



The Health and Safety Executive



and you

2000 edition

Our mission

To ensure that risks to people's health and safety
from work activities are properly controlled



This leaflet is called *The Health and Safety Executive and you*. That means 'you' as a member of the public and/or 'you' as an employee. It explains how we work, what our enforcement practice is and how we aim to give the best standards of service and advice under 'Service First' and the Government's Enforcement Concordat.



For information aimed specifically at employers and the self-employed (or anyone else who is interested in how we go about our inspection and enforcement work) please see our leaflet *The Health and Safety Executive – working with employers*.¹

Another free leaflet, which you may find helpful, is *Health and safety regulation – a short guide*² which explains the differences between guidance, Approved Codes of Practice and regulations, and how they relate to each other.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is one of the biggest publishers among UK government bodies and some of our publications are available in larger public libraries. You can find more information on how to obtain our publications on page 10.

This leaflet and versions in Welsh, Urdu, Gujarati, Bengali, Hindi and Punjabi are available on HSE's website:

www.hse.gov.uk



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Questionnaire



What are HSC and HSE?

They are government bodies set up to protect people at work and those affected by work activities

The Health and Safety Commission (HSC)

HSC has overall responsibility for policy on health and safety at work and advice to ministers, including advice on standards and regulations to secure them. The Chair of HSC and members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Transport and the Regions, after statutory consultation with representatives of employers, employees and other organisations concerned with health and safety, including local authorities.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

HSE is the operational arm of HSC. It advises HSC on health and safety policy, including developments in science and technology, and enforces (along with local

authorities (see pages 4 and 14) health and safety law in workplaces throughout Great Britain.

The Employment Medical Advisory Service (EMAS), which is part of HSE, gives advice on all aspects of occupational health and aims to promote awareness of health-related matters in the workplace. It is staffed by doctors and nurses with specialist qualifications in occupational health. They carry out a wide range of work and give advice on the effects of particular work activities on health. They also advise on the effects of health on work.

We have an in-house research centre, the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL), which carries out investigation work and provides other scientific services arising from our day-to-day operations.

➔ To contact your local HSE/EMAS office, see pages 11–13



What do we do?

We aim to ensure that risks to people's health and safety from work activities are properly controlled

The law says:

- employers have to look after the health, safety and welfare of their employees;
- employees and the self-employed have to look after their own health and safety; and
- everyone has to take care of the health and safety of other people – such as members of the public who may be affected by their work activity.

We are interested in the health and safety of people at work throughout Great Britain, including those who may be harmed by the way work is done (for example because they live near a factory, or are passengers on a train). In some situations, we are also concerned with the way work

affects the environment.

We develop new health and safety laws and standards, and play a full part in international developments, especially in the European Union. We also:

- inspect workplaces;
- investigate some accidents and cases of ill health;
- enforce good standards, usually by advising people how to comply with the law, but sometimes by ordering them to make improvements and, if necessary, by prosecuting them;
- publish guidance and advice;
- provide an information service;
- carry out research; and
- carry out various activities such as nuclear site licensing and assessing offshore installation safety cases.



Does HSE inspect all places where people work?

No

HSE

HSE covers factories, building sites, mines and quarries, fairgrounds, railways, chemical plant, offshore and nuclear installations, schools and hospitals. You will find a more extensive list of the places covered by HSE on page 14.

Page 9 tells you how to contact us if you have an enquiry about any of the places listed above or those on page 14.

Local authority

Local authority enforcement officers cover retailing, some warehouses, most offices, hotels and catering,

sports, leisure and consumer services. You will find a more extensive list of the places covered by local authorities on page 14.

If your enquiry is about any of the above places or those listed on page 14 you should contact your local authority.

Your local fire brigade will deal with regulations about fire safety. Your local authority covers other regulations in workplaces, such as food safety and trading standards. You can find their addresses and phone numbers in the phone book. Or you can contact your local Citizens' Advice Bureau.

➔ If you are not sure who can help you, ring InfoLine (tel: 08701 545500) for advice



How can we help you?

