help you, as an employer or a self-employed person, to manage health and safety at your workplace. They will help you to carry out risk assessments and to prepare your Safety Statement. They are not intended as a legal interpretation. When these guidelines refer to health and safety they mean the health, safety and welfare of workers while at work.

The approach outlined in these guidelines may not meet the more stringent approaches to hazard identification and risk assessment required by some sector specific laws e.g. for dealing with the control of major accident hazards in chemical companies, the carriage of dangerous goods by road or the classification and labelling of dangerous substances. Further information on these areas and more general workplace health and safety issues may be obtained from the Health and Safety Authority at the addresses listed on the back of this booklet.

**A hazard means anything that can cause harm (e.g. dangerous chemicals, electricity, working at heights from ladders).**

**'Risk' is the likelihood, great or small, that someone will be harmed by the hazard, together with the severity of harm suffered.**

**Risk assessment is a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.**

**Controlling risk means, and the law requires, that you do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure the hazard will not injure anyone (e.g. by eliminating the hazard, enclosing it in a totally enclosed container, using general or local exhaust ventilation, safe operating procedures or providing personal protection, as a last resort).**

# MANAGING WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

## HAVE YOU GOT YOUR WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY UNDER CONTROL?

Controlling dangers at work is no different from tackling any other task - recognising the problem, knowing enough about it, deciding what to do and putting the solutions into practice. The law requires you to prepare a Safety Statement and carry out risk assessments, but it has a practical purpose. This is to help you manage your employees' health and safety, to get the balance right between the size of any health and safety problems and what you have to do about them.

## WHAT IS A SAFETY STATEMENT?

A Safety Statement is your programme, in writing, for safeguarding the health and safety of your employees while they work. It represents your commitment to their health and safety, and should state how you will ensure their health and safety, the resources you feel are necessary for maintaining and reviewing health and safety laws and standards.

## WHAT IS RISK ASSESSMENT?

An assessment of the risk is nothing more than a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or whether you should do more to prevent harm. The aim is to make sure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill. Risk assessments should be carried out

on those work activities that could cause injury or ill health and the results should be written into your safety statement.

## WHY PREPARE A SAFETY STATEMENT?

Preparing and implementing a Safety Statement and keeping it up to date is the most important step in managing health and safety within your business. This will not in itself prevent accidents and ill health at your workplace. But by making a commitment to promoting safety and health and specifying the health and safety measures and resources you are providing, the Safety Statement plays a vital part in the implementation of your health and safety policies.

You, your managers and supervisors should each ensure that workplace practices conform to the safety statement. Behaviour, the way in which everyone works, must reflect the safe working practices contained in the safety statement. Supervisory checks and audits should be carried out to determine how well the aims of the Safety Statement are being achieved. Corrective action should be taken when it is required.

The Safety Statement is required by law and every employer and self-employed person must have one, which is appropriate for the work they do and where they work. You could be prosecuted for not having one. When an inspector from the Health and Safety Authority inspects your workplace he will place great emphasis on ensuring that you prepare and implement your safety statement. If he finds that the statement is inadequate he can ask you to revise it.

## WHAT SHOULD BE COVERED BY A SAFETY STATEMENT?

The areas that should be covered by the Safety Statement are quite specific and are covered by the 1989 Act (Section 12) and the 1993 General Application Regulations (Regulation 10). The document should:

- specify how the health and safety of your employees will be ensured
- give details of how you are going to manage

your employees' health and safety including your commitment to complying with your legal obligations, the resources provided and the arrangements you are implementing for this

- be based on an identification of the hazards and an assessment of the risks in your workplace
- specify the co-operation required from your employees on health and safety matters
- include the names and job titles of people you are appointing to be responsible for health and safety in your organisation
- contain the arrangements for consultation with employees on health and safety matters
- include details of information available to employees on health and safety.

The Safety Statement should take account of all the health and safety legislation that applies to your workplace.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARING THE SAFETY STATEMENT?

Both employers and the self-employed are required to prepare a Safety Statement. Consultation should take place with your employees, as necessary, when preparing the statement in order to ensure that they understand and take ownership of the health and safety measures proposed. There is a duty on everyone at work to co-operate effectively in developing and promoting health and safety.

