Health Risks at Work

Do you know yours?
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INTRODUCTION
Health Risks at Work — Do you know yours?

**Work is important for health** — for our economic health, physical health and our mental health and wellbeing.

**Health is important for work** — for productive and successful businesses, thriving local communities and the sustainable economic development of our nation.

In short — good health is good business!

However, the work activities we perform, and the conditions and substances we are exposed to, can cause long-term harm to our health.

Risks to health can be managed, and ill health prevented, if every business takes some simple steps to identify sources of harm and to put in place measures to manage them.

This DVD and guidance has been designed to help you through that process, to protect yourself, your workers and the future of your business.

Each chapter is designed as a series of Rapid Reference Cards to provide you with quick and easy access to information on health risks to:

» your breathing
» your skin
» your muscles, bones and joints
» your hearing and touch
» your wellbeing.

For each common health risk you will find the answers to the questions:

» What should I know?
» Am I at risk?
» What should I do?
» What should I avoid?
» Where can I get help?

Once you have identified the potential health risks in the workplace environment, this guide takes you through each risk, providing advice and information on how to manage it in your workplace.
The DVD is designed to introduce you and your workers to common health risks. It runs for 20 minutes in total, but each section can be used separately to raise awareness of the specific risks in your own workplace.

The Health Risks at Work guide not only provides you with practical information to help you manage risks in your workplace, it also signposts you to organisations who are there to give you ongoing support.

The partners listed on pages 83–89 are committed to being part of the solution, whether through telephone and website advice or face-to-face mentoring, helping smaller businesses to make a real difference.
RISKS TO YOUR BREATHING
What should I know?

Using hazardous substances at work can put your employees’ health at risk. Therefore, the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) place duties on you to take measures to prevent or control the exposure.

Hazardous substances include:

» chemical products used or produced at work (e.g. adhesives, cleaning agents)

» substances generated by work (e.g. soldering or welding fumes, wood dust)

» natural substances (e.g. grain, flour and enzyme dusts)

» biological agents (e.g. fungi, bacteria, viruses).

Hazardous substances can be present in your workplace as:

» dust, powder or paste (e.g. wood, cement, metal, flour, grain, rubber or stone dust)

» spray or mist (e.g. paint and epoxy sprays, acid mists)

» fumes (e.g. welding, hot rubber, soldering, galvanising fumes)

» liquid (e.g. degreasing solvent, cleaning chemicals)

» vapour (e.g. solvent vapour released from adhesives, paints, inks)

» gas (e.g. chlorine, carbon monoxide).

Employees can be exposed to hazardous substances by:

» breathing them in

» skin contact

» swallowing

» eye contact.

Health effects of exposure to hazardous substances can include:

» lung diseases (e.g. asthma, airway obstruction, bronchitis, lung cancers)

» skin diseases (e.g. dermatitis, skin cancers, burns)

» diseases of other organs (e.g. cancer in other parts of the body, nervous system diseases and disorders of reproductive organs)

» damage to eyes.
Business effects of ill health caused by hazardous substances can include:

» sickness absence and loss of productivity
» enforcement actions, including court cases
» increases in liability insurance premium
» fines
» compensation claims
» loss of business.

What should I do?

» Comply with the requirements of the COSHH Regulations.

What should I avoid?

» Creating dust, spray, mist, fumes, smoke, gases, vapours or solvent splashes without controlling the exposure.

Where can I get help?

» Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com
» Health and Safety Executive, www.hse.gov.uk/coshh

For further details see ‘Where to get extra help and support’ on pages 83–89.
Requirements of COSHH include the following:

You must not carry out any work which could expose your employees to hazardous substances without first:

» considering the risks to health
» identifying whether the exposure could be prevented
» identifying the necessary exposure control measures, if exposure cannot be prevented
» implementing the necessary control measures, including those required in the event of an emergency.

What should I do to comply with COSHH?

1. Know the hazards:
   » Does any product you use have a danger label or sign?
   » Does it have a safety data sheet (SDS) or warnings?
   » Does your trade association or trade magazine have safety information on products or processes you use?
   » When using a hazardous substance, does it give off dust, mist, spray, splashes, fumes, smoke, or gases?
   » Does anyone come into contact with the substance by touch, breathing it in or ingesting it?

2. Assess the risks and identify control measures. Determine the following:

   » Who is exposed and to what substance?
   » How is the exposure taking place (breathing in, skin contact, eye contact, ingestion)?
   » How much of the substance is the person exposed to, how often and for how long?
   » Why is the exposure taking place?
   » Does any employee have a pre-existing health condition (e.g. asthma, dermatitis) that could affect this exposure?

To make your assessment and to identify control measures that match your level of risk, you can use ‘COSHH Essentials’, www.coshh-essentials.org.uk/
3. Choose control measures, in the following order:
   1. Eliminate the use of a substance, or use a safer one.
   2. Use a safer form of the substance, e.g. a paste rather than a powder.
   3. Change the process to emit less of the substance.
   4. Enclose the process so that the substance does not escape.
   5. Extract emissions from the substance near the source.
   6. Have as few workers in harm’s way as possible.
   7. Provide personal protective equipment (PPE), e.g. gloves, coveralls, respirator. PPE must fit the wearer, and be the right type for the task, the substance and the work environment.

If your control measures include items 5, 6 and 7, make sure they all work together.

4. Ensure control measures are used properly and maintained:
   » Train and instruct your workers to use control measures correctly.
   » Even the best control systems fail when they aren’t used in the right way.
   » Follow the recommended schedules for checking, maintenance and testing.
   » Keep records of checks and maintenance in logbooks.

5. Prepare for emergencies:
   » Plan how to deal with accidents such as spills, and emergencies such as splashes on skin or in the eye, or unconsciousness.

6. Monitor exposure and health:
   » Carry out exposure monitoring (air or biological samples such as breath or urine) where you need to ensure that control measures you put in place remain effective.
   » Carry out health checks (e.g. lung conditions, skin checks for dermatitis) if your trade press or HSE information shows there is a need, or one or more employees have reported or shown signs of health problems.

This is not a full list.
Damage to the airways and lungs

**What should I know?**
Using hazardous substances at work can put your employees’ health at risk. Therefore, the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) place duties on you to take measures to prevent or control the exposure.

Breathing in too much of a hazardous substance (e.g. chemicals, some natural substances and materials) at work can cause:
» asthma and other allergic reactions
» other diseases of the airways and lungs (e.g. bronchitis)
» lung and other cancers.

The signs, symptoms and effects of the damage can include:
» shortness of breath, wheezing, a tight feeling in the chest
» persistent chesty cough and phlegm, troublesome chest infections
» difficulty with climbing stairs, playing sport and taking part in other leisure activities
» sickness absence and loss of productivity

» fatalities
» enforcement action, court cases, compensation claims.

The damage is caused by:
» dusts, fumes, smoke, vapours, gases, mists, sprays
» exposure over months and years
» one or more sudden large exposures.

Am I at risk?
You, your business or staff may be put at risk, if:
» you use substances labelled as Irritant, Corrosive, Harmful, Toxic, or Very Toxic
» exposure to dusts, fumes, smoke, vapours, gases, mists, sprays is not controlled in some way
» excessive dust and product residues (e.g. pastes, inks) are present on work surfaces, walls, floors and ventilation ducts
» workers complain about irritation of eyes and airways
» any of your employees have pre-existing health conditions (e.g. asthma).
What should I do?

Identify the following:

» Activities that produce dust, fumes, smoke, vapour, gas, mist or spray.
» Who is exposed, why and to what level.
» What preventive or control measures are needed and put them in place.
» Who needs respirators, what type and face fit.
» Is there a need to control skin exposure?
» Who needs lung and airway health checks.

Ensure the control measures you provide are used correctly and maintained. Consult employees or their representatives on matters affecting their health and safety.

What should I avoid?