That depends on who you are. (If you are an employer or self-employed you may also find it helpful to read our leaflet *The Health and Safety Executive – working with employers*.¹)

➔ If you want to know about risks in your workplace and how you are protected, your employer has to tell you about the risks and, where necessary, instruct and train you on how to deal with them. So first ask your boss, or – if you have one – your safety representative or trade union representative.

➔ If you think your employer is exposing you to risks or is not carrying out legal duties, and you have pointed this out without getting a satisfactory response, you can contact us (see pages 11–13) or the local authority if the place where you work is inspected by them.

We treat all contacts in the strictest confidence

Before we follow up your concerns, it helps us to have the best information you can give us. We may sometimes advise that we don't think anything needs to be done. If we do investigate or visit your

workplace, we will not identify you as a complainant to your employer unless you have said you don't mind. After we have made our enquiries we will let you know what we have found and whether anything has to be done.

➔ If you believe that your work may be affecting your health, you should first discuss your concerns with your manager or occupational health doctor or nurse if available. Your trade union representative or safety representative may also be able to help you. Where a specific medical condition has caused problems at work you should seek advice from your GP.

If these people cannot help you then you can contact us, or the local authority, depending on the type of workplace (see page 14).

➔ If you are a member of the public and think you have been harmed by a work activity or have noticed something you consider dangerous, contact us (see pages 11–13), or the local authority if the work is covered by them (see pages 14–15).

We will need all the details you can give us. If you give us your address or phone number we can get back to you later. We will keep



you in touch with what is happening. In almost every case we will get back to you by letter or telephone within ten working days.

➔ If you want information about health and safety at work, or about HSE itself, we are happy to answer questions or give information. You can either contact HSE's InfoLine (tel: 08701 545500), or your local

HSE office, or one of our information centres (see pages 9–13).

We can also provide information such as statistical data and literature searches for people with special interests.

A lot of our information is free, but we charge for some publications and services. We will give you details when you contact us.

➔ We will be glad to hear from you and will do our best to help.

What standards can you expect from us?

We will:

- ➔ be polite and considerate;
- ➔ tell you our name when we speak to you; and
- ➔ either wear a name badge, give you a business card or show you a warrant if we meet you.

We also aim to:

- ➔ reply to all enquiries or complaints, or let you know what we are doing about them, within ten working days. Straightforward enquiries will be answered immediately. Other, more complicated, enquiries will take

longer. We will keep you in touch with progress. The same applies to letter campaigns by pressure groups, though these can make severe demands on us and it may take longer to deal with them. We cannot promise to reply individually to all campaign circular letters and postcards;

- ➔ consult users regularly about the services we provide and report on the findings; and
- ➔ take all reasonable steps to make our services accessible to everyone, (including people



with special needs) and available to all, regardless of race, sex or age.

InfoLine, our telephone enquiry service (tel: 08701 545500), aims to answer 85% of telephone calls within 15 seconds.

To achieve these standards we need your co-operation, but if we fail to meet them we will apologise and aim to put things right. If you are unhappy with the way we have dealt with you we want to know and we want to put things right (see page 8).

In addition, we:

- are committed to being an open organisation and continually strive to improve access to our information including standards of service, costs, targets and results;
- treat all contacts in confidence;
- always welcome suggestions to help us improve our performance;
- aim to use our resources effectively and in particular to

improve the quality aspects of our service delivery; and

- will work closely with our colleagues in the local authorities who also enforce health and safety law (see pages 14–15).

Our performance

We measure performance against our standards. The following results can be found in the HSC/E Annual Report:

- the number of enquires HSE receives and the number answered within ten days;
- customer satisfaction levels;
- the number of complaints we receive and the number that are justified; and
- the number of calls InfoLine handles.

The report is available for reference in our information centres and you can buy copies from HSE Books. You can find a summary of the report on our website: **www.hse.gov.uk**



How do you complain if you are unhappy with us?

