

Health & Safety Manual

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About health and safety in the cleaning industry

The cleaning industry employs very large numbers of people in all sectors of the economy, from offices to factories, schools to hospitals, shops to aircraft. The range of work covers all cleaning activities from dusting and vacuuming to cleaning windows, factory roofs and industrial equipment.

This website provides occupational health and safety advice for those people working in the cleaning industry. It also provides links to the Cleaning Industry Liaison Forum, which is an HSE chaired committee comprising of industry trade associations, training bodies and trade unions.

The most common types of accidents in the cleaning industry are:

- [Slips and trips](#)^[1]
- [Manual handling](#)^[2]
- [Falls from height](#)^[3]

The main health risks affecting the industry are:

- [Injury to backs and upper limbs](#)^[4]
- [Occupational dermatitis](#)^[5]

Example risk assessments

We have produced some example risk assessments to help you see what a risk assessment might look like. They hopefully make clear that a risk assessment should be about identifying practical actions that protect people from harm and injury, not a bureaucratic experience. We believe that for the great majority of risk assessments, short bullet points work well.

- [General office cleaning](#)^[6]
- [Cleaning large retail premises](#)^[7]
- [Cleaning contractor](#)^[8]

Link URLs in this page

1. Slips and trips
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/slips/index.htm>
2. Manual handling
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/cleaning/backpain.htm>
3. Falls from height
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/cleaning/falls.htm>
4. Injury to backs and upper limbs
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/cleaning/backpain.htm>
5. Occupational dermatitis
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/skin/employ/dermatitis.htm>

6. General office cleaning
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/casestudies/officecleaning.htm>
7. Cleaning large retail premises
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/casestudies/cleaningretail.htm>
8. Cleaning contractor
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/casestudies/cleancontractor.htm>

This is the statement of general policy and arrangements for:

Overall and final responsibility for health and safety is that of:

Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to:

Warner House Companies Ltd (Name of company)
Feather Flickers (Name of employer)
Greg Gottig

STATEMENT OF GENERAL POLICY	RESPONSIBILITY OF: Name/Title	ACTION/ARRANGEMENTS (customise to meet your own situation)
To prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health and provide adequate control of health and safety risks arising from work activities.	Greg Gottig Managing Director	Covered at staff induction/staff training
To provide adequate training to ensure employees are competent to do their work.	Greg Gottig Managing Director	Covered at staff induction/staff training
To engage and consult with employees on day-to-day health and safety conditions and provide advice and supervision on occupational health.	Greg Gottig Managing Director	Covered at staff induction/staff training/visiting client premises
To implement emergency procedures – evacuation in case of fire or other significant incident. You can find help with your fire risk assessment at: www.communities.gov.uk/firesafety .	Greg Gottig Managing Director	Covered at staff induction/staff training/visiting client premises
To maintain safe and healthy working conditions, provide and maintain plant, equipment and machinery, and ensure safe storage/use of substances.	Greg Gottig Managing Director	Covered at staff induction/staff training/

Health and safety law poster is displayed:	Yes		
First-aid box and accident book are located: Accidents and ill health at work reported under RIDDOR: (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) www.hse.gov.uk/riddor Tel: 0845 300 9923	Warner House, Riverview, Tarleton Lancs PR4 6EB		
Signed: (Employer)	Greg Gottig	Date:	January 2011
Subject to review, monitoring and revision by:	Greg Gottig	Every:	11 months or sooner if work activity changes

Employers with five or more employees should have a written health and safety policy and risk assessment.

For further information and to view our example health and safety policy go to www.hse.gov.uk/risk

For advice and support contact HSE Infoline Tel: 0845 345 0055 or e-mail: hse.infoline@connaught.plc.uk.

Combined risk assessment and policy template published by the Health and Safety Executive 09/09

All employers must conduct a risk assessment. Employers with five or more employees have to record the significant findings of their risk assessment.

We have started off the risk assessment for you by including a sample entry for a common hazard to illustrate what is expected (the sample entry is taken from an office-based business).

Look at how this might apply to your business, continue by identifying the hazards that are the real priorities in your case and complete the table to suit.

You can print and save this template so you can easily review and update the information as and when required. You may find our example risk assessments a useful guide (www.hse.gov.uk/risk/casestudies). Simply choose the example closest to your business.

Company name: Warner House Companies t/as Feather Flickers

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Slips and trips	Staff may be injured if they trip over objects or slip on spillages.	<p>General good housekeeping.</p> <p>Where possible, all areas are well lit</p> <p>No trailing leads or cables.</p> <p>Staff keep work areas clear, eg no boxes left in walkways and deliveries stored immediately.</p> <p>The right cleaning equipment is used for the right job, and staff follow safe systems of working.</p> <p>Staff monitor entrances for wet floor surfaces walked in.</p> <p>Warning cones placed around spillages, and removed as soon as spillages clear and floor dried.</p> <p>Staff do not leave cleaning materials/equipment unattended.</p> <p>Cleaning of stairs done outside hours.</p>	Better housekeeping in needed, eg on spills.	All staff and manager director to monitor	From now on 01/12/2011	04/01/2011

Contact with bleach and other cleaning materials	Staff risk getting skin problems such as dermatitis, and eye damage, from direct contact with bleach and other cleaning chemicals, eg solvents and detergents. Vapour may cause breathing problems	Long-handled mops/brushes, and appropriate gloves, provided and staff trained in their use. All staff trained in the risks, use and storage of cleaning chemicals and wear personal protective equipment as instructed. Cleaning materials marked 'irritant' substituted, where possible for milder alternatives.	Staff reminded to wash gloves and aprons when used after used. Staff reminded to report any health problems they think may come from cleaning, and to check for dry, red or itchy skin on their hands. Staff reminded to see separate COSHH manual	All staff and managing director to monitor	From now until 01/12/2011	04/01/2011
Work at height	Staff risk bruising and fracture injuries if they fall from any height	No ladders policy All high level cleaning done by trained staff working from floor level, using telescopic poles with cleaning tools attached.	No further action required at this stage.			
Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD's) and injuries	Staff risk problems such as back pain if they try to lift objects that are heavy and /or awkward to carry such as hoovers/heavy waste bags, or if they are often required to work in awkward postures.	All staff trained in lifting safely and follow safe systems of work. Staff do not overfill bags and buckets Mopping systems have a long-handled wringer, and a bucket. Long-handled mops, brushes and litter pickers provided to reduce need to stretch and stoop.	No further action required at this stage.			
Electrical	Staff risk electric shocks or burns from faulty electrical equipment or installation, or from misuse of electrical appliances	Staff trained in basic electrical safety. Staff trained to perform pre-use checks – on cables, switches and sockets – before using electrical appliances.	Remind staff to do pre-use checks before using electrical appliances	Managing director	01/12/2011	
Verbal Abuse or assault	Staff may suffer verbal abuse, and possibly assault from members of the public, particularly in quiet or remote areas	Staff trained in dealing with difficult and/or confrontational situations. Staff trained to make the managing director aware when they are working in a remote location. Staff report all instances of abuse	No further action required at this stage			

Extremes of weather	Staff working outside may suffer discomfort and possibly ill health from exposure to poor weather	Suitable personal protective equipment provided for staff working outdoors.	No further action needed at this stage			
Collecting waste	Staff emptying bins, particularly in toilets, risk potentially serious injury from sharp objects, including needles	Staff trained in safe systems of work and provided with suitable tools (litter pickers) and personal protective equipment	Staff Memo by e-mail	Managing director	01/12/2011	
Rug Doctor Machine for carpet cleaning	Staff and others risk injury from improper use of the machine eg if the machine were to buck and hit feet and ankles.	Machines provided are the right ones for the job. Cleaners are trained in the safe use of machines. Pre-use checks are done for damaged plugs, cables, on/off switches. Machines are regularly examined and maintained by a competent person.	Cleaners reminded that if they have doubts about the health and safety of this or any machine they are not to use it and to inform the managing director immediately. Staff reminded to see separate Rug Doctor/carpet cleaning manual.	Managing director	01/12/2011	
Lack of awareness of risk by staff	Staff, particularly temporary from an agency, are at risk if they are not aware of the risks on site and how those risks are controlled.	Risk assessment discussed with all staff and a copy displayed. Temporary staff are briefed on site safety Temporary staff agency supply only staff who speak English	No further action required at this stage.			

Assessment review date: 01/12/2011 (usually within one year, or earlier if working habits or conditions change)

For information specific to your industry please go to www.hse.gov.uk.

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For further information and to view our example risk assessments go to www.hse.gov.uk/risk.

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Combined risk assessment and policy template published by the Health and Safety Executive 09/09



Slips and trips: The importance of floor cleaning

Slips and Trips 2

Introduction

Slips and trips are the most common cause of major injuries at work. Around 90% of these are broken bones. The costs to industry are substantial (over £500 million per year) and there is incalculable human cost and suffering to those injured. Floor cleaning is significant in causing slip and trip accidents, both to cleaning staff and others.

Legal actions following an injury can be extremely damaging to business, especially where the public is involved. Insurance only covers a small part of the cost.

Effective solutions are often simple, inexpensive and can lead to other benefits.

The most effective approach is to ensure that slips and trips hazards are designed out of a building. Consulting with the cleaners during refurbishment for example, can provide valuable information on the suitability of proposed flooring types and storage facilities for cleaning equipment.

This information sheet provides guidance on reducing slips and trips from cleaning activities and will be useful to those who:

- employ or supervise cleaners;
- manage cleaning contracts;
- manage premises where cleaning takes place (either in-house or contracted out);
- are involved in workplace health and safety, for example safety representatives.

Case study: Woman loses leg following two slip accidents

Alison was an occupational therapist in a large hospital when she had two slip accidents at work.

The first happened in 1986. Alison slipped on rotting leaves on the concrete steps of the hospital on her way in. The leaves were supposed to be cleared on a daily basis, but had not been because of staff shortages. She fell heavily on her right knee and was still in pain three months later, when she was told she needed surgery.

In 1992 she slipped again, this time on a wet vinyl floor. Someone had mopped the floor and failed to

dry it or put out any barriers or warning signs. She slipped and fell directly onto her right ankle. Over the next few years she faced 30 operations. Eventually she was told that the only solution was to have her foot amputated. Recently Alison had a 32nd operation when her leg was amputated at the knee.

As anyone can imagine, these easily avoidable accidents have had a horrendous effect on Alison's life. She was an active 21 year old who enjoyed dancing, aerobics and jogging. She cannot do any of these activities now and spends a lot of her time in a wheelchair.

Although she received extensive compensation, she has lost her job and will never work again because of ongoing problems. Alison said no amount of money can compensate for what happened to her.



Slips and trips and the cleaning industry

Floor cleaning is key in controlling many slip and trip accidents because:

- floor surface contamination (such as water, oil, dust) is often a cause of slip accidents. So, regular cleaning to remove contamination can reduce accidents;
- cleaning can present slip and trip hazards to those entering the area being cleaned, including the cleaners themselves. For example smooth floors left damp by a mop are likely to be extremely slippery and trailing wires from a vacuum or buffing machine can present a trip hazard;
- reported major accident figures show cleaning is high risk for slips and trips.

Where cleaning is carried out effectively, it can make the difference between a floor being an unacceptably high slip risk or an acceptably low slip risk.

Slip and trip accidents can be serious and costly. Floor cleaning can cause or prevent slips and trips – choose the right method. Simple, inexpensive measures can be effective.

When is someone likely to slip or trip?

Almost all slips happen when floors are wet or dirty (for example contaminated with water, oil, food debris, dust etc). If the floor has a smooth surface (for example the surfaces of standard vinyl, glazed ceramic tiles, varnished wood and some metal floors are all often very smooth) even a tiny amount of contamination can present a real slip problem. Trips generally take place on damaged, uneven and badly laid floors or because obstacles have been left where people do not expect to find them.

People rarely slip on clean dry floors. Floors in poor condition and bad housekeeping are responsible for most trip injuries at work.

What can be done to prevent slips and trips?