## WHO MUST HAVE ACCESS TO THE SAFETY STATEMENT?

All employees, must be made aware of the relevant contents of the Safety Statement and have access to it. The relevant contents of the Safety Statement must also be brought to the attention of any other people in your workplace who may be affected by health and safety risks and who therefore need to be aware of the necessary safety precautions. These could include outside contractors who are involved in cleaning or maintenance activities or building work, temporary workers, delivery people who stack their goods in your premises and self-

employed people who provide a service for you from time to time.

You should ensure that the relevant contents of the Safety Statement are brought to the attention of your employees at least annually, and whenever it is revised. There is an ongoing responsibility to ensure that your employees are aware of the Safety Statement and understand its terms. A campaign to discharge this responsibility could include a combination of written and verbal communication, including:

- distributing the Safety Statement or relevant sections of it to all employees when prepared and whenever significant changes are made
- verbal communication of the terms of the Safety Statement
- inclusion of the Safety Statement in employees' handbook or manual
- through ongoing training.

# PREPARING YOUR SAFETY STATEMENT AND CARRYING OUT RISK ASSESSMENTS

The Safety Statement is based on the principle that safety can be managed, because most accidents and ill health are foreseeable and can usually be prevented. It is basically an action programme setting out how health and safety is managed in your workplace. A comprehensive Safety Statement is a practical tool for reducing accidents and ill health at work. For small businesses the preparation of a Safety Statement should be a simple and straightforward matter. There are six simple steps to be followed, all of which are important in developing a health and safety management programme for your organisation:



# DRAW UP A HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

You have ultimate responsibility for health and safety. The Safety Statement should begin with a declaration, signed at senior, responsible management level on your behalf and indicate your commitment to ensuring a workplace that is as safe and healthy as reasonably practicable and that all relevant statutory requirements will be complied with. This declaration should spell out your policy in relation to overall health and safety performance, provide a framework for the management of health and safety and indicate relevant objectives.

Because the Safety Statement must be relevant at all times to the health and safety of your employees, the policy declaration should indicate that the Safety Statement will be revised as changes occur and periodically evaluated at set intervals. It should indicate how the relevant contents of the Statement are to be brought to the attention of your employees and any other people in your workplace who might be affected by the statement.

The health and safety policy should also take account of the your general duties as set out in the 1989 Act and any other legislation that applies to you. You must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- a safe place of work
- safe means of access and egress
- safe plant, equipment and machinery
- safe systems of work - e.g. operating procedures
- provision of appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision
- provision of suitable protective clothing and equipment where hazards cannot be eliminated
- preparation and revision of emergency plans
- designation of staff having emergency duties
- prevention of risk to health from any article or substance (including plant, machinery and equipment)

- provision and maintenance of welfare facilities
- provision, where necessary, of a competent person to advise and assist in securing the safety, health and welfare of employees. (A competent person is someone with appropriate training and practical experience in the specific task required.)

If any of these issues are particularly relevant to you, you may make a comment on them in the health and safety policy declaration. Otherwise you can comment on them in the main part of the Safety Statement.

The Managing Director or another senior manager who has overall responsibility for health and safety should sign the health and safety policy.

# IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS

**A hazard means anything that can cause harm (e.g. dangerous chemicals, electricity, working at heights from ladders).**

The first step in safeguarding safety and health is to identify hazards from materials, equipment, chemicals and work activities. You are required to systematically examine your workplace and identify hazards. Where you may have control of several work locations, or different types of work activity or changing work locations (e.g. road repairs, building work), you may need a Safety Statement that has separate sections dealing with the different locations or activities.

You will be familiar with the hazards associated with the type of work you are involved in. Records of accidents, ill health and insurance claims can also help you to identify the main hazards. You should also refer to any relevant legislation or standards covering the hazard (e.g. the 1995 Construction Regulations for construction site hazards, the 1994 Chemical Agents Regulations and its Code of Practice for chemical hazards and their control). Manufacturers' instructions or datasheets can also help you spot hazards and put risks in their true perspective.

Some hazards are obvious, e.g. unguarded moving parts of machinery, fumes, electricity, working at heights, or moving heavy loads. Less obvious, but at the root of many accidents, are hazards presented by untidy workplaces and poor maintenance. In the case of some hazards, e.g. excessive noise, it may take months or even years before damage materialises.