We always aim to give the best standard of service we can and will try to help you as much as possible. We hope that this booklet helps to explain why there may be limits on what we can do by law.

If you are not happy with the way we have dealt with you, we want to know.

- ➔ If you cannot sort out the problem with the person you have been dealing with, ask them for the name of their manager (letters from us will also give this information).
- ➔ You can then ask to speak to the manager, or, if you prefer, write. They will certainly investigate your complaint and tell you what they are going to do about it.

We find that most complaints are settled like this. Usually we

respond straight away but, if not, we always aim to get back to you within ten working days.

- ➔ If you are still not satisfied, you can write to HSE's Director General at the address given below, who will ensure your complaint is followed up promptly and fairly:

**Director General
Health and Safety Executive
Rose Court
2 Southwark Bridge
LONDON SE1 9HS**

E-mail:

director.general@hse.gsi.gov.uk

You can also ask your MP at Westminster to take up your case with HSE or with ministers. Your MP may also ask the independent Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (the Ombudsman) to review your complaint.



How can you contact us?

Who you contact will depend on where you work or what you want

General enquiries and information

We run a national telephone public enquiry service from HSE's InfoLine. Staff there draw on extensive sources of HSE information to:

- ➔ answer general enquiries;
- ➔ tell you about our publications; and
- ➔ help you find your way round HSE.

HSE InfoLine

Tel: 08701 545500 (national rate call) – open 8.30am–5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

If you want advice about domestic gas safety, phone the **HSE Gas Safety Advice Line (free) on 0800 300363**

Information centres

We have information centres in Sheffield, London and Bootle (Merseyside) open from 9am–5pm, Monday to Friday for personal callers who want to consult the information held there. You can send written enquiries by post,

fax or e-mail to our Sheffield information centre.

All of these information centres are on the ground floor and are accessible to wheelchair users. Enquirers with special needs may ask for documents to be made available in Braille, large print or audio formats.

Sheffield Information Centre

(for personal callers and written, faxed or e-mail enquiries)

Health and Safety Executive Information Centre

Broad Lane

SHEFFIELD S3 7HQ

Fax: 0114 289 2333

E-mail :

public.enquiries@hse.gov.uk

London Information Centre

(for personal callers only)

Health and Safety Executive Information Centre

Rose Court

2 Southwark Bridge

LONDON SE1 9HS



Bootle Information Centre

(for personal callers only)

Health and Safety Executive**Information Centre****Magdalen House****Stanley Precinct****Bootle****MERSEYSIDE L20 3QZ****Contacting your HSE office**

Inspectors and other field professionals are based in offices organised into regions. The bullet point ● shows an office where you can also contact inspectors dealing with the manufacture, processing and storage of chemicals and other onshore major hazards including gas transmission and distribution, pipelines and the road transport of dangerous substances.

Internet website

HSE's Internet website is at: **www.hse.gov.uk** It gives you

information about HSE and links to the HSE Books website.

HSE Books

You can order free leaflets and priced publications direct from:

HSE Books**PO Box 1999****Sudbury****Suffolk CO10 2WA****Tel: 01787 881165****Fax: 01787 313995**

HSE Books has its own website with an electronic catalogue of all HSE free and priced publications – HSE Bookfinder. You can download free publications, and order and pay for priced publications electronically. We have also developed an online service to allow you to download priced publications for a fee.

You can visit the HSE Books website at: **www.hsebooks.co.uk**

HSE priced publications are also available from good booksellers.



HSE office addresses and contact numbers

HSE offices are open 9am–5pm Monday to Friday

WALES AND WEST

Covers:

Wales and the unitary authorities of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, North West Somerset, Bath and North-East Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire, Hereford and Worcester, Shropshire and Staffordshire.