Control measures can be divided into:

- management systems;
- contamination control:
 - preventing contamination,
 - choose the right cleaning method,
 - make sure cleaning does not introduce an additional slip risk;
- obstacle removal.

All three are needed to prevent slips and trips.

Management systems

Slips and trips research has shown that cleaning processes are often poorly thought through; and cleaners are rarely involved in deciding how things are done.

Cleaning, as with other areas of health and safety, requires a good management system to help you identify problem areas, decide what to do, act on your decisions and check the steps have been effective. A good system should involve:

- planning to make sure the correct cleaning regime is chosen for the type of floor, taking into account how the floor is used, by whom (for example some people are more at risk such as visually impaired people, the elderly), when it's used and contaminants present. Consider also how spillages etc will be cleaned up between the scheduled whole floor cleaning;
- organising your work and consulting with staff to make sure the planning stage is implemented;
- control to ensure that working practices and processes are being carried out properly, for example access is prevented to wet smooth floors;
- monitoring and reviewing to identify any improvements that can be made to the system.

Effective communication is needed at all levels, such as with the:

- purchasing department to make sure you get what you need, for example equipment and materials;
- flooring suppliers, who should supply information on their floor and how to effectively clean it;
- equipment and chemical suppliers to ensure suitability of the product for the type of contaminant and floor;
- cleaning contractor and client to ensure the contract provides appropriate cleaning by trained cleaners. The contract should be reviewed if the work environment changes;
- cleaners who need to be consulted on their duties and why the cleaning needs to be undertaken in a particular way or at a particular time. Lack of understanding can lead to inappropriate shortcuts. They should also be informed of any changes.

Effective training and supervision is essential to make sure the standard of cleaning is correct. Training should match the individual, the environment and equipment used. If any of these factors change, training should be reviewed. Cleaners should be encouraged to report any difficulties in carrying out their work.

Floors and equipment should be well maintained.

Case study: Incorrect technique, increased risk!

Health and safety managers at a busy railway station knew that spillages on their shiny new floor could cause slip accidents if they weren't dealt with immediately. Their solution to this problem was to employ a roving cleaner who patrolled the station concourse. A spillage of water from the fresh flower stall was notified to the cleaner and he arrived at the scene very quickly.

He parked his cleaning trolley about 10 metres from the spill. As he walked to the spillage water dripped from his mop. But the dripped water from his mop was just as likely to cause a slip accident as the spillage itself! Once he got to the spillage he wiped over the area and a bit further with his mop. Unfortunately this increased the slip hazard even more, because it was no longer a small spill everyone could see, but a large area of wet, smooth floor.

Tiny amounts of water (often almost invisible) on a smooth floor can cause a slip. He could have parked his trolley next to the spill and wiped it up with some absorbent material to leave the floor dry.

The cleaning technique had not been well thought through. Training and supervision were inadequate.



Contamination control

People rarely slip on a clean dry floor. There is contamination involved in almost all slip accidents. It can be introduced by the work activity or in fact by the cleaning activity itself.

Preventing contamination

The best method is to prevent contamination of the dry floor. Spot cleaning is a useful technique to clean up spills etc as they happen, especially between whole floor cleaning. You need to consider who is best placed to do the spot cleaning, for example those working in an area or dedicated cleaners. Further information on spot cleaning is given in 'Choosing the right cleaning method'. At entrances, enclosed holders for wet umbrellas and effective well-maintained matting can stop the floor getting wet. If contamination is walked beyond the matting, can it be improved?

Choosing the right cleaning method

To effectively remove contaminant, the correct cleaning regime needs to be chosen. Consider the factors below when choosing the cleaning technique.

Detergent - is essential if there is any greasy or oily contamination on the floor. Water on its own, whether it is cold or warm, is not effective in removing this kind of contamination. The concentration of detergent is critical to its effectiveness. Follow the manufacturer's instructions, because too strong a solution can be as ineffective as too weak. Monitoring how much is used can be a useful check. Dosing systems can eliminate error. The detergent should be left on the floor for enough time to allow effective removal of grease before rinsing. A useful comparison is washing-up, heavily soiled pots and pans require soak time in the detergent. Scouring or brushing can increase the effectiveness of detergent.

Spot cleaning - using a paper towel or rag to remove small areas of water-based contamination from the floor. This is a cheap and effective method of removing water-based spills. It avoids spreading the contamination or increasing the slip risk by mopping a large area. Spot cleaning can be used between scheduled whole-floor cleaning to control contamination. For greasy spills, detergent will be required.

Mopping - is usually only effective on smoother floors because it only skims the surface of the floor, regardless of the effort used. Even a well-wrung mop will leave a thin film of water which is enough to create a slip risk on a smooth floor. Subsequent use of a dry mop will reduce the drying time but will not eliminate the slip risk. Where smooth floors are mopped, take care to make sure the floor is left to dry completely

before pedestrians are allowed access. Consider how dirt is removed from the floor and where it goes. For example use a separate dirty water bucket for wringing the mop out to increase the dirt removal. Greasy floors require contact time with the detergent solution, for example use an immersion mopping technique, where the detergent is put down in one stage, and mopped up after a soak time in a second stage.

Sweeping brush - on a smooth floor may be adequate to remove dry contaminants. Airborne dust can be created, so this technique should not be used where there are health risks associated with the dust, for example flour, sawdust.

Hose/power washer - with sufficient power can be used to remove dusty or doughy contaminants. The floor will be left wet, so should be rough enough not to create a slip risk with the water left behind. Suitable drainage will be required. For greasy contamination, detergent will be required.

Squeegee - can be effective in removing excess water after cleaning, to reduce drying time. The floor will not be left dry and will still present a slip risk. If a floor is rough enough to be left wet, the volume of water is not important and a squeegee is unnecessary. Where oily or greasy contamination is present, the squeegee can have the effect of spreading a thin layer of contamination over a wider area, or forcing it into the surface. This may result in a floor that is more difficult to clean.

Wet vacuum cleaner - effective at cleaning up liquid spills. This is more effective on smooth floors which can be left completely dry.

Dry vacuum cleaner - effective at cleaning up dry/dusty contaminants. This is often effective on rougher floors. It avoids the creation of airborne dust. If the dust creates a health risk, make sure the filter is suitable.

Scrubber-drier machines - can be an effective way to clean most kinds of flooring. Different designs of scrubber-drier lend themselves to different situations. The squeegee needs to be wide enough to recover all the water put down by the scrubber-drier. Single scrubber machines tend to throw water out to one side, and may require an asymmetric squeegee to recover this. The squeegee needs to be well maintained to ensure there is no leakage, which may, for example leave a smooth floor dangerously wet. On very rough or profiled surfaces the squeegee may not be flexible enough to allow adequate removal of water from the surface. On greasy floors a detergent should be used to remove and hold the oil or grease in the water. The operator should be trained in the correct use of the machine, for example using the appropriate level of water for the floor surface, to reduce leaking and water trails.

Case study: Cleaner identifies problem with cleaning equipment.

A cleaner in a food factory noticed that although a scrubber-drier was being used at a reasonable frequency, it was not removing the greasy contamination from the floor, making the floor slippery. The issue was reported to the cleaning supervisor who looked into the problem in more detail and found that the wrong concentration of detergent was being used. It had become custom and practice to use one capful of detergent in the scrubber-drier, which was far below the manufacturer's recommendation. In addition, the supervisor observed that there were some maintenance issues with the scrubber-drier - the squeegee was in a poor condition, so it did not effectively remove water from the floor. The scrubber-drier was repaired, preventative maintenance implemented, and training provided to the cleaners. Once the manufacturer's recommended detergent concentration was used, there was a rapid improvement in the quality of the floor cleaning, because the grease was now removed. This case study shows the importance of management systems, training and communication.

Make sure cleaning does not introduce an additional slip risk

A smooth wet floor creates a slip risk. People often slip on floors that have been left wet after cleaning. Mopping is one of the main causes of floors being left wet after cleaning. However, other cleaning techniques can also leave the floor wet, for example a poorly maintained squeegee on a scrubber-drier.

Where the current cleaning technique results in a smooth floor being left wet after cleaning you should:

- consider alternative cleaning techniques that leave the floor dry;
- if alternative cleaning techniques are not going to work in your premises, you need to ensure the floor is left to dry completely before pedestrians are allowed access.

To restrict pedestrian access to drying floors, the following techniques are available. Techniques at the top of the list are considered to be more effective than those at the bottom of the list. A combination of different techniques may be required to make sure methods of preventing access during drying are effective.

- Clean during quiet hours, when pedestrians are not around.

- Physically exclude people from wet cleaning areas, for example using physical barriers or locking off an area while the floor is wet. Provide information on alternative routes. The 'exclusion' should be removed once the floor is dry so it continues to be effective.
- Clean in sections, so there is a dry path through the area.
- Use warning signs. Consider using cones etc carefully, because they only warn of the hazard. Provide information on alternative routes. Cones:
 - do not prevent people from entering the area where they may slip;
 - often poorly demark the extent of the area where someone may slip;
 - are frequently left in areas that are clearly not being cleaned or are already dry, so people ignore them and they lose effectiveness.

Warning signs can be an effective means of informing people of a spill before it can be cleaned up, especially if the spill is visible, indicating the sign is being properly used and, critically, the sign is removed once the area is safe.

Stairs are a particularly hazardous part of the building and become even more so when being cleaned. The potential for a slip or trip applies to both the cleaner and the stair user.

During the course of their work cleaners may be exposed to slip risks. Controls should ensure risks are minimised, for example by the sequence in which cleaning is undertaken and the cleaning techniques used. Appropriate slip-resistant footwear can also help reduce the slip risk to cleaners themselves. Footwear provided as personal protective equipment must be free to employees.

Contamination should be removed effectively and appropriately.
Smooth floors should not be left wet, if people have access.
Warning signs such as cones are generally ineffective because they are not used properly.

Obstacle removal

Obstructions and objects left lying around can easily go unnoticed and cause a trip accident. These causes are frequently overlooked, but generally easy to remedy.

Potential trip hazards associated with cleaning and possible control measures to reduce the risk to cleaners and others are given below.

Cables and leads - from cleaning equipment such as scrubber-driers and vacuum cleaners. The use of battery-operated equipment avoids trailing cables.

Where possible cleaning should be undertaken during quiet times or outside normal work hours to reduce the likelihood of people tripping over equipment and cables. If cleaning has to be carried out when there are people in the vicinity, ensure staff and others are made aware that cleaning is in progress, for example by using effective signs or barriers. Where the use of a cable is unavoidable, minimise the operating length (for example by using a closer socket), increase its visibility, cover it or move it out of the way of pedestrians (for example by using overhead cables). Disconnect and tidy away equipment after use.

Rubbish - for example discarded boxes, waste materials, bin bags. Safely remove and dispose of any waste items that may cause a trip hazard. Avoid temporary trip hazards by not leaving unattended rubbish in walkways.

Uneven floors - For example curling mats, peeling or missing carpet tiles, holes, and changes in level. Cleaners and supervisors should report any flooring defects or unmarked changes in level to the occupier. Occupiers should put systems in place, which make it easy for cleaners to report defects.

Lighting - poor lighting can increase the risk of trips, as obstacles may not be clearly visible. Cleaners and supervisors should tell occupiers about areas where the light is poor or bulbs are missing or blown.

Housekeeping - inform occupiers about housekeeping issues, for example workers leaving clutter around workstations, which create trip hazards for cleaning staff. The same applies to spillages, for example leaking machinery, spillages from vending machines and leaking roof lights. Make sure cleaning equipment is not left unattended and is safely stored when not in use. Somewhere should be provided for the storage of cleaning equipment and warning signs, barriers etc.

What the law says

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSW Act) requires employers to ensure the health and safety of their employees and others who may be affected by their work activity. For instance, contractors have a general duty towards their client and vice versa. It also requires employees not to endanger themselves or others and use any safety equipment provided.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 build on the HSW Act and include duties:

- on employers to assess slip and trip risks to employees and others who may be affected by their work activity and take action to control these risks;

- on those who employ cleaning contractors in their premises to make sure the contractors are given information on health and safety in those premises.

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 require floors to be suitable for the purpose for which they are used and free from obstructions and slip hazards.