Don't be overcomplicated. In most firms in the office, retail, commercial, service and light industrial sector, the hazards and hazardous work activities are few and simple. Checking them is common sense, but necessary. If you are a small firm and you are confident you understand the work you can do the hazard identification and risk assessment yourself. If you are a larger firm, you could ask a responsible employee or safety officer, to help you. If you are not confident, get help from

a competent source. Consult and involve all employees including the safety representatives as necessary. But remember - you are responsible for seeing it is adequately done.

If you are doing the hazard identification and risk assessment yourself, walk around your workplace and look afresh at what could reasonably be expected to cause harm. Ignore the trivial and concentrate on the significant hazards that could result in serious harm or affect several people. Ask your employees or their representatives what they think. They may have noticed things that are not immediately obvious.

The following checklists provide a systematic, though not exhaustive, approach to identifying hazards.

## PHYSICAL HAZARDS

Some common causes of accidents are:

- manual handling (e.g. heavy, awkward or hard to reach loads, handling patients, treating farm animals)
- working at a height (e.g. from mezzanine floors or scaffolding)
- equipment (e.g. which is poorly maintained or whose guards have been disabled)
- falling objects
- slipping/tripping hazards (e.g. poorly maintained floors or stairs)
- introduction of new machinery or work systems
- fire (e.g. from flammable or combustible materials, hay, waste material)
- machinery - especially moving parts of machinery (e.g. blades or rollers, power take off shafts on tractors and farm machinery)
- ejection of material (e.g. from plastic moulding)
- electricity (e.g. poor wiring or residual current device)
- special hazards of maintenance of equipment and the workplace itself (e.g. the roof, windows or gutters)
- internal transport (e.g. fork lifts) and at the interface with external transport (e.g. at loading bays)
- hot substances or surfaces

- hand tools (e.g. noise, eye injury, electrocution)
- poor housekeeping
- collisions between moving equipment or vehicles and workers
- pressure systems (e.g. steam boilers).

## HEALTH HAZARDS

- noise (e.g. if people must raise their voices to be heard)
- harmful dusts (e.g. from grinding)
- unsuitable lighting levels
- some types of light (e.g. over-exposure to ultra-violet light can cause skin cancer)
- vibration (e.g. from pneumatic rock or concrete breakers)
- sources of radiation
- extremes of temperature
- injury through poor design of tasks or machinery.

## CHEMICAL HAZARDS

Chemical substances of some sort are used in nearly all organisations. They range from common everyday products like glues and correction fluids to industrial solvents, dyes, pesticides or acids. In most cases the hazards are well documented and information is available on safety precautions to be taken. Regulations require certain chemicals to be labelled according to their hazards.

Manufacturers and suppliers are legally required to provide material safety data sheets, which give information on the health and safety risks of any chemical substances. You should ask for this information. The Code of Practice for the 1994 Chemical Agents Regulations gives a list of several hundred chemical agents which are dangerous and should be consulted if you use chemicals as part of your operations.

In order to identify chemical hazards and assess their risks you need data on at least the following:

- immediate problems, (e.g. acute toxic effects or catching fire)

- long-term effects of exposure on health, (e.g. cancer-causing)
- likelihood of explosion
- likelihood of skin problems, (e.g. skin irritation or sensitiser causing dermatitis)
- likelihood of chest problems (e.g. respiratory irritation or sensitisation, i.e. asthma).

## BIOLOGICAL AGENT HAZARDS

These include viruses and bacteria that can cause infection and substances from plants or animals that can lead to other health problems. These hazards are likely to occur in places such as laboratories, hospitals, farms or abattoirs. They include:

- tuberculosis from contact with infectious cases
- brucellosis
- farmers lung caused by spores from mouldy hay
- hepatitis from unprotected handling of infected body fluids or waste.

If you work in or are responsible for any of the above activities you should consult the 1994 and 1998 Biological Agents Regulations for further information on identifying biological agent hazards and their method of control.