» Creating dust, spray, smoke, fumes, gas, mist, vapour, splashes, etc. without controlling the exposure.
» Using an extraction system (LEV) which is not designed professionally, maintained and tested, or which is damaged.
» Home-made modifications to LEV.
» Using brooms, brushes or compressed air to clean dust on surfaces.
» Incorrect selection, fitting or use of respirators.
» Contaminated overalls causing exposure to the employee and their family.

Where can I get help?

» Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com
» Health and Safety Executive, www.hse.gov.uk/coshh

For further details see ‘Where to get extra help and support’ on pages 83–89.
Additional information

Actions to prevent damage to breathing and lungs

1. Know the hazards:
   » Does any product you use have a danger label or sign? Does it have a safety data sheet (SDS) or warnings?
   » Does your trade association or magazine have safety information on products or processes you use?
   » When using the substance or product, does it give off dust, mist, spray, splashes, smoke, fumes, or gases?

2. Assess the risks and identify control measures:
   » Who is exposed, to what substances, in what form (e.g. gas, dust)?
   » How much of the substance is the person exposed to, how often and for how long?
   » Why is the exposure taking place?

3. Choose control measures in the following order:
   1. Eliminate the use of a substance, or use a safer one.
   2. Use a safer form of the substance, e.g. a paste rather than a powder.
   3. Change the process to emit less of the substance.
   4. Enclose the process so that the substance does not escape.
   5. Extract emissions from the substance near the source.
   6. Have as few workers in harm’s way as possible.
   7. Provide personal protective equipment (PPE), e.g. gloves, coveralls, respirator. PPE must fit the wearer, and be the right type for the task, the substance and the work environment.

If your control measures include items 5, 6 and 7, make sure they all work together. Control measures should be selected or designed by competent people who are experienced in this area.
4. Ensure control measures are used properly and maintained:
   » Train and instruct your workers to use control measures correctly.
   » Even the best control systems fail if they are not used in the right way.
   » Follow the recommended schedules for checking, maintenance and testing.
   » Keep records of checks and maintenance in logbooks.

5. Prepare for emergencies:
   » Plan how to deal with accidents (e.g. spills).
   » Plan how to deal with emergencies (e.g. splashes on the skin or in the eye, or unconsciousness).

6. Monitor exposure and health:
   » Carry out exposure monitoring (air or biological samples such as breath or urine) where you need to ensure that control measures you put in place remain effective.
   » Carry out health checks (e.g. lung conditions) if your trade press or HSE information shows there is a need, or one or more employees have reported or shown signs of health problems.

This is not a full list.
Local exhaust ventilation (LEV)

**What should I know?**
LEV is an engineering control system for extracting hazardous substances from the air before your employees can breathe them in. However, many LEV systems are not designed, installed, used, maintained or tested properly. These failures can cause workers to breathe in too much dust, fumes, gas, smoke, mist, vapour and/or spray at work, which can cause:

» lung and airways diseases (e.g. asthma, cancers)
» diseases in other parts of the body (e.g. heart, kidneys, reproductive system, skin).

The signs, symptoms and effects of disease can include:

» shortness of breath, wheezing, a tight feeling in the chest
» persistent chesty cough and phlegm, troublesome chest infections
» difficulty with climbing stairs, playing sport and taking part in other leisure activities
» sickness absence and loss of productivity
» fatalities
» enforcement action, court cases, compensation claims.

**Am I at risk?**
You, your business and employees may be at risk, if:

» the LEV is not designed professionally
» work is done too far away from the extraction capability (capture zone) of the LEV hood
» the hood is not the right type
» the LEV is damaged and not repaired
» the compulsory annual test is not carried out to ensure correct working
» fine dust layers are present on surfaces around LEV hoods.
What should I do?
» Work out which jobs and activities cause exposure.
» Get the right type of LEV and install it correctly.
» Get a user manual.
» Train users in the correct use.
» Carry out routine daily checks.
» Maintain the LEV as recommended, and fill in the logbook.
» Get it tested annually and display the test label.
» Read the test report and carry out repairs promptly.
» Consult workers or their representatives on matters affecting their health and safety.

What should I avoid?
» Creating dust, spray, fumes, smoke, gas, mist, vapour or splashes without controlling the release at the point of production.
» Home-made modifications to LEV.
» Using damaged and unmaintained LEV.

Where can I get help?
» Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com
» Health and Safety Executive, www.hse.gov.uk/lev
For further details see ‘Where to get extra help and support’ on pages 83–89.
Additional information
LEV can be used for extracting dust, fumes, vapour, gas, smoke, mist or spray. It usually has the following parts:
» A hood, to collect contaminated air.
» Ducting, to carry contaminated air.
» A cleaner, to remove contaminant.
» An air mover (fan), to draw the air through the system.
» The air is then discharged to a safe place.

When buying LEV:
» Work out which jobs and activities require LEV.
» What form is the contaminant (dust, fumes, vapour, gas, smoke, mist or spray or a combination of these)?
» Know the properties of the contaminants (e.g. flammability, acidity, alkalinity, viscosity).
» Write down the details of how the work is done.
» Get a reputable supplier to advise you on the design.
» Provide all necessary information and invite the supplier to observe the way the job will be done.
» Involve LEV users in the discussion about design and specification.
» The hood design should ensure that the work can be done within its extraction reach and capabilities.
» Make sure the LEV is installed correctly.
» Make sure commissioning is done and a report is provided.
» Make sure the LEV has airflow indicators.
» Make sure the LEV supplier provides a user manual and logbook.
When using LEV:

» Ask the supplier to train users in correct use.
» Follow the instructions in the user manual.
» Carry out daily checks, including the airflow indicators.
» Check that the LEV is extracting hazardous substances.
» If you move the hood or LEV, check that they are still working properly.
» Check for any leaks through ducts, dampers and hoods.
» Record faults in the logbook.
» Get repairs done promptly and record them.
» Get the LEV thoroughly examined and tested annually.
» Do not use the LEV if it has a ‘red label’. Get the faults rectified promptly.
» Manage and supervise the use of LEV.

This is not a full list.
Asbestos

What should I know?

Asbestos is still present in many buildings. It can be found in commercial properties, houses and other premises such as barns, churches and railway sheds. When asbestos-containing materials are damaged or disturbed, they can release dangerous invisible fibres. If these are breathed in, they can put your and your employees’ health at risk. Many tradesmen die from asbestos-related diseases.

Workers who are most likely to be exposed to asbestos-containing materials are those in construction, maintenance, refurbishment and related trades. These include electricians, plumbers, heating and ventilation engineers, joiners and plasterers.

Diseases caused by asbestos fibres can include:

» a cancer of the linings of the lungs and stomach, known as mesothelioma
» lung cancer
» scarring of the lungs, known as asbestosis
» thickening of the lung walls, known as diffuse pleural thickening.

These diseases take 15 to 60 years to develop. They are incurable and often fatal.

The signs, symptoms and effects of the damage can include:

» shortness of breath, wheezing, a tight feeling in the chest, even painful breathing
» persistent chesty cough and phlegm, often painful, recurrent troublesome chest infections
» difficulty with climbing stairs, playing sport and taking part in other leisure activities
» weight loss
» sickness absence and loss of productivity
» fatalities.
Effects on business can include:

» sickness absence
» loss of productivity
» loss of experienced staff
» enforcement action, court cases, compensation claims.

Am I at risk?

You, your business or your staff may be put at risk, if:

» you undertake work on a building which was constructed or refurbished before the year 2000
» you are working on an unfamiliar site
» you don’t know how to work safely with asbestos-containing materials or products
» your work causes any disturbance or damage to asbestos-containing materials
» exposure to asbestos dust is not prevented or controlled in some way
» any of your employees has a pre-existing health condition (e.g. asthma).

What should I do?

» Before work commences, ask the customer or owner of a building to tell you whether there is evidence of asbestos-containing material.
» Avoid working with asbestos if possible.
» If you have to work on asbestos-containing material, identify who will be exposed, and to what level.
» Establish what preventive or control measures are needed and put them in place.
» Train your staff to work with asbestos.
» Identify who needs respirators and what types; provide proper fitting, training and instruction.
» Provide lung and airway health checks.
» Ensure the control measures you provide are used correctly and maintained.
» Consult employees or their representatives on matters affecting their health and safety.
What should I avoid?