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 require work equipment (for example scrubber-drier, mop) to be well maintained, the selection of suitable equipment and the provision of training in its use.

The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 and The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 require you to consult your employees on matters to do with their health and safety at work.

This is not a full and definitive description of the law that may apply and there may be other duties.

Further information

HSE produces a wide range of documents. Some are available as printed publications, both priced and free, and others are only accessible via the HSE website, www.hse.gov.uk.

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 bookshops and free leaflets can be downloaded from HSE's website: www.hse.gov.uk.)

For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 0845 345 0055 Fax: 0845 408 9566 Textphone: 0845 408 9577 e-mail: hse.infoline@natbrit.com or write to HSE Information Services, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG.

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

HSE would like to thank the Working Group from the HSE Cleaning Industry Liaison Forum for their input into the production of this information sheet.

This document is available web only at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/web/slips02.pdf

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SR4

COSHH essentials for service and retail



This information will help employers (including the self-employed and franchisees) comply with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH), as amended, to control exposure and protect workers' health.

It is also useful for trade union safety representatives.

This sheet describes good practice using personal protective equipment (PPE).

It covers the points you need to follow to reduce exposure to an adequate level.

It is important to follow all the points, or use equally effective measures.

Disinfectants are biocidal products. Authorised products are safe for use so long as you follow the instructions on the label.

Some chemicals can be flammable, so your controls must suit those hazards too. Look at the safety data sheet for more information.

Main points

- Can you get products 'ready for use'?
- Avoid or minimise skin contact with chemicals.
- Check that all the controls are being used properly.
- Consider substituting with safer products.

Manual cleaning and disinfecting surfaces

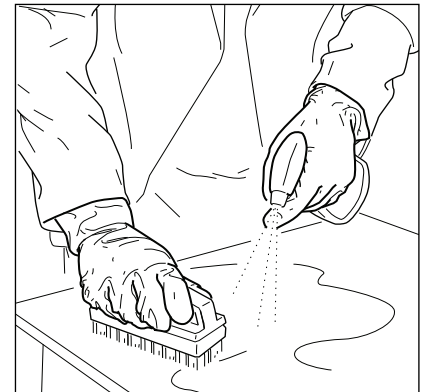
Harm via skin or eye contact

Access and premises

- ✓ Mark any pedestrian routes that can become slippery when wet.
- ✓ Provide good washing facilities.

Equipment

- ✓ Do you need colour-coded cloths, mops and buckets to minimise cross-contamination?
- ✓ Provide protective gloves.
- ✓ Remove heavy dirt deposits first.



Caution: Never decant concentrate into an unlabelled container. Never re-use a concentrate container - dispose of it safely or return it to your supplier. Don't store more than 50 litres of flammable liquid indoors - use a flammable store.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ✓ Follow the instructions on product labels.
- ✓ Ask your supplier to help you choose the right PPE.
- ✓ Provide protective gloves - single-use gloves are acceptable. If you must use latex gloves, use only 'low-protein, powder-free' gloves.
- ✓ Throw away single-use gloves every time they are taken off.
- ✓ Provide waterproof, slip-resistant footwear.
- ✓ Skin creams are important for skin condition. These help in washing contamination from the skin. After work creams help to replace skin oils.

Caution: 'barrier creams' do not make a full barrier.

Procedures

- ✓ Store products securely in a cool, dry, dark place, capable of keeping in spills. Don't store far more than you need.
- ✓ Ensure that workers follow the instructions for use by reading the label, and make up solutions for immediate use only.
- ✓ Put the cap back on the container immediately.
- ✓ Keep products off your skin. Workers should wash off any splashes and avoid contact with surfaces until they are dry.

Special care

- ✓ Contact with many products can lead to dermatitis. Some can also damage the eyes.
- ✓ Some products may cause asthma - check the safety data sheet.
- ✓ Take special care using caustic soda (sodium hydroxide). Splashes in the eye can cause blindness.
- ✓ Never add any other chemical to concentrates that contain bleach (sodium hypochlorite solution). This can cause a dangerous gas (chlorine) to be given off.

Health monitoring

- ✓ Ask your workers to check their skin for dryness or soreness every month.
- ✓ If you use a product labelled 'may cause sensitisation by skin contact' or 'may cause sensitisation by inhalation', seek specialist advice - see 'Useful links'.

Cleaning and housekeeping

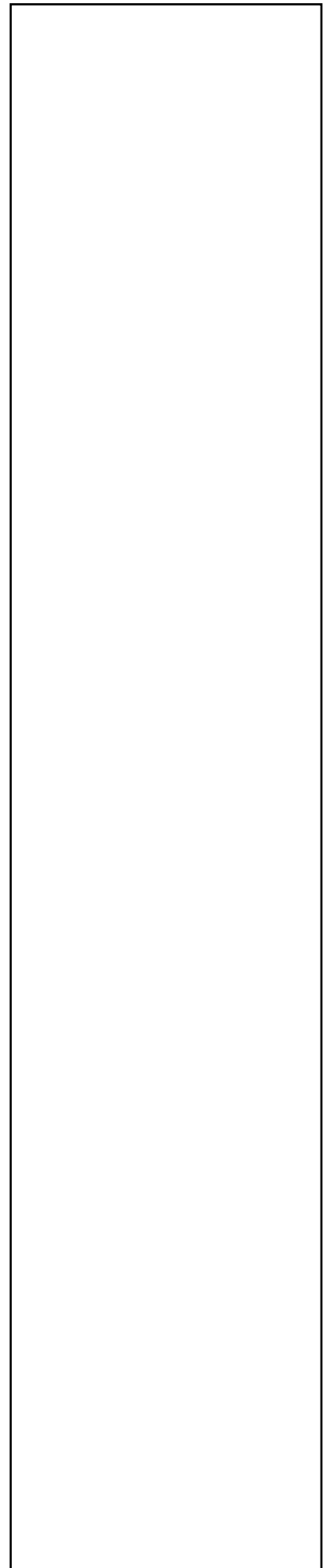
- ✓ Wash out the equipment after use. Dispose of this waste liquid safely.
- ✓ Clean up spills promptly - practise how to do this.

Training and supervision

- ✓ Tell workers about the risks of using the product - see products labels or Section 15 of the safety data sheet.
- ✓ Working in the right way and using the controls correctly is important for exposure control. Train and supervise workers. See sheet SR0.

Further information

- *Assessing and managing risks at work from skin exposure to chemical agents: Guidance for employers and health and safety specialists* HSG205 HSE Books 2001 ISBN 0 7176 1826 9
- *Preventing dermatitis at work: Advice for employers and employees* Leaflet INDG233 HSE Books 1996 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 0 7176 1246 5)
- Posters on protective gloves and skin care - see www.hse.gov.uk/skin/information.htm



Useful links

- HSE priced and free publications are available from HSE Books
Tel: 01787 881165 Website: www.hsebooks.co.uk.
- For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 0845 345 0055 Textphone: 0845 408 9577 e-mail: hse.infoline@natbrit.com.
- Contact the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) on 01332 298101 or at www.bohs.org for lists of qualified hygienists who can help you.
- Look in the Yellow Pages under 'Health and safety consultants' and 'Health authorities and services' for 'occupational health'.
- Also see www.nhsplus.nhs.uk.

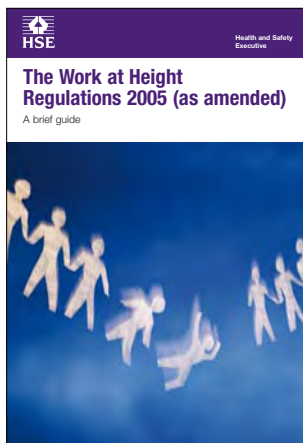
Employee checklist

- Look for signs of leaks, wear and damage.
- If you find any problems, tell your supervisor. Don't just carry on working.
- Use and store your protective equipment according to instructions.
- Throw away single-use gloves every time you take them off.
- Wash your hands after use.
- Never clean your hands with concentrated cleaning products or solvents.
- Check your skin regularly for dryness or soreness - tell your supervisor if these symptoms appear.
- Use skin creams provided as instructed.

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance as illustrating good practice.

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended)

A brief guide



*This is a web-friendly
version of leaflet
INDG401(rev1)*

In 2005/06 falls from height accounted for 46 fatal accidents at work and around 3350 major injuries. They remain the single biggest cause of workplace deaths and one of the main causes of major injury.

This document is written for employers, the self-employed and anyone who works at height. It tells you what you need to do to comply with the Work at Height Regulations 2005, as amended by the Work at Height (Amendment) Regulations 2007. The Regulations apply to all work at height where there is a risk of a fall liable to cause personal injury.

Using this information

- 1 This document summarises what you need to do to comply with the Work at Height Regulations 2005. Some industry/trade associations may have produced more detailed guidance about working at height. You can also find more information on the HSE website.
- 2 It has been written so that in most cases it can be used without access to the Regulations. However, it may be useful to have the Regulations to hand if you require more information.

Why are these rules important?

- 3 These Regulations have been made to prevent the deaths and injuries caused each year by falls at work.
- 4 They replace all the earlier regulations about working at height. The Work at Height Regulations 2005 consolidate previous legislation on working at height and implement European Council Directive 2001/45/EC concerning minimum safety and health requirements for the use of equipment for work at height (the Temporary Work at Height Directive).

What is 'work at height'?

Regulation 2

- 5 A place is 'at height' if (unless these Regulations are followed) a person could be injured falling from it, even if it is at or below ground level.
- 6 'Work' includes moving around at a place of work (except by a staircase in a permanent workplace) but not travel to or from a place of work. For instance, a sales assistant on a stepladder would be working at height, but we would not be inclined to apply the Regulations to a mounted police officer on patrol.

What do the Schedules to the Regulations cover?

7 They cover the detailed requirements for: Schedule

■ existing places of work and means of access for work at height	1
■ collective fall prevention (eg guard rails and toe boards)	2
■ working platforms	3
■ collective fall arrest (eg nets, airbags etc)	4
■ personal fall protection (eg work restraints, work positioning, fall arrest and rope access)	5
■ ladders and stepladders	6
■ inspection reports (for working platforms in construction only)	7
■ revocations	8

Do the rules apply to you?

Regulations 3 and 14

8 The Work at Height Regulations 2005 apply to all work at height where there is a risk of a fall liable to cause personal injury. They place duties on employers, the self-employed, and any person who controls the work of others (eg facilities managers or building owners who may contract others to work at height) to the extent they control the work.

9 Paid instructors or leaders of caving or climbing activities may use recognised alternative means of rope access and work positioning that do not make provision for two separately anchored ropes, providing they maintain an equivalent level of safety.

10 If you are an employee or working under someone else's control, regulation 14 says you must:

- report any safety hazard to them;
- use the equipment supplied (including safety devices) properly, following any training and instructions (unless you think that would be unsafe, in which case you should seek further instructions before continuing).

Special cases

Regulations 3, 15 and 16 and Schedule 2

11 In certain cases the Regulations can apply outside Great Britain. (For details see regulation 3(1).)

12 There are some exemptions for shipping, offshore installations, and docks. (For details see regulations 3(4) – 3(6) and 16.) People and organisations acting in the interests of national security may be exempted by the Secretary of State for Defence.

13 You may ask the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to exempt certain people, premises, equipment, or activity from some of the regulations relating to guard rails and the like, but you will have to show that there is no risk to anyone's health or safety. (For details see regulation 15 and Schedule 2.)