## HUMAN FACTOR HAZARDS

Apart from physical surroundings, human factors must also be taken into account when identifying hazards. People should be mentally and physically capable of doing their jobs safely. The workplace, the work system, the organisation of work and the job should be designed so as to avoid sustained stress. Other human factor issues that may need to be reviewed include violence to workers, bullying and the effects of passive smoking.

Some groups are particularly vulnerable:

- young workers, these have a higher accident rate
- pregnant women (see the 1994 Pregnant workers etc. Regulations)
- people with disabilities
- new or inexperienced workers
- older workers.

# CARRY OUT A RISK ASSESSMENT

**'Risk' is the likelihood, great or small, that someone will be harmed by the hazard, together with the severity of the harm suffered.**

**An assessment of the risk is a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.**

The aim is to make sure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill. Accidents and ill health can ruin lives, and can affect your business too if output is lost, machinery is damaged, insurance costs increase, or you have to go to court.

Risk will depend on many, often related, circumstances:

- Is anyone exposed to the hazard?
- Is the hazard likely to cause injury?
- How serious would the injury be?
- Is the hazard well controlled?
- Is the level of supervision adequate?
- How long are people exposed and what are the levels of exposure that should not be exceeded? (These levels apply to chemicals, temperature, noise, heavy loads, radiation, etc.)

When carrying out a risk assessment you should estimate how likely it is that a hazard will cause harm and how serious that harm is likely to be. This will help you to decide on the appropriate level of management effort and resources that will be required to control each hazard. It will also help you to decide how urgent any corrective measures need to be. There are various qualitative and quantitative methods for carrying out risk assessment. Choose one which best suits your

organisation. A generic format for carrying out risk assessments in a tabular format is given in the Appendix.

Sometimes, a portion of the risk assessment may already be done for you. For example, if you use dangerous chemicals, the hazards and the precautions will be listed on the label or the material safety data sheet. There may also be health and safety regulations, industry standards, and codes of practice or guidelines dealing with a particular hazard. You should use these to help you assess the risks and to decide if your existing precautions are adequate. It is your duty, as an employer, to carry out the risk assessment. Try and carry out the assessment yourself and involve your managers and employees as much as possible.

Where you do not have the in-house expertise to do so you must employ the services of an external competent person to help you. Check that they are familiar with and have the ability to assess your work activities. Involve as many of your own employees as possible in order to ensure your employees take ownership of the finished assessments.

## DECIDE WHO MIGHT BE HARMED, AND HOW

Apart from employees (e.g. operators, maintenance personnel, office staff) think about people who may not be in the workplace all the time (e.g. cleaners, visitors, and contractors, outside maintenance personnel). Include members of the public, or people you share your workplace with, if there is a chance they could be hurt by your activities. Pay particular attention to staff with disabilities, visitors, inexperienced staff and lone workers.

If changes such as new plant, new working practices or new materials occur in your workplace, you must carry out a new risk assessment, and update the Safety Statement accordingly. The risk assessments and any subsequent revisions must be brought to the attention of everyone affected by them.



# DECIDE WHAT PRECAUTIONS ARE NEEDED

You may already have in place some safety measures, your risk assessment will tell you whether these are adequate or more should be done.

You also need to ask yourself if you have done all the things that the law says you have to. Remember that all health and safety laws provide guidance on how to assess the potential risks and the appropriate safeguards. For example, there are legal requirements on prevention of access to dangerous parts of machinery. Then ask yourself whether generally accepted industry standards are in place. But do not stop there - think for yourself, because the law also says that you must do what is reasonably practicable to keep your workplace safe. Your real aim is to make all risks small by adding to your precautions if necessary.

Improving health and safety need not cost a lot. For instance, placing a mirror on a dangerous blind corner to help prevent vehicle accidents, or putting some non-slip material on slippery steps, are inexpensive precautions considering the risks. Sometimes changing the way a job is done can reduce the risk of an accident.

If you find that something needs to be done, ask yourself:

- Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?
- Can I change the way the job is done so as to make it safer?
- If not, what safety precautions are necessary to control the risk?

**Controlling risk means, and the law requires, that you do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure the hazard will not injure anyone.**

Common sense tells us that life cannot be totally risk free, however, you are required to do all that is reasonably practicable to minimise the risk of injury. If you share a workplace, tell the other

employers and self-employed people there about any risks your work could cause them, and what precautions you are taking. Also, think about the risks to your workforce from those who share your workplace.