» Working on asbestos material if it is a sprayed coating, board or lagging on pipes and boilers. Only a licensed contractor should work on these.

» Using methods that generate asbestos dust (e.g. using power tools).

» Sweeping up dust with brooms and brushes.

» Using compressed air to clean dust on surfaces.

» Incorrect selection, fitting or use of respirators.

» Reusing disposable clothing or masks.

» Taking used overalls home. Contaminated overalls can cause exposure to the employee and their family.

Where can I get help?

» Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com

» Health and Safety Executive, www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos

For further details see ‘Where to get extra help and support’ on pages 83–89.
Additional Information

Where are you likely to find asbestos?

Buildings that were constructed or refurbished before the year 2000. Areas likely to contain asbestos materials include:

» ceiling tiles
» textured coatings on ceilings, walls and stairwells
» sprayed coatings on ducts, pipes and some ceilings
» boards around radiators, windows, fireplaces, building columns, pillars
» inside fire doors
» soffit boards
» insulation on pipes
» sealants on pipes joints, gaskets
» ropes and yarns
» fuse boxes
» electrical switchgear
» water tanks
» cement products, roof sheets, downpipes.

Work safely with asbestos

There are two types of asbestos-related tasks, namely asbestos licensed work and non-licensed tasks. However, you should note that if you are not licensed, you can still only work with non-licensed tasks after receiving training. This will help you to do the work safely. Examples of non-licensed tasks include work on: asbestos cement, textured coatings and asbestos cement roof and asbestos-containing gaskets, asbestos fabrics and asbestos insulating board (work taking less than an hour). There are many more tasks that fall into this category. If you are not sure, or require further information, consult the HSE’s Asbestos Essentials www.hse.gov.uk/asbestosessentials
Avoiding exposure

» Avoid disturbing asbestos by doing the job in some other way, if possible.
» Ensure the work you need to do does not require a licence.
» Minimise dust by using hand tools.
» Keep materials damp but not wet.
» Clean up as you go using a Class H vacuum cleaner (high efficiency to minimise dust leakage through the cleaner).
» Do not use a brush or broom. These create large amounts of invisible dust.
» Wear a properly fitted and suitable respirator (e.g. disposable mask known as FFP3) and type 5 disposable coveralls.
» When the work is finished, use either the H-class vacuum cleaner or a damp cloth to decontaminate your coveralls, gloves and the outsides of your mask.
» Double-bag asbestos waste and label the bags with asbestos labels. Dispose of them at a permitted waste disposal site for asbestos.

» Do not contaminate yourself when removing overalls and gloves.
» Do not take overalls home. These can contaminate you and others at home.
» Do not re-use disposable coveralls, dispose of them as asbestos waste.
» Do not eat or drink in the work area.
» Always ensure contaminated tools are cleaned with a damp cloth or use other ways to minimise dust creation.
» Work in such a way to prevent contaminating work vans or your vehicle.

Remember, smoking can seriously aggravate your health condition.

This is not a full list.
What should I know?

RPE is designed to protect the wearer from hazardous substances in the air before they can breathe them in. RPE must be used where it is not possible to achieve adequate control of exposure by other control measures alone, and then only in addition to them. However, much of the RPE used at work is incorrectly selected, used, maintained or stored. These failures can cause workers to breathe in too much dust, fumes, smoke, gas, mist, vapour and/or spray at work. This can cause:

» lung and airway diseases (e.g. asthma, cancers)

» diseases in other parts of the body (e.g. heart, kidneys, reproductive system, skin).

The signs, symptoms and effects of disease can include:

» shortness of breath, wheezing, a tight feeling in the chest

» persistent chesty cough and phlegm, troublesome chest infections

» difficulty with climbing stairs, playing sport and taking part in other leisure activities

» sickness absence and loss of productivity

» fatalities

» enforcement action, court cases, compensation claims.

Am I at risk?

You, your business and staff may be at risk, if:

» you use RPE as the main control without any consideration of other control measures

» you do not know how to correctly select, use, maintain and store RPE

» RPE masks are worn without fit testing

» filters are not changed as recommended by the supplier

» damaged or dirty RPE is used

» RPE users are not trained in its correct use.
**What should I do?**

» Work out which jobs and activities cause exposure and why RPE is needed.

» Select the right RPE for the substance, task, wearer and environment.

» Ensure other protective equipment used does not interfere with RPE use and performance.

» Only use ‘CE’ marked RPE.

» Carry out RPE fit testing for each wearer.

» Use and maintain RPE as recommended by the manufacturer.

» Train wearers in the correct use of RPE.

» Mark the RPE zone in your premises.

» Ensure the control measures you provide are used correctly and maintained.

» Consult employees or their representatives on matters affecting their health and safety.

**What should I avoid?**

» Creating dust, spray, fumes, smoke, gas, mist, vapour, splashes without controlling the release at the point of production.

» Incorrect selection, use, or storage of RPE.

» Misuse of RPE.

» Failure of employees to use RPE when required.

» Home-made modifications to RPE.

» Using damaged, dirty and unmaintained RPE.

» Nuisance dust masks.

**Where can I get help?**

» Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com


For further details see ‘Where to get extra help and support’ on pages 83–89.
Additional information

There are two types of RPE. These are respirators and breathing apparatus.

Respirators:
» use filters to remove dust, sprays, mists, gases, fumes or vapours
» must never be used in an area of low oxygen levels or very high contaminant levels. These situations are immediately dangerous to life or health. They are commonly found in confined spaces (e.g. chambers, tanks, vats, pits, trenches, pipes, sewers, flues or wells)
» will not provide protection unless fitted with the right type or size of filters, which are changed as recommended.

Breathing apparatus (BA):
» uses breathing-quality air from a clean source such as an air cylinder or an air compressor and airlines hoses. BA may be used in confined spaces.

RPE may be used in the following circumstances:
» As a last control measure after taking other control measures (e.g. dust, spray, vapour, mist suppression methods and extract ventilation).
» For short-duration or infrequent work where control at source is not practical.
» As a temporary measure before other controls are in place.
» To escape in an emergency.
» For emergency work – breakdowns, maintenance, spills.
» For rescuing people in danger.
» As an additional protection in case other control measures fail to operate.

The ‘CE’ mark on RPE:
» means RPE meets the minimum design and performance features as set out in law and international standards.
» does not mean it is necessarily the right sort of RPE. You must select the right type for your own needs. Get help where necessary.
Selecting the right RPE

Match it to the following:

» Substance – dust, fumes, mist, spray, smoke, vapour and/or gas.

» Task undertaken – e.g. heavy work, moving about, light work.

» Wearer – e.g. face size and shape, beards, spectacles, turban.

» Environment – e.g. hot or cold, confined space.

» Other PPE used – e.g. hard hat, goggles.

Provide training

This will ensure:

» correct use, maintenance and storage of RPE

» correct techniques are used to carry out the work, and for using tools and equipment

» wearers understand why they need to wear the RPE provided.

Maintain, examine and test the RPE in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and at least once every month, and keep records.

Common misuses of RPE include:

» face masks used without fit testing

» goggles or spectacles causing poor fit of face mask

» nose bridge on RPE not pinched correctly

» facial hair interfering with fit and protection

» broken or damaged straps

» using only one strap

» twisting straps together

» dirty and damaged face seals and valves

» damaged face mask

» missing components (e.g. valves, filters, straps)

» DIY modifications

» airflow not adjusted correctly.

This is not a full list.

Rapid Reference Card
Respiratory protective equipment (RPE) selection

What should I know?
RPE must be used where it is not possible to achieve adequate control of exposure by other control measures alone, and then only in addition to them.

Other exposure control measures include:
» eliminating the use of the toxic substance
» replacing it with a low toxicity substance
» modifying the way you do the job, using suitable handling methods, equipment, and/or tools
» enclosing the process (so that hazardous substances do not escape into workplace air)
» providing adequate local extraction ventilation
» reducing the number of employees exposed to hazardous substances.