What you must do as an employer

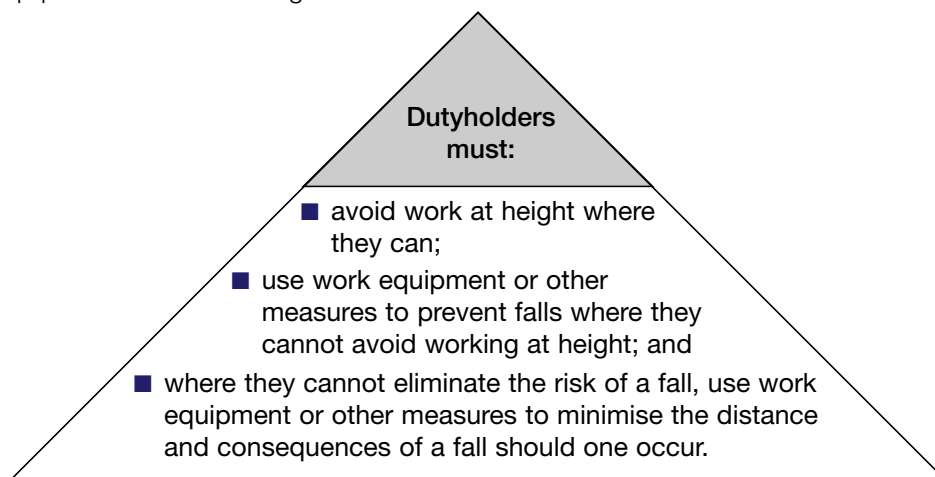
Overriding principle

Regulation 6(3)

14 You must do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent anyone falling.

The Regulations hierarchy

15 The Regulations set out a simple hierarchy for managing and selecting equipment for work at height.



Dutyholders' responsibilities

16 The Regulations require dutyholders to ensure:

- all work at height is properly planned and organised;
- all work at height takes account of weather conditions that could endanger health and safety;
- those involved in work at height are trained and competent;
- the place where work at height is done is safe;
- equipment for work at height is appropriately inspected;
- the risks from fragile surfaces are properly controlled; and
- the risks from falling objects are properly controlled.

Planning

Regulations 4 and 6(1, 2)

17 You must:

- ensure that no work is done at height if it is safe and reasonably practicable to do it other than at height;
- ensure that the work is properly planned, appropriately supervised, and carried out in as safe a way as is reasonably practicable;
- plan for emergencies and rescue;
- take account of the risk assessment carried out under regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

Weather

Regulation 4(3, 4)

18 You must ensure that the work is postponed while weather conditions endanger health or safety (but this does not apply to emergency services acting in an emergency).

Staff training

Regulations 5 and 6(5)(b)

19 You must ensure that everyone involved in the work is competent (or, if being trained, is supervised by a competent person). This includes involvement in organisation, planning, supervision, and the supply and maintenance of equipment.

20 Where other precautions do not entirely eliminate the risk of a fall occurring, you must (as far as it is reasonably practicable to do so) train those who will be working at height how to avoid falling, and how to avoid or minimise injury to themselves should they fall.

The place where work is done

Regulation 6(4)

21 You must ensure that the place where work is done at height (including the means of access) is safe and has features to prevent a fall, unless this would mean that it is not reasonably practicable for the worker to carry out the work safely (taking into account the demands of the task, equipment and working environment). Detailed safety requirements about where work is done at height are set out in Schedule 1.

Equipment, temporary structures, and safety features

Regulations 6(4)(b), 6(5)(a, b), 7, 8 and 12

22 If you rely on the exception in paragraph 21 above, you must provide equipment for preventing (as far as is reasonably practicable) a fall occurring.

23 If the precautions in paragraphs 21 and 22 do not entirely eliminate the risk of a fall occurring, you must do all that is reasonably practicable to minimise the distance and effect of a fall.

24 When selecting equipment for work at height you must:

- use the most suitable equipment;
- give collective protection measures (eg guard rails) priority over personal protection measures (eg safety harnesses);
- take account of:
 - the working conditions; and
 - risks to the safety of all those at the place where the work equipment is to be used.

25 You must ensure that all equipment, temporary structures (eg scaffolding), and safety features comply with the detailed requirements of Schedules 2 to 6.

Inspections

Regulations 12 and 13

26 'Inspection' is defined by regulation 12(10) as 'such visual or more rigorous inspection by a competent person as is appropriate for safety purposes ... (including) any testing appropriate for those purposes'.

27 You must ensure (as far as it is reasonably practicable to do so) that each individual place at which work is to be done at height is checked on every occasion before that place is used. This involves checking the surface and every parapet, permanent rail etc.

28 You must ensure that any item of a type mentioned in Schedules 2 to 6 is inspected:

- after it is assembled or installed (or after it has been assembled and installed if both are required), if its safety depends on how it is assembled or installed;
- as often as is necessary to ensure safety, and in particular to make sure that any deterioration can be detected and remedied in good time.

29 You must ensure that before you use any equipment which has come from another business, and before any equipment leaves your business, it is accompanied by an indication (clear to everyone involved) that the last inspection required by these regulations has been carried out.

Note: This does not apply to lifting equipment governed by regulation 9(4) of the Lifting Operations and Equipment Lifting Regulations 1998, but since that rule is similar to this one there is little practical difference.

30 You must ensure that any platform used for (or for access to) construction work and from which a person could fall more than 2 m is inspected in place before use (and not more than seven days before use). Where it is a mobile platform, inspection at the site is sufficient without re-inspection every time it is moved.

Notes: 'Construction work' is defined in detail in regulation 2(1) of the Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996 but broadly means 'the carrying out of any building, civil engineering or engineering construction work'. 'Platform' is widely defined by regulation 2 to include areas like gangways and stairways.

31 You must ensure that the person inspecting a platform (as required in paragraph 30):

- prepares a report before going off duty, giving the details listed in Schedule 7;
- gives the report (or a copy) within 24 hours of completing the inspection to the person for whom the inspection was done (eg you or your site manager).

32 You must keep the report of a platform inspection made under the instructions given in paragraphs 30 and 31:

- at the construction site until the work is completed;
- then at an office of yours for another three months.

33 'Keeping' a report means keeping it (or a copy) safe from loss and unauthorised interference, and so that a printed copy can be supplied when required.

34 You must keep all other records of inspection until the next inspection has been carried out.

35 Paragraphs 31 to 33 do not apply to lifting equipment governed by the similar rules imposed by regulations 9 and 10 of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998.

Fragile surfaces

Regulation 9

36 You must ensure that no one working under your control goes onto or near a fragile surface unless that is the only reasonably practicable way for the worker to carry out the work safely, having regard to the demands of the task, equipment, or working environment.

37 If anyone does work on or near a fragile surface you must:

- ensure (as far as it is reasonably practicable to do so) that suitable platforms, coverings, guard rails, and the like are provided (and used) to minimise the risk;
- do all that is reasonably practicable, if any risk of a fall remains, to minimise the distance and effect of a fall.

38 If anyone working under your control may go onto or near a fragile surface, you must do all that is reasonably practicable to make them aware of the danger, preferably by prominent warning notices fixed at the approaches to the danger zone.

Falling objects

Regulations 10 and 11

39 Where it is necessary to prevent injury, you must do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent anything falling.

40 If it not reasonably practicable, you must ensure that no one is injured by anything falling.

41 You must ensure that nothing is:

- thrown or tipped from height if it is likely to injure anyone;
- stored in such a way that its movement is likely to injure anyone.

42 If the workplace contains an area in which there is a risk of someone being struck by a falling object or person, you must ensure that the area is clearly indicated and that (as far as reasonably practicable) unauthorised people are unable to reach it.

Further reading

If in doubt, contact your local HSE office (the address is in the phone book). The staff there can refer you to the appropriate inspector or the environmental health officer at your local authority.

Legislation

Work at Height Regulations 2005 SI 2005/735 The Stationery Office 2005 (available online at: www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20050735.htm) as amended by the *Work at Height (Amendment) Regulations 2007* SI 2007/114 The Stationery Office 2007 (online at: www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/20070114.htm)

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 SI 1999/3242 The Stationery Office 1999 ISBN 0 11 085625 2

Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 SI 1998/2307 The Stationery Office 1998 ISBN 0 11 079598 9

Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996 SI 1996/1592 The Stationery Office 1996 ISBN 0 11 035904 6

Useful website

HSE's Falls from height website: www.hse.gov.uk/falls

Further information

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 bookshops and free leaflets can be downloaded from HSE's website: www.hse.gov.uk.)

For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 0845 345 0055 Fax: 0845 408 9566 Textphone: 0845 408 9577 email: hse.infoline@natbrit.com or write to HSE Information Services, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG.

The Stationery Office publications are available from The Stationery Office, PO Box 29, Norwich NR3 1GN Tel: 0870 600 5522 Fax: 0870 600 5533 e-mail: customer.services@tso.co.uk Website: www.tso.co.uk (They are also available from bookshops.)

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This document is available in priced packs of 10 from HSE Books, ISBN 978 0 7176 6231 9. Single free copies are also available from HSE Books.

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Preventing contact dermatitis at work



This is a web-friendly version of leaflet INDG233(rev1), revised 03/07

This leaflet tells you about a skin problem that you can get at work – contact dermatitis.

If you are an employer, safety representative, trainer or safety advisor you can influence work practice and prevent this disabling disease.

The leaflet shows you what to look out for and how to prevent dermatitis. It also tells you where you can find more detailed practical advice for specific jobs and workplaces.

What is contact dermatitis?

Contact dermatitis is inflammation of the skin caused by contact with a range of materials. These include detergents, toiletries, chemicals and even natural products like foods and water (if contact is prolonged or frequent). It can affect all parts of the body, but it is most common to see the hands affected. There are three main types of contact dermatitis:

- irritant contact dermatitis:
- allergic contact dermatitis:
- contact urticaria.

Irritant contact dermatitis is caused by things that dry out and damage the skin, eg detergents, solvents, oils and prolonged or frequent contact with water.

Allergic contact dermatitis occurs when someone becomes allergic to something that comes into contact with his or her skin. The allergic reaction can show up hours or days after contact. Common causes include chemicals in cement, hair products, epoxy resins and some foods.

Urticaria is a different kind of allergy. It occurs within minutes of the material touching the skin. Things like plants, foods and natural rubber latex gloves can cause it.

What does contact dermatitis look like?

The signs and symptoms of the different types of dermatitis are similar. Dry, red and itchy skin is usually the first sign. Swelling, flaking, blistering, cracking and pain can follow.

Sometimes the consequences of contact with a material are immediately visible. Sometimes contact occurs without apparent effect. However, every contact can cause minute amounts of 'invisible' damage to the skin that can build up until more serious signs are seen. So, don't be lulled into a false sense of security.



What are the high-risk jobs and workplaces?

Certain workers are at greater risk of developing dermatitis. They include healthcare workers, hairdressers, beauticians, printers, those in cleaning, catering and construction and workers using metalworking fluids. But remember, dermatitis can occur in just about any workplace.

Managing the work to prevent dermatitis

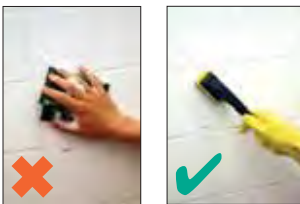
Following three simple steps can prevent dermatitis:

Avoid contact with materials that cause dermatitis.

Protect the skin.

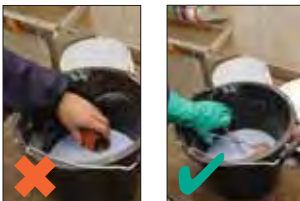
Check for early signs of dermatitis.

No contact = no dermatitis. So take all the steps you can to **avoid contact with materials that cause dermatitis** by changing the task or process. Some examples of how you can do this are given below.



Examples of how you can **avoid contact** are:

- substitute a more hazardous material with a safer alternative;
- automate the process;
- enclose the process as much as possible;
- use mechanical handling;
- use equipment for handling;
- don't use the hands as tools;
- use a safe working distance.



You will also need to **protect the skin**. This is particularly important if the steps above aren't practical or aren't enough to totally avoid contact.

You can **protect the skin** by the following:



- tell workers how to look after their skin;
- remind them to wash any contamination from their skin promptly;
- tell them about the importance of thorough drying after washing;
- provide soft cotton or paper towels;
- supply moisturising pre-work and after-work creams;
- provide appropriate protective clothing/gloves;
- make sure gloves are made of suitable material;
- select gloves that are the right size and right for the task to be done;
- use and store gloves correctly;
- replace gloves when necessary.



You will also need to make sure regular skin checks are carried out to look for early signs of dermatitis.