● Government Buildings
Ty Glas
Llanishen
CARDIFF CF14 5SH
Tel: 029 20 263000
Fax: 029 20 263120

Inter-City House
Mitchell Lane
Victoria Street
BRISTOL BS1 6AN
Tel: 01179 886000
Fax: 01179 262998

● The Marches House
Midway
NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME
ST5 1DT
Tel: 01782 602300
Fax: 01782 602400

Ballard House
West Hoe Road
PLYMOUTH PL1 3BL
Tel: 01752 668481
Fax: 01752 226024

Crown Buildings
31 Chester Street
WREXHAM
Clwyd LL13 8AN
Tel: 01978 290500
Fax: 01978 355669

Haswell House
St Nicholas Street
WORCESTER WR1 1UW
Tel: 01905 723406
Fax: 01905 723045

3rd Floor
Darkgate Buildings
3 Red Street
CARMARTHEN
Dyfed SA31 1QL
Tel: 01267 232823
Fax: 01267 223267

HOME COUNTIES

Covers:

The counties of Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Dorset, Essex (except London Boroughs in Essex), Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Isle of Wight, Norfolk, Suffolk and Wiltshire.

14 Cardiff Road
LUTON LU1 1PP
Tel: 01582 444200
Fax: 01582 444320

Priestley House
Priestley Road
BASINGSTOKE RG24 9NW
Tel: 01256 404000
Fax: 01256 404100

● 39 Baddow Road
CHELMSFORD CM2 0HL
Tel: 01245 706200
(Fax: 01245 706222)

● Kiln House
Pottergate
NORWICH
Norfolk NR2 1DA
Tel: 01603 615711
Fax: 01603 761436

14 New Fields
Stinsford Road
Nuffield Industrial Estate
POOLE
Dorset BH17 0NF
Tel: 01202 667219
Fax: 01202 667224

LONDON AND SOUTH-EAST

Covers:

The counties of Kent, Surrey, East Sussex and West Sussex, and all London boroughs.

St Dunstan's House
201–211 Borough High St.
LONDON SE1 1GZ
Tel: 0207 556 2100
Fax: 0207 556 2200



International House
Dover Place
ASHFORD
Kent TN23 1HU
Tel: 01233 624658
Fax: 01233 634827

● 3 East Grinstead House
London Road
EAST GRINSTEAD
RH19 1RR
Tel: 01342 334200
Fax: 01342 334222

MIDLANDS

Covers:

The counties of West Midlands, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Nottingham.

● McLaren Building
35 Dale End
BIRMINGHAM B4 7NP
Tel: 0121 607 6200
Fax: 0121 607 6349

Agricultural Health and
Safety Information Centre
National Agricultural Centre
Stoneleigh
KENILWORTH
Warwickshire CV8 2LZ
Tel: 024 76696518
Fax: 024 76696542

● Belgrave House
1 Greyfriars
NORTHAMPTON NN1 2BS
Tel: 01604 738300
Fax: 01604 738333

● 1st Floor
The Pearson Building,
55 Upper Parliament Street
NOTTINGHAM NG1 6AU
Tel: 0115 971 2800
Fax: 0115 971 2802

YORKSHIRE AND NORTH-EAST

Covers:

The counties and unitary authorities of Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton-on-Tees, Durham, Hull, North Lincolnshire, North-East Lincolnshire, East Riding, York, North Yorkshire, Northumberland, West Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, and the metropolitan boroughs of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, and Sheffield.

● 8 St Paul's Street
LEEDS LS1 2LE
Tel: 0113 283 4200
Fax: 0113 283 4296

Woodside House
261 Low Lane
Horsforth
LEEDS LS18 5TW
Tel: 0113 2834200
Fax: 0113 2834296

● Sovereign House
110 Queen Street
SHEFFIELD S1 2ES
Tel: 0114 2912300
Fax: 0114 2912379

Festival House
93 Jameson Street
HULL HU1 3JR
Tel: 01482 223487
Fax: 01482 218855

● Arden House
Regent Centre
Regent Farm Road
Gosforth
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
NE3 3JN
Tel: 0191 202 6200
Fax: 0191 202 6300

NORTH-WEST

Covers:

The counties of Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside.