When can I use RPE?
» After using other control measures.
» For short-duration or infrequent jobs where other controls may not be practicable.
» When you are putting in place other control measures.
» To escape in the event of an emergency (e.g. leaks).
» Emergency repairs or work.
» For rescuing someone in danger.

In addition, you may consider issuing RPE to provide additional protection in case other control measures fail to operate.

Am I at risk?
You, your business and staff may be put at risk, if:
» you use RPE as the main control without considering other control measures
» you do not know how to correctly select, use, maintain and store RPE
» RPE masks are worn without fit testing
» filters are not changed as recommended by the supplier
» damaged or dirty RPE is used
» RPE users are not trained in its correct use.

What should I do?
» You may use the table on pages 32–33 or seek the help of a professional to select the right RPE.
» If you use the table and you are unsure about or do not know answers to any of the issues contained in it, seek professional help.
» Ask your RPE supplier to provide RPE options based on the information you supply.
» Select the right RPE from the options available – it is your responsibility to do this.
» Use RPE as recommended.
» Train employees in the correct use and storage of RPE.
» Maintain RPE as recommended.

What should I avoid?
» Creating dust, spray, fumes, smoke, gas, mist, vapour, splashes without controlling the release at the point of production.
» Incorrect selection, use or storage of RPE.
» Misuse of RPE.
» Employees not wearing RPE when they should be doing so.
» Home-made modifications to RPE.
» Using damaged, dirty and unmaintained RPE.
» Nuisance dust masks.

Where can I get help?
» Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com
» Health and Safety Executive, www.hse.gov.uk/coshh-essentials.org.uk

For further details see ‘Where to get extra help and support’ on pages 83–89.
# What you need to know to select the right RPE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task or job for which RPE is needed (e.g. paint spraying, cleaning, sawing, welding)</th>
<th>Write task here:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where is the work undertaken?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) A confined space (e.g. a chamber, vat, tank, silo, pit, trench, sewer, flue, well)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) A space lacking oxygen (no free air exchange with outside air)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Area with chances of sudden release of copious contaminants</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) A flammable and/or explosive area</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(If yes or unsure, seek professional help)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals in products (get an up-to-date safety data sheet from your product supplier) or substances created at work (e.g. welding fumes, wood dust) or natural substances used (e.g. flour, hay dust)</td>
<td>Write name of substance here:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(If you do not know or you are unsure, seek professional help)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much of the product is used each time?</td>
<td>Handful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the physical form of the product as supplied or used?</td>
<td>Solid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a solid, how dusty is the substance?</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High – fine powder/dust cloud in air</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium – crystalline materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low – pellets, pill-like or waxy/sticky</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(If do not know or you are unsure, seek professional help)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If liquid, what is its boiling point?</td>
<td>°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What temperature is the product used at?</td>
<td>Room Temperature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>Vapour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mist</td>
<td>Spray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(If unsure, seek professional help)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rapid Reference Card
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How long does the task take?</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. spraying a car, 20 minutes; welding a pipe, 10 minutes; cleaning a surface, 30 minutes; sanding a wood panel, 10 minutes; cutting stone, 5 minutes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long will the RPE be worn before it is taken off for a break or rest?</td>
<td>Less than 1 hour</td>
<td>More than 1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many times a day is the task performed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the total number of hours of RPE use each day?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much physical effort is needed to do the work?</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light – seated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium – sustained hand–arm work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy – heavy manual work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is clear, precise verbal communication with others necessary to ensure safety and to give and receive instructions?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are other hazards associated with the task?</td>
<td>Hot</td>
<td>Cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot – above room temperature or direct sun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold – around 15°C or below</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humidity – higher than a normal work area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do any RPE wearers have:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do any wearer need:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What size range is needed to meet the needs of all wearers?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rapid Reference Card
RISKS TO YOUR SKIN
**What should I know?**

First, read the section entitled Hazardous substances, pages 9–12. Using hazardous substances at work can put your employees’ health at risk. Therefore, the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) place duties on you to take measures to prevent or control the exposure.

**Skin contact with hazardous substances at work can cause:**

- dermatitis and burns
- cancers of the skin
- diseases in other parts of the body.

**The signs, symptoms and effects of the damage can include:**

- dry, red, itchy skin
- flaking, blistering, cracking
- swelling and pain
- skin irritation, severe skin damage, skin sensitisation and allergy
- sickness absence and loss of productivity
- enforcement action, court cases, compensation claims.

The damage is often caused by skin coming into frequent and prolonged contact with a range of substances, including:

- chemicals and chemicals contained in products (e.g. paints, glues)
- solvents
- water (wet work)
- natural substances (e.g. food ingredients, wood dust, latex rubber proteins)
- the sun.

**Am I at risk?**

You, your business and staff may be at risk, if:

- you use substances labelled as Irritant, Corrosive, Harmful, Toxic or Very Toxic
- employees’ hands are immersed in or come into direct contact with hazardous substances
- employees’ hands come into contact with surfaces that are heavily contaminated with hazardous substances (e.g. work surfaces, tools or workwear such as coveralls, gloves, boots)
» excessive solvent splash, spray or dust frequently lands on the skin
» the insides of protective gloves are contaminated with hazardous substances.

What should I do?
Establish or carry out the following:
» Are there substances used, produced or created in your workplace that can cause dermatitis?
» Get an up-to-date safety data sheet (SDS).
» Who is exposed, how, why and for how long?
» What control measures are needed to prevent skin contact?
» Who needs protective gloves and what type?
» What types of skin protection cream are needed?
» Who should receive regular skin checks for early detection of skin problems?
» Do employees have any pre-existing skin problems?
» Ensure control measures you provide are used correctly and maintained.

» Consult employees or their representatives on matters affecting their health and safety.

What should I avoid?
» Using hands as a tool to perform a task, instead of using a tool or an alternative handling method.
» Frequent and daily skin contact with substances without protection.
» Excessive skin contact with water (e.g. washing the hands more than 20 times, or hands in contact with water more than 2 hours a day).
» Using gloves that are contaminated inside.
» Using solvents or aggressive cleaners to remove dirt from the skin.
» Prolonged exposure to the sun without protection.

Where can I get help?
» Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com
» Health and Safety Executive, www.hse.gov.uk/skin

For further details see ‘Where to get extra help and support’ on pages 83–89.
Additional information

There are three simple steps to prevent dermatitis:

Avoid skin contact:

» Substitute a hazardous substance, material or product with a safer alternative.
» Automate the process.
» Enclose the process as much as you can, to minimise skin contact.
» Use mechanical handling.
» Do not allow workers’ hands to be used as tools (i.e. in direct contact with hazardous substances).
» Use a safe working distance (SWD) between the hands and hazardous substances.
» Ensure extraction systems are designed professionally, used correctly, checked and maintained as recommended in the extraction system manual.

Protect the skin:

» Tell workers why and how to avoid skin contact.
» Provide suitable gloves and coveralls where necessary.
» Make sure gloves are the right size, of the right type and material for the task and the substance.
» Make sure workers use and store gloves correctly.
» Replace gloves as recommended by the supplier.
» Provide mild skin cleansers and encourage workers to clean their hands regularly.
» Provide moisturisers and encourage workers to use them.

Check for the early signs of dermatitis:

» Carry out regular visual skin checks to detect dry-looking, flaking, scaling, cracking or swollen skin.
» Act immediately on any signs and symptoms of injury and encourage early reporting.
» Get medical help as soon as you spot symptoms – either get help from an occupational health nurse or ask the affected worker to see their GP.

This is not a full list.
What should I know?

Skincare products help to remove dirt and keep the skin hydrated and lubricated. There are three main types:

» pre-work or protective creams
» skin cleansers
» moisturisers

You are required by law to provide adequate welfare facilities for your employees. These are needed to maintain a good standard of personal hygiene for controlling exposure to hazardous substances. Incorrect selection and use of skin cleansers and creams can cause skin exposure to hazardous substances (chemicals and some natural products), and can lead to:

» skin disease (e.g. dermatitis, burns)
» skin cancer and other diseases.