- Regular skin checks can spot the early stages of dermatitis.
- Early detection can prevent more serious dermatitis from developing.
- Steps can be taken to start treating the condition.
- Checks can help indicate a possible lapse in your preventative measures and the need to reassess the situation.

What does the law require?

The law requires employers to adequately control exposure to materials in the workplace that cause ill health like dermatitis. Employers and employees need to comply with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended) (COSHH). They require employers to assess risks, provide adequate control measures, ensure the use and maintenance of these; provide information, instruction and training; and in appropriate cases, health surveillance.

Where can I get more detailed information on the topics outlined?

Skin disease

Skin diseases, preventing skin disease, legislation and other control information: www.hse.gov.uk/skin, www.bsif.co.uk

Catering

HSE are developing catering web pages during 2007

Construction

General construction information: www.hse.gov.uk/construction

Hairdressing

Good practice advice: www.badhandday.hse.gov.uk

Metalworking fluids

Good practice advice: www.hse.gov.uk/metalworking/ecoshh

Printing

Good practice advice: www.hse.gov.uk/printing/dermatitis

Further information

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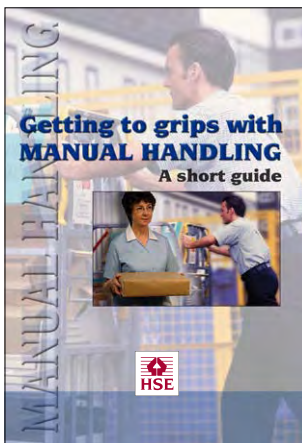
This leaflet contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

This leaflet is available in priced packs of 15 from HSE Books, ISBN 978 0 7176 6183 1. Single copies are free and a web version can be found at: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg233.pdf.

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Getting to grips with manual handling

A short guide



This booklet explains the problems associated with manual handling and sets out best practice in dealing with them. The advice is intended for managers of small firms or similar organisations. But the general principles are relevant to all workplaces, whatever their size. Avoiding injuries from manual handling makes sound business sense.

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, as amended in 2002 ('the Regulations') apply to a wide range of manual handling activities, including lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling or carrying. The load may be either inanimate - such as a box or a trolley, or animate - a person or an animal. This guidance gives useful practical advice for employers, managers, safety representatives and individual employees on how to reduce the risk of injury from manual handling.

What's the problem?

More than a third of all over-three-day injuries reported each year to HSE and local authorities are caused by manual handling - the transporting or supporting of loads by hand or by bodily force. The pie chart shows the pattern for over-three-day injuries reported in 2001/02.

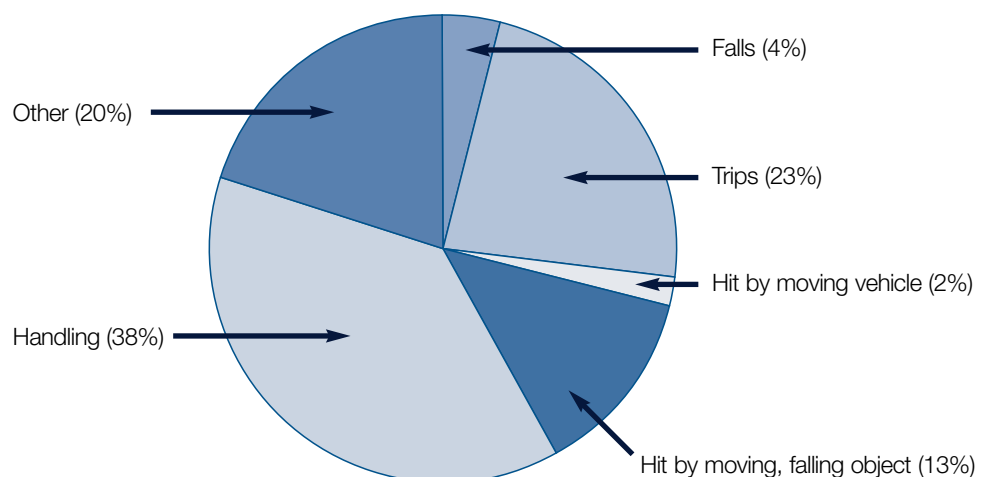


Figure 1 Kinds of accident causing over-three-day injury, 2001/02

The most recent survey of self-reported work-related illness estimated that in 2001/02, 1.1 million people in Great Britain suffered from musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) caused or made worse by their current or past work. An estimated 12.3 million working days were lost due to these work-related MSDs. On average each sufferer took about 20 days off in that 12-month period.

Manual handling injuries can occur wherever people are at work - on farms and building sites, in factories, offices, warehouses, hospitals, banks, laboratories, and while making deliveries. Heavy manual labour, awkward postures, manual materials handling, and previous or existing injury are all risk factors implicated in the development of MSDs. More information and advice on MSDs is available on the HSE website, including advice on managing back pain at work (see 'Further reading').

Prevention and control of MSDs, such as manual handling injuries, has been identified as a priority by the Health and Safety Commission. Taking the action described in this booklet will help prevent these injuries and is likely to be cost-effective. However you cannot prevent all MSDs, so it is still essential to encourage early reporting of symptoms and make arrangements for the proper treatment and rehabilitation of anybody who does get injured.

What should I do about it?

Consider the risks from manual handling to the health and safety of your employees - the rest of this booklet will help you to do this. If there are risks, the Regulations apply.

Consult and involve the workforce. Your employees and their representatives know first-hand what the risks in the workplace are. So they can probably offer practical solutions to controlling them.

What are my duties?

The Regulations require employers to:

- **avoid** the need for hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable;
- **assess** the risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling that can't be avoided; and
- **reduce** the risk of injury from hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable.

These points are explained in detail under 'Avoiding manual handling' and 'Assessing and reducing the risk of injury'.

Employees have duties too. They should:

- follow appropriate systems of work laid down for their safety;
- make proper use of equipment provided for their safety;
- co-operate with their employer on health and safety matters;
- inform the employer if they identify hazardous handling activities;
- take care to ensure that their activities do not put others at risk.

Avoiding manual handling

Check whether you need to move it at all

For example:

- does a large workpiece really need to be moved, or can the activity (eg wrapping or machining) safely be done where the item already is?
- can you take the treatment to the patient, not vice versa?
- can raw materials be piped to their point of use?

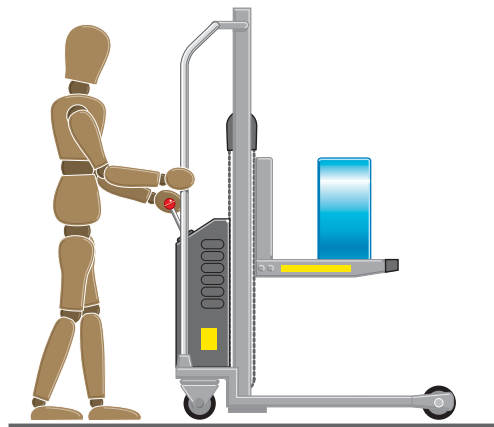
Consider automation, particularly for new processes

Think about mechanisation and using handling aids

For example:

- a conveyor;
- a pallet truck;
- an electric or hand-powered hoist;
- a lift truck.

But **beware of new hazards** from automation or mechanisation.



For example:

- automated plant still needs cleaning, maintenance etc;
- lift trucks must be suited to the work and have properly train operators.

Assessing and reducing the risk of injury

Who should make the assessment?

The assessment is the employer's responsibility. You should be able to do most assessments in-house. You, your employees and safety representatives know your business better than anyone. Most situations will require just a few minutes' observation to identify ways to make the activity easier and less risky, ie less physically demanding. Later in this booklet you will find easy-to-use guidelines to help decide whether there are risky lifting activities where a full assessment is required. Advice from outside experts may be helpful in difficult or unusual cases, or to get you started. See Table 1 for the kind of problems to look for.

What role can employees and their representatives play in carrying out assessments?

Your employees can help you carry out the assessment - they often know what problems there are and how best to solve them. If their work is varied or not closely supervised, make sure they are aware what risks to look for when manual handling, and what to do about them. But the final responsibility for assessments rests with employers. You have duties under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 to consult and keep safety representatives and employees up to date. Consultation with them will offer the best solutions as they are best placed to know how the job works and what can be done to improve it. It is especially useful to get your employees' input when buying new equipment.

Do assessments need to be recorded?

It is often useful to record and keep the main findings, and this should always be done if it would be difficult to repeat the assessment. However, an assessment need not be recorded if:

- it could very easily be repeated and explained at any time because it is simple and obvious; or
- the handling operations are low risk, and are going to last a very short time.

Do I have to do assessments for each individual employee and workplace?

It is sometimes acceptable to do a 'generic' assessment - one that is common to several employees or to more than one site or type of work. However:

- this should only be done if there are no individual or local factors which need to be taken into account, for example differences in stature, competence etc;
- you should review any generic risk assessment if individual employees report adverse symptoms, become ill, injured or disabled, or return following a long period of sickness, as they may have become vulnerable to risk.

Remember, you may need to carry out individual risk assessments for employees with a disability and to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (in particular section 6).

The important thing in all assessments is to identify all significant risks of injury and point the way to practical improvements.

How should I use my assessment?

Don't just forget it or file it away. The purpose of the assessment is to pinpoint the worst features of the work - and they're the ones you should try to improve first (see Table 1). It is also important to remember to update the assessment when significant changes are made to the workplace.

All employees covered by a risk assessment - including generic assessments - should be told about the risks it identifies.

Table 1 Making an assessment (cont'd on next page)

Problems to look for when making an assessment	Ways of reducing the risk of injury
<p><i>The tasks, do they involve:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ holding loads away from the body? ■ twisting, stooping or reaching upwards? ■ large vertical movement? ■ long carrying distances? ■ strenuous pushing or pulling? ■ repetitive handling? ■ insufficient rest or recovery time? ■ a work rate imposed by a process? 	<p><i>Can you:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ use a lifting aid? ■ improve workplace layout to improve efficiency? ■ reduce the amount of twisting and stooping? ■ avoid lifting from floor level or above shoulder height, especially heavy loads? ■ reduce carrying distances? ■ avoid repetitive handling? ■ vary the work, allowing one set of muscles to rest while another is used? ■ push rather than pull?
<p><i>The loads, are they:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ heavy, bulky or unwieldy? ■ difficult to grasp? ■ unstable or likely to move unpredictably (like animals)? ■ harmful, eg sharp or hot? ■ awkwardly stacked? ■ too large for the handler to see over? 	<p><i>Can you make the load:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ lighter or less bulky? ■ easier to grasp? ■ more stable? ■ less damaging to hold? <p>If the load comes in from elsewhere, have you asked the supplier to help, eg provide handles or smaller packages?</p>
<p><i>The working environment, are there:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ constraints on posture? ■ bumpy, obstructed or slippery floors? ■ variations in levels? ■ hot/cold/humid conditions? ■ gusts of wind or other strong air movements? ■ poor lighting conditions? ■ restrictions on movements or posture from clothes or personal protective equipment (PPE)? 	<p><i>Can you:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ remove obstructions to free movement? ■ provide better flooring? ■ avoid steps and steep ramps? ■ prevent extremes of hot and cold? ■ improve lighting? ■ provide protective clothing or PPE that is less restrictive? ■ ensure your employees' clothing and footwear is suitable for their work?