Some common methods of controlling risk are:

- extraction or containment of the hazard at source
- ventilation of an area of the workplace
- isolation of the process or the worker (e.g. switching off and isolating machines before carrying out repairs or alterations)
- safeguarding of machinery
- ensuring a clean and tidy workplace
- adequate training and supervision
- emergency planning procedures including first aid
- protective equipment or clothing. They should be used only as a last resort after all other ways of eliminating the hazard have been fully explored.
- adequate health surveillance programme including pre-placement or regular health checks where appropriate
- accident and ill health reporting and investigation
- use of permit to work systems on safe working procedures
- adequate welfare facilities.

The need for these risk control methods will vary according to the needs of your workplace.

## PERMIT TO WORK SYSTEMS

A permit to work system is a written system of the procedures which must be taken to safeguard workers doing work such as repair, maintenance or cleaning work in potentially dangerous areas. It involves mechanical, electrical or process isolation procedures or monitoring the atmosphere for the presence of dangerous fumes. It sets out in a systematic way the work to be done, the hazards involved and the precautions to be taken. Situations where this is necessary, for example, are where machinery could be restarted with the

worker still inside it, or working in confined spaces where there is a danger of chemical or physical contamination.

## EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC RISK ASSESSMENTS

### *Risk of a slip, trip or fall*

Slips, trips and falls are the most common type of accident in most places of work. The risk will depend on:

- whether the premises is kept clean, tidy and uncluttered
- the flooring and stairs being in good repair
- the control of other trip hazards
- spillages of liquid being cleaned promptly.

The extent of injury from slips, trips and falls may vary from relatively minor to severe, depending on a variety of factors including nature of fall, whether at the level or from a height.

### *Risk of being struck by a fork-lift truck*

Vehicles in the workplace are a risk to other employees on foot. The risk is a combination of the chance that someone will be struck, together with the likely severity of the injury. This will depend on:

- whether pedestrians use walkways which keep them away from moving fork-trucks
- the number of pedestrians and fork-lift trucks using the same areas
- the training and instruction provided to both drivers and pedestrians
- the degree of supervision and enforcement of safe procedures (e.g. for separating pedestrians and forklifts)
- the mechanical condition of the fork-lift truck (e.g. brakes and flashing beacons)
- the wearing of high visibility PPE.

The extent of injury is likely to be severe as it may result in death or disability.

## *Isocyanate paint risk assessment*

Paints containing isocyanates are a hazard to health. The material safety data sheet and the label on the paint container give this information.

Breathing in isocyanate fumes can cause asthma.

The risk is a combination of the chance that someone's lungs will be damaged together with the extent of the likely damage. This will depend on:

- the amount of isocyanate in the air
- how often the job is done. Is it all day every day or once or twice a year?
- the work method - how the paint is used, e.g. if it is sprayed the risk will be greater than if brushed on
- the number of people that could be affected - is just one person working with the paint or many? Could their work affect others?
- what could go wrong? i.e. what errors could lead to spillage and atmospheric emissions
- are the precautions (exhaust ventilation, personal protective equipment) already taken sufficient? Do they comply with the legal requirements? How do they compare with good practice and national or 'trade' guidance?

The extent of the likely damage is severe. An employee could develop asthma, which might make him unemployable in that industry.

# RECORD YOUR FINDINGS INCLUDING WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING SAFETY

The Safety Statement is the place to record the significant findings of your risk assessment. This means writing down the more significant hazards and recording your most important conclusions - for example, "Electrical installations: insulation and earthing to be checked every six months and after any modifications", or "Fume from welding: local exhaust ventilation has been provided, supervisor to ensure that it is always used and is checked every month". You must also inform your employees about your findings. You should also state in the Safety Statement where the results of these checks are retained.

Keep the written document for future reference or use. It can help you if a HSA inspector questions your precautions, or if you become involved in any action for civil liability. It can also remind you to keep an eye on particular matters. And it helps to show that you have done what the law requires.

To make things simpler, your Safety Statement can refer to specific procedures contained in other documents. These documents might include:

- quality manuals
- operating instructions
- company rules
- manufacturers' instructions
- your health and safety procedures.