The signs, symptoms and effects include:

» irritation, flaking, blistering, burns to the skin
» allergic reactions, sensitisation
» pain, discomfort
» sickness absence or loss of productivity
» enforcement action, court cases, compensation claims.

Am I at risk?

You, your business and staff may be at risk, if:

» solvent-based cleansers are used
» hands get heavily contaminated, thereby requiring extensive cleaning
» nail areas remain contaminated after cleaning
» an employee has a pre-existing skin condition.
What should I do?
» Ensure your risk assessment has considered the need to use skincare products.
» Use handling methods that limit extensive hand contamination.
» Ensure employees can access washing facilities, creams and cleansers in the work area.
» Train users in the correct use of cleansers and creams.
» Ensure the control measures you provide are used correctly and maintained.
» Consult employees and their representatives on matters affecting their health and safety.

What should I avoid?
» Immersing hands (including gloved hands) in chemicals.
» Using solvents or solvent-based wipes to clean hands.
» Forgetting to apply moisturisers after cleaning.

Where can I get help?
» Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com
» Health and Safety Executive, www.hse.gov.uk/skin
For further details see ‘Where to get extra help and support’ on pages 83–89.
**Additional information**

**Product selection**

The three main types of skincare products are described below:

**Pre-work or protective creams**

Protective creams are designed for use before starting work, and provide a semi-resistant barrier between chemicals and the skin. They are not a replacement for protective gloves because they do not provide a complete barrier against hazardous substances. It is important to remember that selection should be made on the basis of the most appropriate properties for the substance:

» Vanishing creams are designed to trap resins, dyes, etc.

» Water-resistant creams form a layer on the skin and repel water.

» Oil- and solvent-resistant creams repel oils, tars and certain solvents.

» Other types of pre-work cream react with supplier-specified substances.

**Skin cleansers**

These help to remove contaminants from the skin. A ‘suitable’ cleanser (the most effective but least powerful) removes most of the contamination without causing unacceptable skin damage. Ask the supplier for the least aggressive cleanser for the relevant substances. Immediately rinsing the skin with water and mild soap is often enough to remove irritants and allergens.

» Select solvent-free or mild cleansers.

» The need to use an aggressive cleanser would suggest that your skin exposure control measures may not be adequate.
Moisturisers

These are creams, lotions or ointments that replace lost moisture and oil. You should consider the following points:

» They should be applied at least once a day and preferably more frequently (ideally, every time the hands are washed and dried).

» Provide alcohol-free moisturisers.

» Avoid moisturisers that take a long time to be absorbed by the skin or are too runny.

Look for the following when selecting skin cleansers or creams:

» Does the product have a guide on its correct usage?

» Does the product-dispensing system meet your needs, e.g. wall-mounting/personal issue?

This is not a full list.
**Protective gloves**

### What should I know?

Using hazardous substances at work can put your employees’ health at risk. Therefore, the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) place duties on you to take measures to prevent or control the exposure.

Many gloves used at work are not correctly selected, used or stored. These failures can lead to skin exposure to hazardous substances (chemicals or some natural products) which can cause:

- skin diseases (e.g. dermatitis, burns)
- skin and other cancers
- diseases in other parts of the body (e.g. heart, kidneys, reproductive system).

### The signs, symptoms and effects of disease can include:

- dry, red, itchy skin
- flaking, blistering, cracking
- swelling and pain
- skin irritation, severe skin damage, skin sensitisation and allergy
- sickness absence and loss of productivity
- enforcement action, court cases, compensation claims.

### Am I at risk?

You, your business and staff may be put at risk, if:

- you do not know how to select the appropriate gloves
- you do not use or store gloves correctly
- damaged gloves are used
- the insides of the gloves are contaminated
- employees’ hands become contaminated when putting on or taking off gloves
- employees suffer from existing skin problems.
What should I do?
» Work out which jobs and activities cause skin exposure, and why gloves are needed.
» Get up-to-date safety data sheets for all chemical products.
» Select the right gloves for the substance, task, wearer and environment.
» If you must use latex gloves, use only ‘low-protein, powder-free’ type.
» Ensure gloves do not cause significant interference with work.
» Only use ‘CE’ marked gloves.
» Use gloves as recommended.
» Train wearers in correct use, including glove breaks and skincare.

Ensure the control measures you provide are used correctly and maintained. Consult workers or their representatives on matters affecting their health and safety.

What should I avoid?
» Immersing even gloved hands in chemicals.
» Using the wrong glove material and size.
» Using the wrong type of glove.
» Using damaged or internally contaminated gloves.
» Wearing gloves beyond their useful lifetime.
» Storing gloves on contaminated surfaces.
» Incorrect removal of used gloves.

Where can I get help?
» Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com
» Health and Safety Executive, www.hse.gov.uk/skin
For further details see ‘Where to get extra help and support’ on pages 83–89.
**Additional information**

**The first rule of skin protection**

So far as is reasonably practicable, keep hazardous substances away from hands by means other than gloves.

**Gloves are not a substitute for control measures such as:**

» suitable handling methods
» extraction of contaminated air
» containment in an enclosure
» suppression of dust, mist, splashes
» a safe working distance.

**The ‘CE’ mark:**

» means gloves meets the minimum design and performance features, as set out in law and international standards
» does not mean they are necessarily the right type. You must select the right gloves for your needs. Get help where necessary.

**Select the right glove**

Match it to the:

» substance and form (e.g. chemicals as dust, fumes, liquid, mist, spray, vapour, gas, paste)
» task factors (e.g. hot, abrasive, sharps, electrical, length of glove)
» wearer (e.g. size, skin condition)
» environment (e.g. hot or cold, climbing as part of the work).

**Using gloves**

» No glove is tested to give chemical protection for more than 8 hours from its first use. Chemicals can penetrate an undamaged glove. If you want to use it for longer, seek supplier’s advice.
» Where practicable, wipe gloves clean before taking them off.
» Throw away ‘single-use’ gloves when they are taken off.

**Provide training**

This will ensure:

» the correct use and storage of gloves
» the correct procedure is used for putting on and removing gloves.

This is not a full list.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Information for glove supplier</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task or job for which gloves are needed</strong> (e.g. handling degreased items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chemicals in products</strong> (get an up-to-date safety data sheet from your product supplier)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical form of product</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If a solid, how dusty is it?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If liquid, what is its boiling point?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What temperature is the product used at?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How long does the task take?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How many times a day is the task performed?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How does the hand come into contact with the product?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How far do the chemicals and contamination reach?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are there other hazards associated with the task?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Touch and grip requirements</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Important</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What size range is needed to meet the needs of wearers?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are fine inner gloves needed for continuous glove wear?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Protective gloves selection

What should I know?
Gloves must be used where it is not possible to achieve adequate control of exposure by other control measures alone, and then only in addition to such measures.

Other exposure control measures include:
» eliminating the use of the toxic substance
» replacing it with a low toxicity substance
» enclosing the process so that the hazardous substance does not escape onto workplace surfaces, tools and into the air)
» modifying the way you do the job, using suitable handling methods, equipment and tools, to minimise skin contact
» establishing an adequate safe working distance (SWD) between hands and the hazardous substance
» reducing the number of employees exposed to the hazardous substance.

When can I use gloves?
» After using other control measures.
» For short-duration or infrequent jobs where installing other controls may not be practicable.
» When you are putting in place other control measures.
» Emergency repairs or work.
» For rescuing someone in danger (e.g. a contaminated person).

In addition, you may consider issuing gloves to provide additional protection in case other control measures fail to operate.
What should I do?

» You may use the table on page 45 or seek the help of a professional to select the right gloves.

» If you are unsure about or do not know answers to any of the issues in the table, seek professional help.

» Ask your glove supplier to provide gloves options based on the information you supply in the table.