Table 1 Making an assessment (cont'd)

Problems to look for when making an assessment	Ways of reducing the risk of injury
<p><i>Individual capacity, does the job:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ require unusual capability, eg above-average strength or agility? ■ endanger those with a health problem or learning/physical disability? ■ endanger pregnant women? ■ call for special information or training? 	<p><i>Can you:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ pay particular attention to those who have a physical weakness? ■ take extra care of pregnant workers? ■ give your employees more information, eg about the range of tasks they are likely to face? ■ provide more training (see ‘What about training?’) <p>Get advice from an occupational health advisor if you need to.</p>
<p><i>Handling aids and equipment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ is the device the correct type for the job? ■ is it well maintained? ■ are the wheels on the device suited to the floor surface? ■ do the wheels run freely? ■ is the handle height between the waist and shoulders? ■ are the handle grips in good order and comfortable? ■ are there any brakes? If so, do they work? 	<p><i>Can you:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ provide equipment that is more suitable for the task? ■ carry out planned preventive maintenance to prevent problems? ■ change the wheels, tyres and/or flooring so that equipment moves easily? ■ provide better handles and handle grips? ■ make the brakes easier to use, reliable and effective?
<p><i>Work organisation factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ is the work repetitive or boring? ■ is work machine or system-paced? ■ do workers feel the demands of the work are excessive? ■ have workers little control of the work and working methods? ■ is there poor communication between managers and employees? 	<p><i>Can you:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ change tasks to reduce the monotony? ■ make more use of workers’ skills? ■ make workloads and deadlines more achievable? ■ encourage good communication and teamwork? ■ involve workers in decisions? ■ provide better training and information?



Consider mechanical aids; even a sack truck can make a big improvement.

How far must I reduce the risk?

To the lowest level 'reasonably practicable'. That means reducing the risk until the cost of any further precautions - time, effort or money - would be far too great in proportion to the benefits.

Do I have to provide mechanical aids in every case?

You should definitely provide mechanical aids if it is reasonably practicable to do so and the risks identified in your risk assessment can be reduced or eliminated by this means. But you should consider mechanical aids in other situations as well - they can improve productivity as well as safety. Even something as simple as a sack truck can make a big improvement.

What about training?

Training is important but remember that, on its own, it can't overcome:

- a lack of mechanical aids;
- unsuitable loads;
- bad working conditions.

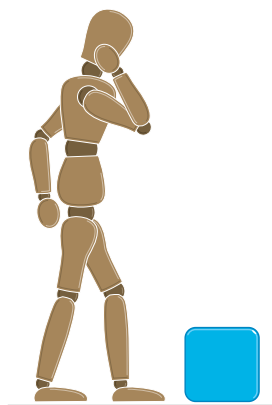
Training should cover:

- manual handling risk factors and how injuries can occur;
- how to carry out safe manual handling including good handling technique (see 'Good handling technique for lifting' and 'Good handling technique for pushing and pulling');
- appropriate systems of work for the individual's tasks and environment;
- use of mechanical aids;
- practical work to allow the trainer to identify and put right anything the trainee is not doing safely.

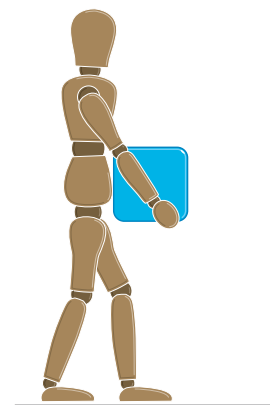
Good handling technique for lifting

Here are some practical tips, suitable for use in training people in safe manual handling. In the following section a basic lifting operation is taken as an example.

- **Think before lifting/handling.** Plan the lift. Can handling aids be used? Where is the load going to be placed? Will help be needed with the load? Remove obstructions such as discarded wrapping materials. For a long lift, consider resting the load midway on a table or bench to change grip.



Think before lifting/handling



Keep the load close to the waist

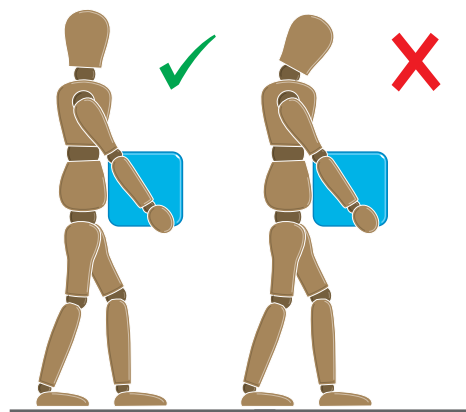


Adopt a stable position with feet apart and one leg slightly forward to maintain balance

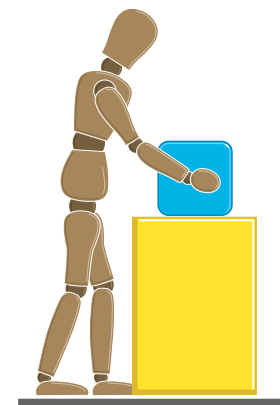


Start in a good posture

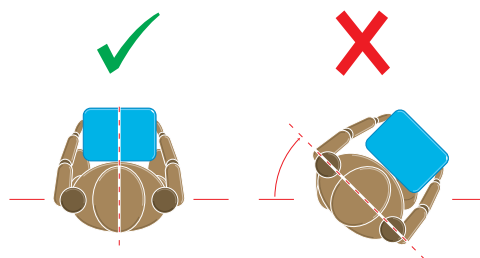
- **Keep the load close to the waist.** Keep the load close to the body for as long as possible while lifting. Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body. If a close approach to the load is not possible, try to slide it towards the body before attempting to lift it.
- **Adopt a stable position.** The feet should be apart with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance (alongside the load, if it is on the ground). The worker should be prepared to move their feet during the lift to maintain their stability. Avoid tight clothing or unsuitable footwear, which may make this difficult.
- **Get a good hold.** Where possible the load should be hugged as close as possible to the body. This may be better than gripping it tightly with hands only.
- **Start in a good posture.** At the start of the lift, slight bending of the back, hips and knees is preferable to fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees (squatting).
- **Don't flex the back any further while lifting.** This can happen if the legs begin to straighten before starting to raise the load.
- **Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways,** especially while the back is bent. Shoulders should be kept level and facing in the same direction as the hips. Turning by moving the feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.
- **Keep the head up when handling.** Look ahead, not down at the load, once it has been held securely.
- **Move smoothly.** The load should not be jerked or snatched as this can make it harder to keep control and can increase the risk of injury.
- **Don't lift or handle more than can be easily managed.** There is a difference between what people can lift and what they can safely lift. If in doubt, seek advice or get help.
- **Put down, then adjust.** If precise positioning of the load is necessary, put it down first, then slide it into the desired position.



Keep the head up when handling



Put down, then adjust



Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways, especially while the back is bent

Good handling technique for pushing and pulling

Here are some practical points to remember when loads are pushed or pulled.

- **Handling devices.** Aids such as barrows and trolleys should have handle heights that are between the shoulder and waist. Devices should be well-maintained with wheels that run smoothly (the law requires that equipment is maintained). When purchasing new trolleys etc, ensure they are of good quality with large diameter wheels made of suitable material and with castors, bearings etc which will last with minimum maintenance. Consultation with your employees and safety representatives will help, as they know what works and what doesn't.
- **Force.** As a rough guide the amount of force that needs to be applied to move a load over a flat, level surface using a well-maintained handling aid is at least 2% of the load weight. For example, if the load weight is 400 kg, then the force needed to move the load is 8 kg. The force needed will be larger, perhaps a lot larger, if conditions are not perfect (eg wheels not in the right position or a device that is poorly maintained). The operator should try to push rather than pull when moving a load, provided they can see over it and control steering and stopping.
- **Slopes.** Employees should enlist help from another worker whenever necessary if they have to negotiate a slope or ramp, as pushing and pulling forces can be very high. For example, if a load of 400 kg is moved up a slope of 1 in 12 (about 5°), the required force is over 30 kg even in ideal conditions - good wheels and a smooth slope. This is above the guideline weight for men and well above the guideline weight for women.
- **Uneven surfaces.** Moving an object over soft or uneven surfaces requires higher forces. On an uneven surface, the force needed to start the load moving could increase to 10% of the load weight, although this might be offset to some extent by using larger wheels. Soft ground may be even worse.
- **Stance and pace.** To make it easier to push or pull, employees should keep their feet well away from the load and go no faster than walking speed. This will stop them becoming too tired too quickly.

How do I know if there's a risk of injury?

It's a matter of judgement in each case, but there are certain things to look out for, such as people puffing and sweating, excessive fatigue, bad posture, cramped work areas, awkward or heavy loads or a history of back trouble. Operators can often highlight which activities are unpopular, difficult or hard work.

Can you be more definite?

It is difficult to be precise - so many factors vary between jobs, workplaces and people. But the general risk assessment guidelines in the next section should help to identify when a more detailed risk assessment is necessary.

General risk assessment guidelines

There is no such thing as a completely 'safe' manual handling operation. But working within the following guidelines will cut the risk and reduce the need for a more detailed assessment.

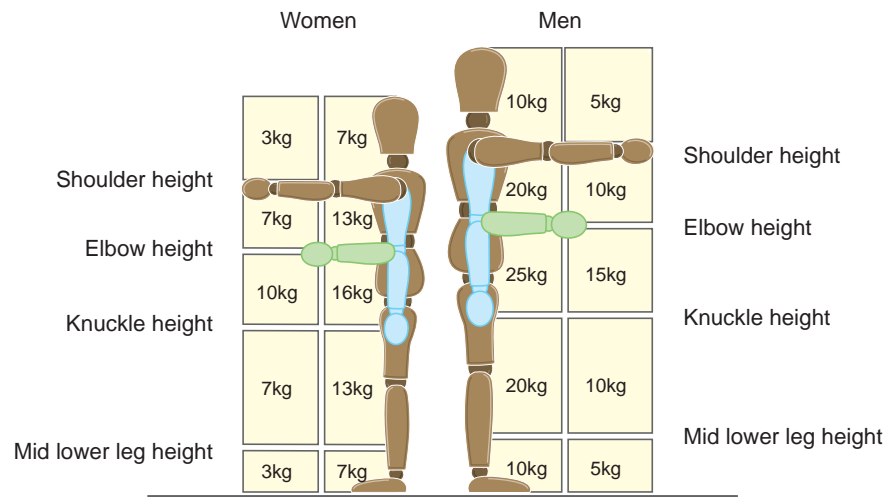


Figure 2 Lifting and lowering

- Use Figure 2 to make a quick and easy assessment. Each box contains a guideline weight for lifting and lowering in that zone. (As you can see, the guideline weights are reduced if handling is done with arms extended, or at high or low levels, as that is where injuries are most likely to occur.)
- Observe the work activity you are assessing and compare it to the diagram. First, decide which box or boxes the lifter's hands pass through when moving the load. Then, assess the maximum weight being handled. If it is less than the figure given in the box, the operation is within the guidelines.
- If the lifter's hands enter more than one box during the operation, use the smallest weight. Use an in-between weight if the hands are close to a boundary between boxes.
- The guideline weights assume that the load is readily grasped with both hands and that the operation takes place in reasonable working conditions, with the lifter in a stable body position.

Twisting

Reduce the guideline weights if the handler twists to the side during the operation. As a rough guide, reduce them by 10% if the handler twists beyond 45°, and by 20% if the handler twists beyond 90°.

Frequent lifting and lowering

The guideline weights are for infrequent operations - up to about 30 operations per hour - where the pace of work is not forced, adequate pauses to rest or use different muscles are possible, and the load is not supported by the handler for any length of time. Reduce the weights if the operation is repeated more often. As a rough guide, reduce the weights by 30% if the operation is repeated once or twice per minute, by 50% if the operation is repeated five to eight times a minute, and by 80% where the operation is repeated more than 12 times a minute.

Pushing and pulling

The task is within the guidelines if the following figures are not exceeded:

	Men	Women
Force to stop or start the load	20 kg	15 kg
Sustained force to keep the load in motion	10 kg	7 kg

See 'Good handling technique for pushing and pulling' for some examples of forces required to push or pull loads.

Using the results: Do I need to make a more detailed assessment?

Using Figure 2 is a first step. If it shows the manual handling is within the guideline figures (bearing in mind the reduced limits for twisting and for frequent lifts) you need not do any more in most cases. But you will need to make a more detailed assessment if:

- the conditions given for using the guidelines (eg that the load can be readily grasped with both hands) are not met;
- the person doing the lifting has reduced capacity, eg through ill health or pregnancy;
- the handling operation must take place with the hands beyond the boxes in the diagram; or
- the guideline figures in the diagram are exceeded.