These may already list hazards and precautions. You do not need to repeat all that, and it is up to you whether you combine all the documents, or keep them separately. You must make sure your employees are made aware of these hazard and precautions.

## ORGANISATION

Your Safety Statement must also specify how you are going to organise and assign responsibilities to safeguard your employees' health and safety on a day to day basis. The areas it must cover are available resources, co-operation by employees, names of responsible persons, consultation participation and representation.

## RESOURCES

Your Safety Statement must give details of the resources provided by you, in terms of time, people and finance, to ensure the health and safety of your employees. For example, the budgets and the commitments of employee training have to be specified.

## CO-OPERATION REQUIRED FROM YOUR EMPLOYEES

There is a duty on all employees to take care of their own safety while at work. Employees must co-operate when using personal protective equipment or clothing provided by you for their health and safety and co-operate so as to enable you comply with the law.

The co-operation required must be clearly spelt out in the Safety Statement and must not be couched in vague generalities. Where disciplinary procedures for failure to comply with safety requirements are appropriate, these should be specified.

Since your employees are required to report to either you, their manager or their supervisor, any defects in plant, equipment, place or system of work that might endanger health and safety, the Safety Statement should indicate the system for doing so.

## RESPONSIBILITY

An organisation chart showing your health and safety management structure and the names and responsibilities of key personnel should be written down in your safety statement. As a minimum it must include the name of the person at senior

management level with delegated responsibility for safety in the company. This should be at director level. It must also allocate responsibility for each arrangement that you have identified is necessary for ensuring health and safety. Responsibilities should be clearly identified. Lines of communication should also be laid down between the different levels of responsibility.

## CONSULTATION, PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

The law requires you to put in place a safety consultation programme that facilitates participation by all employees in health and safety matters. Participation by your employees supports your risk control by encouraging their “ownership” of health and safety policies and procedures. It also gives them an understanding that your workplace and the people working in it benefit from good health and safety performance. Pooling knowledge and experience through employee consultation, participation and representation through the safety representative means that health and safety becomes “everybody's” business.

Your Safety Statement must specify the arrangements you are going to use for consultation with, and the participation by, your employees on health and safety matters. This would include the procedures you will use for facilitating effective co-operation and communication on health and safety matters between you and your employees. The names and functions of the safety representatives should also be detailed. It should also give details of the health and safety information your employees are entitled to under the law and its location.

# REVIEW YOUR PROGRAMME AND UPDATE AS NECESSARY

## KEEPING SAFETY STATEMENTS UP TO DATE

Implementing your Safety Statement should be an integral part of every day operations. So, your Safety Statement needs to be relevant at all times. Whenever there are changes, and in the light of risk assessments and improvements that have an impact on health and safety, it may be necessary to revise the Safety Statement. Such changes may include changes in work processes, organisational structure, equipment or substances used, technical knowledge, legislation or standards.

Changes in your workforce may also have an impact; e.g. altering the number of workers on a particular process, replacing older/more experienced workers with young trainees or as a result of experience gained through training. Do not amend your Safety Statement for every trivial change, or for each new job, but if a new job introduces significant new hazards of its own, you will want to consider them in their own right and do whatever you need to keep the risks down.

A HSA inspector may review your Safety Statement during an inspection of your workplace. If he finds that it is inadequate, he can direct you to revise it within 30 days. This could happen if risks to safety and health are not assessed or controlled adequately.

## PERIODIC EVALUATION OF SAFETY STATEMENTS

Your Safety Statement should be periodically evaluated. The evaluation serves two purposes. A backward look to review how effective your health and safety management has been, and a forward look to ensure you have considered any proposed changes. You should always try to improve on your

last performance. You will obviously need to have a system of checking that your safety measures are working effectively. You should monitor them on a regular basis.

You are responsible for drawing up, revising and evaluating your Statement. If you are not competent to do so you must obtain assistance from a competent person. It may also be appropriate to call on outside experts (e.g. engineer, scientist, occupational physician, ergonomist, occupational hygienist or other relevant health and safety advisers) to solve particular problems.