» Select the right gloves from the options available – this is your responsibility.

» Use gloves as recommended.

» Train employees in the correct use and storage.

What should I avoid?

» Immersing even gloved hands in chemicals.

» Using glove material that is incompatible with the hazardous substance.

» Using the wrong size and length of glove.

» Using damaged or internally contaminated gloves.

» Wearing gloves beyond their useful lifetime.

» Storing gloves on contaminated surfaces.

» Incorrect removal of used gloves.

Where can I get help?

» Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com

» Health and Safety Executive, www.hse.gov.uk/skin

For further details see ‘Where to get extra help and support’ on pages 83–89.
### What you need to know to select the right gloves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task or job for which gloves are needed (e.g. handling degreased items, washing salad, painting)</th>
<th>Write task here:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals in products (get an up-to-date safety data sheet from your product supplier) or substances created at work (e.g. welding fumes, wood dust) or natural substances used (e.g. enzymes, wet work).</td>
<td>(If you do not know or are unsure, seek professional help)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the physical form of the product?</td>
<td>Gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paste</td>
<td>Oily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a solid, how dusty is it?</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High</strong> – fine powder/dust cloud in air</td>
<td><strong>Medium</strong> – crystalline materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If liquid, what is its boiling point?</td>
<td>°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the physical form of the product?</td>
<td>Oily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What temperature is the product used at?</td>
<td>Room temperature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the task or job create: (mark all that apply and write down exact details of the type of gas, vapour, metal fumes, dust, mist, spray or smoke created)</td>
<td>Gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dust</td>
<td>Mist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoke</td>
<td>Oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(If unsure, seek professional help)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long does the task take? (e.g. spraying a car, 20 minutes; welding a pipe, 10 minutes; cleaning a surface, 30 minutes; sanding a wood panel, 10 minutes; cutting stone, 5 minutes)</td>
<td>Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Less than 1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long will the gloves be worn before they are taken off for a break or rest?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many times a day is the task performed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the total number of hours of glove use each day?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do the hands come into contact with the product?</td>
<td>Dipping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How far do the chemicals and contamination reach?</td>
<td>Hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above elbows</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there other hazards associated with the task?</td>
<td>Hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abrasive</td>
<td>Electric shock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the touch and grip requirements?</td>
<td>Fine work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What size range is needed to meet the needs of wearers?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do any of the gloves wearers have any existing skin problems?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are fine inner gloves needed for continuous glove wear (e.g. when gloves are worn continuously for more than 1 hour)?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RISKS TO YOUR MUSCLES, BONES AND JOINTS
Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs)

What should I know?
Damage to muscles, bones and joints is one of the most common work-related illnesses. Therefore, specific duties are proscribed in the Manual Handling Operations Regulations and the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Regulations.
The principal duties include:
» avoiding the need for hazardous manual handling operations and tasks involving significant physical effort, repetitive movement, or poor posture.
» assessing those hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided, and reducing the risk of injury.

Damage to muscles, bones and joints by work can cause:
» lower back pain
» injury and pain to other parts of the body (e.g. arms, fingers, shoulders, neck, wrists, elbows, knees).

The signs, symptoms and effects of disease can include:
» muscular pain, sore joints, tingling, burning and cramp
» reduced mobility
» becoming accident-prone, including slips, trips, falls
» sleep disturbance
» stress and pain affecting work, family and social life
» frequent or recurrent sickness absence
» loss of productivity
» enforcement action, court cases, compensation claims.
The damage can be caused by, for example:

» heavy manual lifting
» pushing or pulling heavy loads
» repetitive tasks, using the same muscles over and over again
» poor posture during lifting, pushing, carrying and other hand–arm activities
» staying in one position for too long (e.g. at a computer workstation or maintaining an awkward position, or prolonged driving)
» lifting and carrying objects incorrectly
» excessive vibration reaching the hands and the body.

Am I at risk?
You, your business and staff may be at risk, if there is:

» heavy manual lifting on a daily basis
» frequent repetitive movement of the same body part to do the job
» a need for a large amount of manual force to carry, move, push, slide, stop, undo or extract workpieces
» the use of hand-held powered tools on a daily basis
» lifting above head height
» repetitive handling of uneven or large size work pieces
» a need to work in cramped conditions, affecting posture and load handling methods
» a need to use or adopt an incorrect or uncomfortable posture to do work including computer-related tasks
» whole-body vibration caused by work activities.
**What should I do?**

Establish or carry out the following:

» Activities and use of tools, equipment and workstations that can contribute to injuries.

» Who is exposed and what are the reasons for risk of injuries.

» What preventive and control measures are needed.

» Who needs training in manual handling activities, use of workstations, tools or equipment.

» Talk to staff to identify any issues they have.

» Arrange health checks for those at risk.

Ensure control measures you provide are used correctly and maintained. Consult employees or their representatives on matters affecting their health and safety.

**What should I avoid?**

» Incorrectly designed or arranged work areas and benches.

» High-vibration tools and equipment.

» Blunt and unmaintained cutting tools.

» Frequent and daily repetitive manual tasks without any mechanical aid.

» Poor posture when using the body to do a task.

**Where can I get help?**

» Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com

» Health and Safety Executive, www.hse.gov.uk/msd

For further details see ‘Where to get extra help and support’ on pages 83–89.
Additional information

There are six ways to help prevent injuries to muscles, bones and joints.

1. **Reduce manual force:**
   - Reduce the weight of items or the distance moved.
   - Use levers (e.g. lift, wrench, hoist, forklift truck) or use a team of operators.
   - Use lightweight tools, supports, jigs.
   - Use low-vibration tools and maintain them.
   - Ensure adequate grip is applied to the load.

2. **Reduce repetition:**
   - Automate tasks or provide mechanical aids.
   - Break up work periods with several short breaks, or use work rotation.
   - Build in short pauses for very intensive and frequent work.
   - Use multiple steps in a process to reduce repetitive action.
   - Rotate staff to minimise exposure to repetitive tasks.

3. **Use the right working position and/or station:**
   - Design the task and equipment to suit workers (take into account differences in size, build, strength, health and right- or left-handed operations).
   - Provide platforms, adjustable chairs, tools and the right-sized gloves with adequate grip.
   - Ensure enough space is available to do the job.
   - Design the work to prevent sudden movement of the body.
   - Avoid awkward postures.

4. **Improve the working environment:**
   - Make sure the temperature is reasonable. Provide suitable clothing to keep warm in cold workplaces or tasks (e.g. cold-room work).
   - Avoid putting workstations near draughts.
   - Make sure the lighting is right for the job.
5. Tackle factors that influence work:

» Consider pre-employment health assessment; you may have to provide suitable facilities under the Disability Discrimination Act.

» Minimise production speed-related injuries.

» Act immediately on any signs and symptoms of injury, encourage early reporting and provide health checks where necessary.

6. Provide training:

» Provide training in the correct techniques for carrying out the work, and how to use tools and equipment correctly.

This is not a full list.
Risks to your hearing and touch
What should I know?
Many people at work are exposed to levels of noise that put their hearing at risk. Because of this, the Noise at Work Regulations require employers to prevent or reduce the risk to their employees.

Noise created at work can cause:
» permanent or temporary damage to your hearing
» ringing, whistling, buzzing or humming in the ear.

The signs, symptoms and effects of hearing damage can include:
» not hearing instructions or warning/alert systems at work
» not participating in or keeping up with conversation
» distress and sleep disturbance
» enforcement action, court cases, compensation claims.

The damage is caused by, for example:
» repeated exposure to high noise levels over months or years
» sudden and extremely loud noises.

Am I at risk?
You, your business and staff may be at risk, if workers:
» are in an area where there is interfering noise for most of the day (e.g. a vacuum cleaner, a busy street or a crowded bar)
» have to raise their voices to talk to a person 2 metres away
» use powered or pneumatic tools or machines
» use impact tools (e.g. hammers, drop forges, riveters)
» use powered cartridge-operated tools and guns or punching tools
» carry out noise-generating activities in high-risk sectors including heavy construction, demolition, agriculture, road repair, foundry work or undertake wood or metal products manufacture or repair, plastic processing or waste recycling
» experience muffled hearing at the end of the day.
What should I do?