For pushing and pulling, you should make a more detailed assessment if:

- there are extra risk factors like uneven floors or confined spaces;
- the worker can't push or pull the load with their hands between knuckle and shoulder height;
- the load has to be moved for more than about 20 m without a break; or
- the guideline figures in the table are likely to be exceeded.

More advice on how to make a more detailed assessment is given in our main guidance booklet *Manual handling*. Guidance on regulations (see 'Further reading' for details).

HSE has also developed a tool called the *Manual Handling Assessment Chart (MAC)*, to help you assess the most common risk factors in lifting, carrying and team handling. You may find the MAC useful to help identify high-risk manual handling operations and to help complete detailed risk assessments. It can be downloaded from www.hse.gov.uk/msd.

Are you saying I mustn't exceed the guidelines?

No. The risk assessment guidelines are not 'safe limits' for lifting. But work outside the guidelines is likely to increase the risk of injury, so you should examine it closely for possible improvements. You should remember that you must make the work less demanding if it is reasonably practicable to do so.

Your main duty is to avoid lifting operations that involve a risk of injury. Where it is not practicable to do this you should assess each lifting operation and reduce the risk of injury to the lowest level reasonably practicable. As the risk of injury goes up you must look at the operation increasingly closely to make sure it has been properly assessed and the risk of injury has been reduced.

Further reading

HSE's website on musculoskeletal disorders: www.hse.gov.uk/msd

Manual handling. Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended). Guidance on Regulations L23 (Third edition) HSE Books 2004
ISBN 0 7176 2823 X

This booklet gives comprehensive guidance, including:

- the full text of the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended in 2002) with detailed advice on each regulation;
- guidelines for assessing risk while lifting, carrying, pushing and pulling, and handling while seated;
- practical advice on measures to reduce the risk of injury; and
- an example of an assessment checklist.

Manual handling: Solutions you can handle HSG115 HSE Books 1994
ISBN 0 7176 0693 7

A pain in your workplace? Ergonomic problems and solutions HSG121
HSE Books 1994 ISBN 0 7176 0668 6

Further information

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 bookshops and free leaflets can be downloaded from HSE's website: www.hse.gov.uk.)

For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 0845 345 0055
Fax: 0845 408 9566 Textphone: 0845 408 9577
e-mail: hse.infoline@natbrit.com or write to HSE Information Services,
Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG.

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

This leaflet is available in priced packs of 10 from HSE Books,
ISBN 0 7176 2828 0. Single free copies are also available from HSE Books.

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SR24

Storing chemical products (small scale)

COSHH essentials for service and retail



This information will help employers (including the self-employed and franchisees) comply with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH), as amended, to control exposure and protect workers' health.

It is also useful for trade union safety representatives.

This sheet describes good practice using general ventilation.

It covers the points you need to follow to reduce exposure to an adequate level.

It is important to follow all the points, or use equally effective measures.

Some chemicals can be flammable, so your controls must suit those hazards too. Look at the safety data sheet for more information.

Main points

- Safe storage - segregate chemicals that might react together, and contain spills from burst containers.
- Check that all the controls are being used properly.

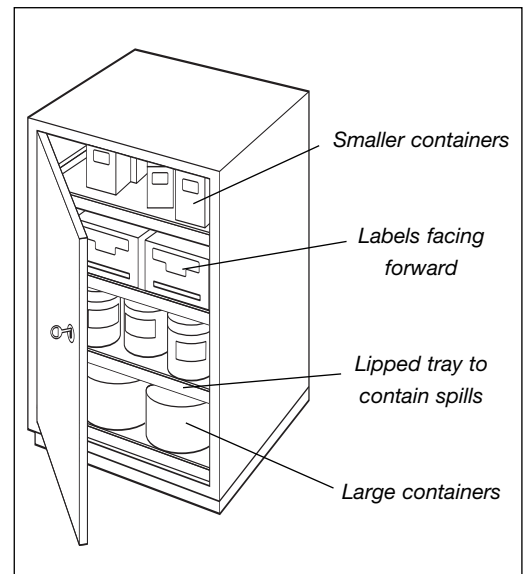
Control approach 1 General ventilation

Access and premises

- ✓ Ensure that only trained workers have access to stored chemical products. Keep the storage container locked.
- ✓ Provide good washing facilities.

Equipment

- ✓ Keep the store area well ventilated; 5-10 air changes per hour with a through draught.
- ✓ Keep a spill clean up kit nearby. Ask your supplier for advice.



Caution: Never decant concentrate into an unlabelled container. Never re-use a concentrate container. Dispose of it safely or return it to the supplier. Don't store more than 50 litres of flammable liquid indoors. Use a flammables store.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ✓ Follow the instructions on product labels.
- ✓ Ask your safety-clothing supplier to help you get the right PPE.
- ✓ You may need respiratory protective equipment (RPE) in case of a spill. Seek advice from your RPE supplier.
- ✓ Provide protective gloves - single-use nitrile gloves are acceptable. If you must use latex gloves, use only 'low-protein, powder-free' gloves.
- ✓ Throw away single-use gloves every time they are taken off.

Procedures

- ✓ Keep apart:
 - solid and liquid products;
 - flammable and non-flammable liquids;
 - acids and alkalis; and
 - wastes.
- ✓ Store products containing chemicals securely in a cool, dry, dark place, capable of keeping in spills. Don't store far more than you need.

- ✓ Store containers so their labels face forwards.
- ✓ Store heavier items and corrosive chemicals on lower shelves.
- ✓ Ensure that containers are easy to pour from, don't dribble, and don't trap liquid in a rim.
- ✓ Try to buy solid chemicals in tablet form, or in a wide-necked container such that it is easy to scoop out granules.

Caution: Never store chemicals in open containers.

Special Care

- ✓ Contact with many chemicals can lead to skin soreness and itching, rashes, blistering (dermatitis). Some can also damage the eyes.

Cleaning and housekeeping

- ✓ Keep the storage area clean and well organised.
- ✓ Clear up spills immediately. Absorb liquids in granules. Scoop solids or absorbed liquids into a marked secure container. Practise how to do this.
- ✓ Dispose of hazardous waste through a specialist contractor.

Training and supervision

- ✓ Tell workers about the risks of using the product - see products labels or Section 15 of the safety data sheet.
- ✓ If products can cause skin or eye damage, plan how to give first aid.
- ✓ Working in the right way and using the controls correctly is important for exposure control. Train and supervise workers. See sheet SR0.

Useful links

- HSE priced and free publications are available from HSE Books
Tel: 01787 881165 Website: www.hsebooks.co.uk.
- For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 0845 345 0055 Textphone: 0845 408 9577 e-mail: hse.infoline@natbrit.com.
- Contact the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) on 01332 298101 or at www.bohs.org for lists of qualified hygienists who can help you.

Employee checklist

- If you find any problems, tell your supervisor. Don't just carry on working.
- Clear up spills straight away. Absorb spills in granules and put them in a lidded bin.
- Wash your hands after use, and before and after eating, drinking, smoking and using the lavatory.
- Never clean your hands with concentrated cleaning products or solvents.

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance as illustrating good practice.

SR2

COSHH essentials for service and retail



This information will help employers (including the self-employed and franchisees) comply with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH), as amended, to control exposure and protect workers' health.

It is also useful for trade union safety representatives.

This sheet describes good practice using personal protective equipment (PPE).

It covers the points you need to follow to reduce exposure to an adequate level.

It is important to follow all the points, or use equally effective measures.

Some concentrates are biocidal products. Authorised products are safe for use so long as you follow the instructions on the label.

Some chemicals can be flammable, so your controls must suit those hazards too. Look at the safety data sheet for more information.

Main points

- Avoid or minimise skin contact with chemicals.
- Check that all the controls are being used properly.
- Consider substituting with safer products.

Diluting chemical concentrates

Control approach S

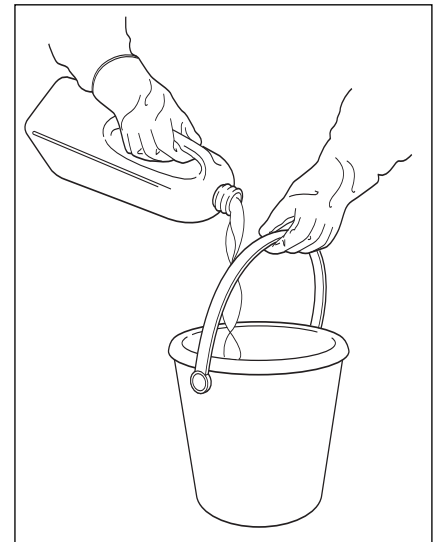
Harm via skin or eye contact

Access and premises

- ✓ Make sure there is enough room to do the job safely.
- ✓ Provide good washing facilities.

Equipment

- ✓ Ensure the equipment used with the product works properly, without leaks.
- ✓ Provide protective gloves.
- ✓ If diluting with a solvent, make sure the room is well ventilated; 5-10 changes per hour, with a through draught.
- ✓ Buy liquid chemicals in containers that are easy to pour from, don't dribble, and don't trap liquid in a rim.
- ✓ Try to buy solid chemicals in tablet or granule form, or in wide-necked containers so it is easy to scoop out.



Caution: Never decant concentrate into an unlabelled container.

Never re-use a concentrate container - dispose of it safely or return it to your supplier. Don't store more than 50 litres of flammable liquid indoors- use a flammables store.

Procedures

- ✓ Contractors using pesticides should have a British Pest Control Association (BPCA) qualification.
- ✓ Store products containing chemicals securely in a cool, dry, dark place, capable of retaining spills. Don't store far more than you need.
- ✓ Reduce skin contact - workers should wash off splashes immediately.
- ✓ Ensure that workers follow instructions for use by reading the label, and make up solutions for immediate use only. Make sure they are aware of the following general guidelines:
 - Add liquid concentrate to diluting liquid - never the other way round, unless the instructions say so.
 - Make a thin paste of powders with a small amount of diluting liquid, then dilute as for liquids.
 - ✓ Put the cap back on the container immediately and wipe the outside clean.

Special care

- ✓ Contact with many chemicals can lead to dermatitis. Some can also damage the eyes.
- ✓ Some products may cause asthma - check the safety data sheet.
- ✓ Avoid products that contain hydrofluoric acid.
- ✓ Take special care using caustic soda (sodium hydroxide). This can erupt when mixed with water. Splashes in the eye can cause blindness.
- ✓ Never add any other chemical to concentrates that contain bleach (sodium hypochlorite solution). This can cause a dangerous gas (chlorine) to be given off.

Maintenance, examination and testing

- ✓ Wash out mixing equipment after use. Dispose of waste liquid safely.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ✓ Follow the instructions on product labels.
- ✓ Ask your supplier to help you choose the right PPE.
- ✓ Provide protective gloves - single-use nitrile gloves are acceptable. If you must use latex gloves, use only 'low protein, powder free' gloves.
- ✓ Throw away single use gloves every time they are taken off.
- ✓ Provide protective goggles to protect eyes when using products that can cause burns (eg acids, caustics).
- ✓ Skin creams are important for skin protection and help in washing contamination from the skin. These are not 'barrier creams'. After work creams help to replace skin oils.

Health monitoring

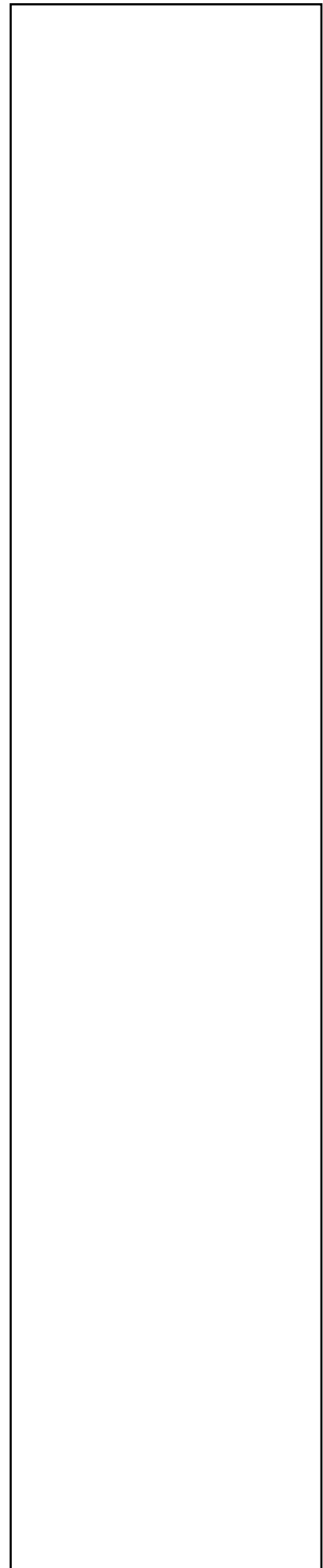
- ✓ Ask your workers to check their skin for dryness or soreness every six months. If these effects appear, check the proper use of skin creams and PPE.
- ✓ If you use a product labelled 'may cause sensitisation by skin contact' or 'may cause sensitisation by inhalation', seek specialist advice- See 'Useful links'.