## DIRECTORS' REPORT

Section 12(6) of the 1989 Act states that the report of the Directors of a company under section 158 of the Companies Act, 1963, shall contain, in addition to the information specified in that section, an evaluation of the extent to which the policy set out in a Safety Statement was fulfilled during the period covered by the report. This report is entirely the responsibility of the directors who may follow the suggested route below.

## HOW SHOULD YOUR SAFETY STATEMENT BE EVALUATED?

In evaluating the Safety Statement, directors should consider at least the following:

- were the aims in the Safety Statement relevant and appropriate?
- did you identify the significant hazards and assess their risks and set out the necessary preventive and protective safety measures?
- were the safety measures you identified, implemented in practice or did you make the sort of progress you had intended to?
- what new safety measures were applied following any reportable accidents or other incidents that occurred, or following any enforcement measures relating to your workplace?
- did you act on the measures necessary to comply with the relevant statutory provisions

(e.g. on management, consultation and training etc.)?

- was there anything more you may reasonably have done?
- were adequate financial, physical, human and organisational resources committed to health and safety?
- what improvements in health and safety measures need to be made for the future?

As part of the evaluation you will find it helpful to refer to any records you may have kept, such as accident/incident reports, health surveillance results, training, maintenance logs, or atmospheric monitoring figures. You must also consult safety representatives and others who may be affected by the evaluation.

## WHEN SHOULD THE SAFETY STATEMENT BE EVALUATED?

It is recommended that it be done at least annually, however in deciding the frequency of review you should consider the nature of your operations and any changes that might affect workers' safety and health.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO AFTER THE SAFETY STATEMENT HAS BEEN EVALUATED?

You should bring any changes made to the attention of the Safety Representatives, employees and any other persons who may be affected by the measures set out in the Safety Statement. Inform them about your findings and of any changes in the required safety precautions.

## APPENDIX

# GUIDANCE ON CARRYING OUT RISK ASSESSMENTS

Company name \_\_\_\_\_

Company address \_\_\_\_\_

Area/department/activity \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment review date \_\_\_\_\_

## Hazards and risks:

Look only for hazards, which you could reasonably expect to result in significant harm under the conditions in your workplace. Use the following examples as a guide:

- Slipping/tripping hazards (e.g. poorly maintained floors or stairs)
- Fire (e.g. from flammable materials)
- Chemicals (e.g. battery acid)
- Moving parts of machinery (e.g. blades)
- Work at height (e.g. from mezzanine floors)
- Ejection of material (e.g. from plastic molding)
- Pressure systems (e.g. steam boilers)
- Vehicles (e.g. fork-lift trucks)
- Electricity (e.g. poor wiring)
- Dust (e.g. from grinding)
- Fume (e.g. welding)
- Manual handling
- Noise
- Poor lighting
- Low temperature.

## Who might be harmed?

There is no need to list individuals by name - just think about groups of people doing similar work or who may be affected, e.g.:

- Office staff
- Maintenance personnel
- Contractors
- People sharing your workplace
- Operators
- Cleaners
- Members of the public.

## Pay particular attention to:

- Staff with disabilities
- Visitors
- Inexperienced staff
- Lone workers.

*They may be more vulnerable.*

Assessment undertaken by \_\_\_\_\_

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**Is the risk adequately controlled?**

Have you already taken precautions against the risks from the hazards you listed? For example, have you provided:

- Adequate information, instruction or training?
- Adequate systems or procedures?

**Do the precautions:**

- Meet the standards set by a legal requirement?
- Comply with a recognized industry standard?
- Represent good practice?
- Reduce risk as far as reasonably practicable?

If so, then the risks are adequately controlled, but you need to indicate the precautions you have in place.

You may refer to procedures, manuals company rules, etc., giving this information.

**Responsible persons:**

You can list individuals by name and job title. It should be clear who is responsible for controlling the risks.

# RISK ASSESSMENT EXAMPLES

(This list of hazards and controls is not intended to be exhaustive. While they may apply to certain situations in your workplace, the controls that you require to comply with the law can only be determined by your own risk assessment.)