Establish the following:

» Noisy areas and sources.
» Who is exposed, to what level and why.
» What prevention and control measures are needed.
» Who needs hearing protectors and what type.
» Who needs hearing checks.
» The control measures you provide are used correctly and maintained.
» Whether employees are involved in decision making about their work or work design affecting health and safety.

Where can I get help?

» Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com
» Health and Safety Executive, www.hse.gov.uk/noise

For further details see ‘Where to get extra help and support’ on pages 83–89.

What should I avoid?

» Damaged or blunt tools, shock absorbers and mountings.
» Damaged sound-absorbing panels.
» Damaged noise enclosures.
» Placing a noisy machine in the middle of a workshop.
» Incorrectly fitted and/or dirty earplugs.
» Using damaged and/or incorrectly fitted earmuffs.
Additional information
There are four steps in preserving hearing:

1: Reduce noise:
» Choose the right methods for your situation.
» Use a quieter process or tool.
» Avoid impact noise (e.g. reducing drop height or force, using noise absorbers on the impact head).
» Reduce vibration from machines and tools.
» Fit silencers and vibration dampers to machines and tools.
» Use shock absorbers and mounts on machines.
» Erect professionally designed enclosures around machines.
» Use sound barriers, absorbers or reflectors.
» Design work areas to keep noisy machines away from quieter areas.
» Limit the amount of time spent in noisy areas each day.
» Carry out checks and maintenance schedules as recommended in the machine manual.

» Specify quieter machines when buying or hiring them.

2: Provide hearing protectors:
Hearing protection should be issued free of charge:
» where extra protection is needed after using noise reduction control measures
» for use as a short-term control until you have put in place other noise reduction control measures
» if requested by employees where noise exposure is within the recommended exposure action values.*

3: Train employees to use control measures properly:
» Even the best control systems and hearing protectors fail if they are not used in the right way.
4: Hearing checks:
You must provide hearing checks when your employees:

» are exposed regularly above the upper noise exposure action values*

» are at an increased risk of hearing loss, e.g. individuals are susceptible to damage due to pre-existing medical conditions or a family history of such conditions.

* To learn more about exposure action values, exposure limit values and how to assess and measure them, visit the HSE website.

This is not a full list.
Selecting hearing protection (earmuffs and plugs)

What should I know?
Hearing protectors should be issued to employees, who should use them whenever it is not possible to achieve adequate control of exposure to noise by other control measures alone.

Other exposure control measures include:
» using a quieter process or tool
» avoiding impact noise (e.g. reducing drop height or force, using noise absorbers on the impact head)
» reducing vibration from machines and tools
» fitting silencers and/or vibration dampers to machines and tools
» using shock absorbers and mounts on machines
» erecting professionally designed enclosures around machines
» using sound barriers, absorbers or reflectors
» designing work areas to keep noisy machines away from quieter areas
» limiting the amount of time spent in noisy areas each day
» carrying out checks and maintenance schedules as recommended in the machine manual
» specifying quieter machines when buying or hiring.

When can I use hearing protectors?
» After using other control measures.
» For short-duration or infrequent jobs where other controls may not be practicable.
» When putting in place other control measures.
» When carrying out emergency repair work.
» If your employees ask for them and their noise exposure is between the lower and upper action values.*

In addition, you may consider issuing hearing protectors to provide additional protection in case other control measures fail to operate.

* To learn more about exposure action values, exposure limit values and how to assess and measure them, visit the HSE website.
Am I at risk?
You, your business and your staff may be put at risk, if hearing protectors:
» are used as the control without any consideration of other control measures
» are dirty and damaged
» are incorrectly used
» have been subjected to DIY modifications.

What should I do?
» Select the right protectors using the HSE hearing protection calculator at www.hse.gov.uk/noise/calculator. If you are unsure seek help from your supplier or a professional.
» Provide your employees with hearing protectors and make sure they use them as recommended by the manufacturer.
» Mark hearing protection zones.
» Consult employees or their representatives on matters affecting their health and safety.

What should I avoid?
» Using incorrect hearing protectors for the noise level and the user.
» Using damaged, dirty or modified hearing protectors.
» Allowing hair, jewellery, spectacles or eye protectors, helmet or respiratory protective equipment or clothing to cause interference.

Where can I get help?
» Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com
» Health and Safety Executive, www.hse.gov.uk/noise
For further details see ‘Where to get extra help and support’ on pages 83–89.
**Additional information**

The most commonly used hearing protectors are:

» earmuffs
» earplugs.

**Earmuffs**

These can be held on tensioned bands or fitted to helmets.

**Earplugs**

These come in various shapes, sizes and designs.

**Use of hearing protectors:**

» Wear when extra protection is needed after other control measures are in place and the upper action value* is exceeded.

» Provide as a short-term measure while other controls are being put in place.

» Provide if requested by an employee because the exposure is between the lower and upper exposure action values.*

» Make sure you select the right protector for the patterns of noise. You may need help or can seek information at the HSE website.

» Do not provide a hearing protector which cuts out too much noise – this can make the user feeling isolated or unwilling to wear it.

» Where multiple PPE (eye protectors, helmet, etc.) are needed, combination equipment is available.

* To learn more about exposure action values, exposure limit values and how to assess and measure them, visit the HSE website.

**The ‘CE’ mark:**

» means hearing protectors meets the minimum design and performance features as set out in law and international standards.

» does not mean they are necessarily the right type. You must select the right hearing protector for your needs. Get help where necessary.
Provide training
This will ensure:

» correct use, maintenance and storage of hearing protectors
» correct techniques are used to carry out the work, and for using tools and equipment.

Maintenance
Ensure that:

» earmuff seals are not damaged
» DIY alterations are not made to headband tension
» earplugs are discarded when dirty.

This is not a full list.
What should I know?

Many people at work are exposed to levels of hand–arm and whole-body vibration, which put their health at risk. Because of this, the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations require employers to prevent or reduce the risk to their employees.

Vibration created at work can cause vibration-related diseases including vibration white finger (VWF) and damage and compression of the nerves in your hands.

The signs, symptoms and effects on fingers and hands can include:

» tingling, numbness, pain, pins and needles
» damaged blood vessels leading to skin and flesh becoming white
» loss of strength, difficulty in feeling things, reduced grip
» difficulty with fine work, importantly in cold and/or damp conditions
» distress, sleep disturbance, inability to do everyday tasks
» enforcement action, court cases, compensation claims.

The damage is caused by vibration such as that transmitted to the hands from hand-held powered work equipment and tools.
Am I at risk?

You, your business and staff may be put at risk if you use hand-held powered tools such as those in the table above.

You may also be at risk, if:

» you use hammer-action tools for more than about 15 minutes per day
» you use rotary action tools for more than about 1 hour per day
» you use manually-held vibrating workpieces
» any of your employees have pre-existing health conditions (e.g. tingling, numbness, pain, pins and needles in hands and fingers).

What should I do?

» Identify which tools and tasks are causing the vibration exposure.
» Check who is exposed, to what level and for how long.
» Find out what can be done to eliminate vibration at source.
» Identify what control measures are needed.
» Check who needs health checks for early detection of vibration damage.
» Ensure control measures you provide are used correctly and maintained.
» Consult employees or their representatives on matters affecting their health and safety.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Risks to your hearing and touch</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chainsaws</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concrete or road breakers,</td>
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<td>compactor plates</td>
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<td>Cut-off saws for metals</td>
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<td>and stone</td>
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<td>Hammer drills and jigsaws</td>
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<td>Hand-held grinders,</td>
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<td>disc cutters, hammer drills</td>
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<td>Impact wrenches</td>
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<td>Needle scalers, scabblers</td>
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<td>Pedestal grinders</td>
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<td>Polishers</td>
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<td>Power sanders, brush cutters,</td>
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<td>strimmers</td>
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<td>High-powered lawn mowers,</td>
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<tr>
<td>hedge trimmers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What should I avoid?
» Using blunt or worn cutting tools.
» Hiring, buying and using high-level vibration tools.
» Using damaged or unmaintained tools.
» Unbalanced rotating discs and wheels.
» Constant and continuous use of vibrating tools.
» Using vibrating workbenches.