Cleaning and housekeeping

- ✓ Clean up spills promptly - practise how to do this.

Training and supervision

- ✓ Tell workers about the risks of using the product - see products labels or Section 15 of the safety data sheet.
- ✓ If products can cause skin or eye damage, plan how to give first aid.
- ✓ Working in the right way and using the controls correctly is important for exposure control. Train and supervise workers. See sheet SR0.



Further information

- *Assessing and managing risks at work from skin exposure to chemical agents: Guidance for employers and health and safety specialists*
HSG205 HSE Books 2001 ISBN 0 7176 1826 9
- *Hydrofluoric acid poisoning: Recommendations on first aid procedures*
Leaflet INDG307 HSE Books 1999 (single copy free or priced packs of 25 ISBN 0 7176 1751 3 Web version available at hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg307.pdf)
- *Preventing dermatitis at work: Advice for employers and employees*
Leaflet INDG233 HSE Books 1996 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 0 7176 1246 5)

Useful links

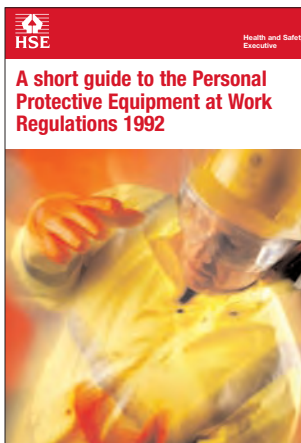
- HSE priced and free publications are available from HSE Books
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- For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 0845 345 0055 Textphone: 0845 408 9577 e-mail: hse.infoline@natbrit.com.
- Contact the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) on 01332 298101 or at www.bohs.org for lists of qualified hygienists who can help you.
- Look in the Yellow Pages under 'Health and safety consultants' and 'Health authorities and services' for 'occupational health'.
- Also see www.nhsplus.nhs.uk.

Employee checklist

- If you find any problems, tell your supervisor. Don't just carry on working.
- Use and store your protective equipment according to instructions.
- Throw away single-use gloves every time you take them off.
- Wash your hands after use, and before and after eating, drinking, smoking and using the lavatory.
- Never clean your hands with concentrated cleaning products or solvents.
- Check your skin regularly for dryness or soreness - tell your supervisor if these symptoms appear.
- Use skin creams provided as instructed.

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance as illustrating good practice.

A short guide to the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992



This is a web-friendly version of leaflet INDG174(rev1), revised 08/05

Employers have basic duties concerning the provision and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) at work and this document, explains what you need to do to meet the requirements of the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (as amended).

What is PPE?

PPE is defined in the Regulations as 'all equipment (including clothing affording protection against the weather) which is intended to be worn or held by a person at work and which protects him against one or more risks to his health or safety', eg safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses.

Hearing protection and respiratory protective equipment provided for most work situations are not covered by these Regulations because other regulations apply to them. However, these items need to be compatible with any other PPE provided.

Cycle helmets or crash helmets worn by employees on the roads are not covered by the Regulations. Motorcycle helmets are legally required for motorcyclists under road traffic legislation.

What do the Regulations require?

The main requirement of the PPE at Work Regulations 1992 is that personal protective equipment is to be supplied and used at work wherever there are risks to health and safety that cannot be adequately controlled in other ways.

The Regulations also require that PPE:

- is properly assessed before use to ensure it is suitable;
- is maintained and stored properly;
- is provided with instructions on how to use it safely; and
- is used correctly by employees.

Can I charge for providing PPE?

An employer cannot ask for money from an employee for PPE, whether it is returnable or not. This includes agency workers if they are legally regarded as your employees. If employment has been terminated and the employee keeps the PPE without the employer's permission, then, as long as it has been made clear in the contract of employment, the employer may be able to deduct the cost of the replacement from any wages owed.

Assessing suitable PPE

To allow the right type of PPE to be chosen, carefully consider the different hazards in the workplace. This will enable you to assess which types of PPE are suitable to protect against the hazard and for the job to be done.

Ask your supplier for advice on the different types of PPE available and how suitable they are for different tasks. It may be necessary in a few particularly difficult cases to obtain advice from specialist sources and from the PPE manufacturer. Another useful source of information is the British Safety Industry Federation (www.bsif.co.uk).

Consider the following when assessing whether PPE is suitable:

- Is it appropriate for the risks involved and the conditions at the place where exposure to the risk may occur? For example, eye protection designed for providing protection against agricultural pesticides will not offer adequate face protection for someone using an angle grinder to cut steel or stone.
- Does it prevent or adequately control the risks involved without increasing the overall level of risk?
- Can it be adjusted to fit the wearer correctly?
- Has the state of health of those who will be wearing it been taken into account?
- What are the needs of the job and the demands it places on the wearer? For example, the length of time the PPE needs to be worn, the physical effort required to do the job and the requirements for visibility and communication.
- If more than one item of PPE is being worn, are they compatible? For example, does a particular type of respirator make it difficult to get eye protection to fit properly?

The hazards and types of PPE

Eyes

Hazards: chemical or metal splash, dust, projectiles, gas and vapour, radiation.
Options: safety spectacles, goggles, faceshields, visors.

Head

Hazards: impact from falling or flying objects, risk of head bumping, hair entanglement.
Options: a range of helmets and bump caps.

Breathing

Hazards: dust, vapour, gas, oxygen-deficient atmospheres.
Options: disposable filtering facepiece or respirator, half- or full-face respirators, air-fed helmets, breathing apparatus.

Protecting the body

Hazards: temperature extremes, adverse weather, chemical or metal splash, spray from pressure leaks or spray guns, impact or penetration, contaminated dust, excessive wear or entanglement of own clothing.
Options: conventional or disposable overalls, boiler suits, specialist protective clothing, eg chain-mail aprons, high-visibility clothing.

Hands and arms

Hazards: abrasion, temperature extremes, cuts and punctures, impact, chemicals, electric shock, skin infection, disease or contamination.

Options: gloves, gauntlets, mitts, wristcuffs, armlets.

Feet and legs

Hazards: wet, electrostatic build-up, slipping, cuts and punctures, falling objects, metal and chemical splash, abrasion.

Options: safety boots and shoes with protective toe caps and penetration-resistant mid-sole, gaiters, leggings, spats.

Training

- Make sure anyone using PPE is aware of why it is needed, when it is to be used, repaired or replaced and its limitations.
- Train and instruct people how to use it properly and make sure they are doing this.
- Because PPE is the last resort after other methods of protection have been considered, it is important that users wear it all the time they are exposed to the risk. Never allow exemptions for those jobs which take 'just a few minutes'.
- Check regularly that PPE is being used and investigate fully any reasons why it is not. Safety signs can be useful reminders to wear PPE.

Maintenance

Make sure equipment is:

- well looked after and properly stored when it is not being used, for example in a dry, clean cupboard, or in the case of smaller items, such as eye protection, in a box or case;
- kept clean and in good repair - follow the manufacturer's maintenance schedule (including recommended replacement periods and shelf lives). Simple maintenance can be carried out by the trained wearer, but more intricate repairs should only be done by specialists.

Make sure suitable replacement PPE is always readily available.

CE marking

Ensure any PPE you buy is 'CE' marked and complies with the requirements of the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002. The CE marking signifies that the PPE satisfies certain basic safety requirements and in some cases will have been tested and certified by an independent body.

Other regulations

The PPE at Work Regulations do not apply where the following six sets of regulations require the provision and use of PPE against these hazards. For example, gloves used to prevent dangerous chemicals penetrating the skin would be covered by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended). The regulations are:

- The Control of Lead at Work Regulations 2002.
- The Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999.
- The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002.
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended).
- The Noise at Work Regulations 1989.
- The Construction (Head Protection) Regulations 1989.

Key points to remember

Are there ways (other than PPE) in which the risk can be adequately controlled, eg engineering controls? If not, check that:

- PPE is provided;
- it offers adequate protection for its intended use;
- those using it are adequately trained in its safe use;
- it is properly maintained and any defects are reported;
- it is returned to its proper storage after use.

Further reading

Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992. Guidance on Regulations L25 HSE Books 2005 ISBN 0 7176 6139 3

COSHH a brief guide to the Regulations: What you need to know about the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) Leaflet INDG136(rev3) HSE Books 2005 (single copy free or priced packs of 10 ISBN 0 7176 2982 1)

Lead and you: A guide to working safely with lead Leaflet INDG305(rev1) HSE Books 1998 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 0 7176 1523 5)

Noise at work: Advice for employers Leaflet INDG362 HSE Books 2002 (single copy free or priced packs of 10 ISBN 0 7176 2539 7)

Selecting protective gloves for work with chemicals: Guidance for employers and health and safety specialists Leaflet INDG330 HSE Books 2000 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 0 7176 1827 7)

Selection of suitable respiratory protective equipment for work with asbestos Leaflet INDG288(rev1) HSE Books 2003 (single copy free or priced packs of 5 ISBN 0 7176 2220 7)

Further information

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 bookshops and free leaflets can be downloaded from HSE's website: www.hse.gov.uk.)

For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 0845 345 0055 Fax: 0845 408 9566 e-mail: hseinformationservices@natbrit.com or write to HSE Information Services, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG.

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

This document is available in priced packs of 15 from HSE Books, ISBN 0 7176 6141 5. Single free copies are also available from HSE Books.

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Feather Flickers Induction Checklist

Name of Employee:

Item	Date Covered
Employee Handbook	
Uniform & Equipment	
Banking Details	
How you are paid?	
FF Keyholder Form	
Subcontracting FF work	
Accidents	
Health & Safety	
COSHH	
Holiday Entitlement	
Discipline, Rules & Procedures	
Two Referees	
CRB Certificate	
FF Cleaning Tips Form	
Looking after Hoovers	
FF Fire Safety	
FF Terms & Conditions	
FF Leaflets	
FF Web Site	
FF Business Cards	
FF Task List	
FF Environmental Policy	
Completed all Documentation?	

Signature of Employee

Print Name

Date Signed & Printed

Feather Flickers Health & Safety Awareness Checklist

Item Covered	Signed	Printed	Dated
Health & Safety Policy			
Feather Flickers Risk Assessment			
Slips and Trips: The importance of floor cleaning			
Manual Cleaning & disinfecting surfaces			
The work at height regulations			
Preventing contact dermatitis at work			
Managing the risks from manual handling			
Storing chemical products			
Diluting chemical products			
A guide to personal protective equipment at work			
Accident book			
COSHH Manual			
Rug Doctor Carpet Cleaning Machine			
Health & Safety in the cleaning industry			

Name of employee

Start Date



*"We Nest, You Rest!"
The All In One Cleaning Service.*

"Warner House"
Riverview
Tarleton
Lancs PR4 6EB

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Accident Book

An accident book is stored at Feather Flickers offices and is available to record any accidents that occur whilst at work.

The accident book is to be filled in no matter what incident occurs, taking the details of exactly what happened, the injured parties name and their details should they be required at a later date.

Feather Flickers successfully undertook a large contract for IMG, the worlds premier and most diversified sports, entertainment and media company during the Royal Birkdale Open Golf in July 2008

Directors:
Greg Gottig FIH FCMi AFA ABHA (Managing)
Ruth Gottig

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