Quay House
Quay Street
MANCHESTER M3 3JB
Tel: 0161 952 8200
Fax: 0161 952 8222

2 Victoria Place
CARLISLE CA1 1ER
Tel: 01228 539321
Fax: 01228 548482

● Victoria House
Ormskirk Road
PRESTON PR1 1HH
Tel: 01772 836200
Fax: 01772 836222

● The Triad
Stanley Road
Bootle
MERSEYSIDE L20 3PG
Tel: 0151 479 2200
Fax: 0151 479 2201



SCOTLAND

● Belford House
59 Belford Road
EDINBURGH EH4 3UE
Tel: 0131 247 2000
Fax: 0131 247 2121

● Lord Cullen House
Fraser Place
ABERDEEN AB9 1UB
Tel: 01224 252500
Fax: 01224 252525

Longman House
28 Longman Road
INVERNESS IV1 1SF
Tel: 01463 718101
Fax: 01463 713459

Pegasus House
375 West George Street
GLASGOW G2 4LW
Tel: 0141 275 3000
Fax: 0141 275 3100

HSE CONTACT POINTS FOR SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES**Mining**

Hazardous Installations
Directorate
Land Division (Mines
Inspectorate)
Room 512
St Anne's House
University Road
Bootle
MERSEYSIDE L20 3RA
Tel: 0151 951 4136

Railways

Railway Inspectorate
4th Floor SW
Rose Court
2 Southwark Bridge
LONDON SE1 9HS
Tel: 0207 717 6533

The nuclear industry

Nuclear Safety Directorate
Information Centre
St Peter's House
Balliol Road
Bootle
MERSEYSIDE L20 2LZ
Tel: 0151 951 4103

The offshore oil and gas industry

Offshore Division
Information Centre
Lord Cullen House
Fraser Place
Aberdeen AB9 1BU
Tel: 01224 252652

The manufacture, processing and storage of chemicals and other onshore major hazards including gas transmission and distribution, pipelines, and the road transport of dangerous substances

See HSE offices marked ● on pages 11–13. You may also contact:

Hazardous Installations
Directorate
St Anne's House
Stanley Precinct
Bootle
MERSEYSIDE L20 3RA
Tel: 0151 951 3235

The manufacture, transport, handling and security of explosives

Explosives Inspectorate
St Anne's House
Stanley Precinct
Bootle
MERSEYSIDE L20 3QZ
Tel: 0151 951 4025

HSE's research facilities
Health and Safety
Laboratory
Information Manager
Broad Lane
SHEFFIELD S3 7HQ
Tel: 0114 289 2920

This information is correct at the time of going to press



Where do HSE and local authorities enforce health and safety law?

Health and Safety Executive –

Enforcement of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and related legislation is shared with local authorities who cover certain types of work activities. As a general guide, HSE is normally the enforcing authority for work activities and premises including:

- factories and other manufacturing, including motor vehicle repair;
- chemical plants and refineries;
- construction;
- railways, tram and underground systems;
- mines, quarries and landfill sites;
- farms, agriculture and forestry;
- hospitals, including nursing homes;
- local government, including their offices and facilities run by them;
- schools, colleges and universities;
- domestic gas installation, maintenance or repair;
- utilities, including power generation, water, and waste;
- fairgrounds (travelling or fixed);
- airports (except terminal buildings, car parks and office buildings);
- police authorities and forces; and fire authorities;

- Crown bodies, including Ministry of Defence Docks;
- nuclear installations ;
- offshore gas and oil installations and associated activities including pipe-laying barges, and diving support vessels;
- onshore major hazards, including pipelines, gas transmission and distribution;
- transport of dangerous substances by road and rail; and
- manufacture, transport, handling and security of explosives.