Company name _____	
Company address _____	
Area/department/activity _____	
Signed _____ Date _____	
Assessment review date _____	
<b>List hazards and risks here:</b>	<b>List groups of people who are especially at risk from the significant hazards which you have identified:</b>
<p><b>Hazard:</b> Faulty electrical equipment.</p> <p><b>Risk:</b> Shock likely to occur and severe injury could result.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Employees</li> <li>● Cleaners</li> <li>● Contractors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hazard:</b> Manual handling of 25kg boxes of material.</p> <p><b>Risk:</b> Back injury likely to occur and be reportable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Employees in packing department.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hazard:</b> Working near edge of mezzanine floor over offices.</p> <p><b>Risk:</b> Falls likely to occur and severe injury could result.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Employees in stores department.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hazard:</b> Sheep dipping with organophosphates.</p> <p><b>Risk:</b> Exposure to splashes or spray could result in poisoning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Farmers, agricultural contractors and farm workers.</li> </ul>

\_\_\_\_\_ Assessment undertaken by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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<p><b>List required controls here or note where the information may be found:</b></p>	<p><b>Responsible persons:</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Report defective equipment</li> <li>● Ensure all leads checked monthly</li> <li>● Residual current device (RCD) provided and checked every 4 months.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Employees</li> <li>● Supervisor</li> <li>● Supervisor.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Push trucks provided and should be used</li> <li>● Employees are trained in manual handling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Supervisor</li> <li>● General manager.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Guard-rail in place at edge of mezzanine floor</li> <li>● Guard-rail to be kept in place at all times</li> <li>● Loading bay is protected with gates and must be kept closed when not in use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● General manager</li> <li>● Supervisor</li> <li>● Supervisor and operators.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wear suitable waterproof clothing and rubber boots. Use face visor when mixing concentrates. Check material safety data sheets for safe handling precautions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Farmer/agricultural contractor.</li> </ul>



\_\_\_\_\_ Assessment undertaken by \_\_\_\_\_

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<b>List required controls here or note where the information may be found:</b>	<b>Responsible persons:</b>

# OTHER PUBLICATIONS FROM THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AUTHORITY

The following list of publications from the Health and Safety Authority can be consulted for further information on specific hazards in certain work sectors and work activities. They would be very helpful when preparing your Safety Statement.

1. Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (General Application) Regulations, 1993
2. Preventing workplace cancers (1993 Carcinogens Regulations Guidelines)
3. Pregnant at work - a guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Pregnant Employees etc.) Regulations, 1994
4. Guidelines to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations, 1995
5. Workplace health and safety management – practical guidelines on the implementation and maintenance of an occupational safety, health and welfare management system
6. Safe to work including a short guide to health and safety law
7. Guidelines on safety consultation & safety representatives
8. Safe Company – A guide to safe working practices (*A video titled Safe Company accompanies this publication*)
9. Handle with care - safe manual handling
10. Manual handling in the construction industry - *training pack*
11. Caring with minimal lifting - a safety and health guide for those who care for patients
12. Obligatory safety signs
13. Violence at work
14. Violence at work in the health care sector
15. Bullying at work
16. Occupational asthma - an employers' guide
17. Occupational asthma - an employees' guide
18. Guidelines on the health and safety of office workers
19. Working in confined spaces
20. Fishing vessel Safety Statement
21. Safety in fishing
22. Stay safe on site
23. Build in safety - a short guide to good practice and legislation
24. Report of the Advisory Committee on Construction Safety
25. Safety in forestry operations
26. Mouldy feed is dangerous
27. Farm safety
28. Preventing accidents to children on farms
29. Report of the Advisory Committee on Agriculture & Forestry Sectors
30. Farming a way of life – *video and teachers manual*
31. Safety and workplace vehicles
32. Guidelines to the 1990 Noise Regulations
33. Is your work making you deaf?
34. Use chemicals safely
35. Workplace stress
36. Who cares for the carers?
37. Safe installation of propane gas cylinders
38. Storage of liquefied petroleum gas
39. Safety in small shops
40. Safety with asbestos
41. Are you ready for the millennium bug?
42. Report of the Advisory Committee on the Health Services Sector
43. Report of the Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety & Health Training
44. Report of the Advisory Committee on the Defence Forces
45. Report of the Advisory Committee on the Education Sector

# GUIDELINES ON PREPARING YOUR SAFETY STATEMENT AND CARRYING OUT RISK ASSESSMENTS

*Achieving a  
Healthy  
and Safe  
Working Life  
-Together*

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