Local authorities –

District, borough or city councils and unitary authorities enforce the HSWA 1974 in respect of certain non-domestic premises, including:

- shops and retailing, including market stalls, coin-operated launderettes, and mobile vendors;
- most offices;
- some wholesale and retail warehouses;
- hotels and other residential catering accommodation , including guest houses, residential care homes, hostels, caravan and camping sites;
- catering including restaurants,



- pubs, cafés, and wine bars;
- leisure and entertainment, including night clubs, social clubs, circuses, sports facilities, health clubs, gyms, riding schools, racecourses, pleasure boat hire, motor racing circuits, and museums, theatres and art galleries;
- places of worship and undertakers;
- animal care, including zoos, livery stables and kennels; and
- beauty and non-medical therapeutic services, including massage, saunas, solariums, tattooing, skin and body piercing, and hairdressing.

If your enquiry is about any of these places, you should contact your local authority. You can find their address and phone number in the phone book. Or you can contact your local Citizens' Advice Bureau.

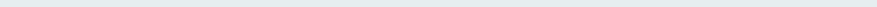
↘ If you are not sure who can help you, contact InfoLine (tel: 08701 545500) for advice

References

- 1 *The Health and Safety Executive – Working with employers* HSE38
HSE Books 2000 free leaflet
- 2 *Health and safety regulation – a short guide* HSC13
HSE Books 1995 free leaflet

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the references listed in this publication, their future availability cannot be guaranteed.





the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are illiterate has increased from 1.2 billion to 1.5 billion. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to reach 1.7 billion by the year 2015 (UNESCO 2003).

There are a number of reasons for the increase in illiteracy. One of the reasons is the rapid population growth in the world. Another reason is the lack of investment in education, particularly in the developing countries. The third reason is the migration of people from rural areas to urban areas, where the educational facilities are not available.

The illiterate population is a major obstacle to the development of a country. Illiterate people are unable to read and write, which makes it difficult for them to find employment and to improve their standard of living. Illiterate people are also more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

There are a number of ways to reduce the number of illiterate people in the world. One way is to invest more in education, particularly in the developing countries. Another way is to provide educational facilities in rural areas. A third way is to provide literacy training to illiterate people.

It is important to note that literacy is not just about reading and writing. It is also about understanding and using the written word. Literacy is a skill that is essential for participation in a modern society.

There are a number of challenges to literacy education. One challenge is the lack of resources. Another challenge is the lack of motivation. A third challenge is the lack of support from the community.

Despite these challenges, there are a number of successful literacy programs in the world. These programs have shown that literacy education is possible, even in the most difficult circumstances.

It is important to continue to work towards reducing the number of illiterate people in the world. Literacy is a key to development and a better life for all people.

HSE and you Questionnaire

We are always interested in knowing what people think of our publications. If you have any comments on this booklet, please complete this slip, cut along the dotted line, fold and return it to us.

(Please tick only one category)

Are you:

- An employer
- Self-employed
- An employee
- A member of the public

How big is your firm?

- 1–49 people
- 50–250
- 251 or more

Did you find this book useful?

Yes No

In what way?

Did it contain all the information you need?

Yes No

If not, what other information would you like it to contain?

Did you find this booklet easy to follow?

Yes No

If not, how could it be improved?

Have you any further comments?

Thank you for taking the time to let us know what you think.





B

SECOND FOLD

BUSINESS REPLY SERVICE
Licence No. LV 5189



Health and Safety Executive
Business Efficiency Unit
Room 017F
Daniel House
Trinity Road
Bootle
Merseyside
L20 3TW

FIRST FOLD

HSE37

THIRD FOLD



A

*Tuck A into B to form envelope
Please do not staple or glue*

HSE priced and free publications are available

by mail order from:

HSE Books

PO Box 1999

Sudbury

Suffolk CO10 2WA

Tel: 01787 881165

Fax: 01787 313995

Website: www.hsebooks.co.uk

HSE priced publications are also available
from good booksellers.

For other enquiries ring HSE's InfoLine

Tel: 08701 545500, or write to HSE's Information
Centre, Broad Lane, Sheffield S3 7HQ.

Website: www.hse.gov.uk

***This leaflet contains notes on good practice
which are not compulsory but which you
may find helpful in considering what you
need to do.***

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