Where can I get help?
» Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com
» Health and Safety Executive, www.hse.gov.uk/vibration

For further details see ‘Where to get extra help and support’ on pages 83–89.
**Risks to your hearing and touch**

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### Additional information

**There are four steps in preventing vibration damage:**

1. **Reduce vibration**

   Choose the right method for your work situation:
   
   » Use alternative work methods to eliminate or reduce vibration.
   
   » Mechanise or automate the task.
   
   » Make sure the equipment selected or allocated for tasks is suitable and can do the work efficiently.
   
   » Select the lowest vibration tool that can do the work efficiently.
   
   » Limit the use of high-vibration tools.
   
   » Use low-vibration workstations.
   
   » Use devices such as jigs and suspension systems to reduce the need to grip heavy tools tightly.
   
   » Purchase or hire low-vibration tools and equipment.
   
   » Limit the amount of time your employees are exposed to vibration.

2. **Maintain controls**

   » Ensure controls you have introduced are used properly.
   
   » Carry out checks and maintenance schedules as recommended in the machine manual.

3. **Train workers to use control measures properly**

   Even the best control systems fail if they are not used in the right way. Provide training in the following:

   » How to select and use the right tool for the job.
   
   » How to check the condition of the tool before use (e.g. cutting tool is sharp).
   
   » How to grip or force a tool or workpiece to minimise vibration.
   
   » How to keep warm. You need to provide protective clothing to keep warm and dry. NB gloves can be used to keep hands warm, but should not be relied upon to provide protection from vibration.
4. Health checks
You must provide health checks if your employees:

» are exposed regularly above the vibration exposure action values*

» are at risk of vibration-related diseases, e.g. they already have some degree of VWF symptoms or are sensitive to vibration damage due to prevailing health conditions (e.g. blood circulatory diseases such as Reynaud’s disease).

* To learn more about exposure action values, exposure limit values and how to assess and measure them, visit the HSE website.

This is not a full list.
RISKS TO YOUR WELLBEING
**What should I know?**
Health, work and wellbeing are closely and powerfully linked. You as an employer and your employees can reap many benefits by managing and minimising risks to health at work.

Work that causes unacceptable interference with normal life can damage workers’ mental or physical health and behaviours.

**The signs, symptoms and effects of damage can include:**
- anxiety and depression
- frequent sickness absence or late arrivals
- underperformance
- high staff turnover
- loss of productivity
- family or relationship breakdown
- tribunals, court cases and compensation claims.

**The damage is caused by, for example:**
- demanding or expecting long working hours
- exerting unacceptable work pressures
- conflicts between personal commitments at home and work.

**Am I at risk?**
You, your business and staff may be at risk, if there are signs of:
- staff working away from home or extended hours in a day for many days and not being compensated
- staff being bullied or harassed into doing extra work
- staff regularly working more than the daily agreed hours
- evidence of work building up
- the quality of the work is falling
- increased sickness absence
- unusually high staff turnover.
What should I do?
» Identify the risk factors.
» Identify who is at risk and why.
» Develop control measures and procedures.
» Monitor the effectiveness of the control measures and procedures.
» Talk to staff to identify any issues they may have.
» Ensure the control measures you provide are used correctly and maintained.
» Consult employees or their representatives on matters affecting their health and safety.

What should I avoid?
» Demanding unacceptable hours of work.
» Subjecting workers to verbal, physical or mental abuse to make them work extra hours.
» Failing to minimise number of hours or days away from home.
» Failing to deal with work/life balance issues.
» Tolerating misuse or abuse of power, causing stress or affecting work/life balance.

Where can I get help?
» Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com
» Health and Safety Executive, www.hse.gov.uk/stress

For further details see ‘Where to get extra help and support’ on pages 83–89.

This is not a full list.
What should I know?
Harassment at work is unlawful and it can put employees’ health at risk. The Prevention of Harassment Act and other laws protect them.

Bullying and harassment at work can damage mental health and behaviours.

The signs, symptoms and effects of the damage can include:
» anxiety, irritability, depression
» lack of drive and commitment
» loss of confidence and concentration
» loss of productivity
» increased sickness absence
» unusual patterns of staff turnover
» tribunals, court cases or compensation claims.

The damage is caused by, for example:
» intimidation or threats
» humiliation
» ridicule or mockery
» unwelcome attention or interest
» unfair treatment with regard to aspects of work
» offensive language.

All of these can take place in private or in front of others.

Am I at risk?
You, your business and staff may be at risk, if there are signs of:
» verbal or physical abuse
» staff being ignored, humiliated or subjected to rumours or gossip
» discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, religion or belief or sexual orientation
» unfair treatment for a specific reason or purpose
» unfounded threats to job security, promotion or personal safety.
**What should I do?**

» Publicise what types of behaviours and actions are unacceptable.
» Publicise the consequences of unacceptable behaviours and actions.
» Monitor the effectiveness of company policy.
» Talk to staff to identify any issues they may have.
» Deal promptly with the alleged ‘bully’.
» Ensure control measures you provide are used correctly and maintained.
» Consult employees or their representatives on matters affecting their health and safety.

**Where can I get help?**

» Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com
» Health and Safety Executive, www.hse.gov.uk/stress

For further details see ‘Where to get extra help and support’ on pages 83–89.

**What should I avoid?**

» Unfair treatment of workers.
» Subjecting workers to verbal, physical or mental abuse.
» Tolerating offensive, malicious, humiliating or unfair behaviours.
» Setting unachievable targets and demands.
» Misuse or abuse of power.
Additional information

Bullies can be individuals from any position in the organisation; often they have, or wish to have, power and influence over decision-making and resources in relation to the person being bullied. Bullying may include offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour and/or abuse or misuse of power or influence through other means to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the victim.

Harassment relates to unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, nationality or accent.

Bullying and harassment can be carried out on individuals or a group. The actions can occur in private or in public, within the organisation or elsewhere.

Behaviours:

Examples of bullying behaviours include the following:

» Copying notes or memos for the purpose of bullying, undermining or harassment.

» Constantly singling out or excluding a person.

» Knowingly setting up someone to fail.

» Unwelcome sexual comments and advances.

» Constant criticism and not offering support, help, training or a suitable solution.

» Blocking career development.

» Unwelcome comments on the grounds described above.

Setting up preventive policies and procedures:

» defines, publicise and monitor unacceptable behaviours

» sets out the first steps to be taken by any member of staff who feels they are being bullied or harassed (e.g. evidence-gathering, informal discussion with line manager or a designated colleague)

» establishes what should happen if the first steps did not work (e.g. mediation, formal investigation, legal action).
Steps to tackle bullying include:

» Mediating an agreement between the parties on standards of behaviour.

» Mentoring and support.

» Training (e.g. victim assertiveness, communication; bully performance management, equal opportunities, managing people, teamworking).

» Transferring one of the party and monitoring developments.

» Looking at the causes and dealing with them (e.g. unfair remuneration, management styles, diversity issues, unfair performance agreement, assessment or rewards).

This is not a full list.
Work-related stress

What should I know?
Over half a million people report experiencing work-related stress which has made them ill. Because of this, employers are expected to take measures to reduce the risk.

Stress at work can damage mental and physical health and behaviours.

The signs, symptoms and effects of stress can include:
» tearfulness
» frustration, irritability, anger
» increased sensitivity
» anxiety and/or depression
» lack of drive and commitment
» loss of confidence, concentration and/or memory
» loss of productivity
» increased sickness absence
» tribunals, court cases, compensation claims.

The damage can be caused by any of the following:
» too much pressure and/or work
» unacceptable time constraints or deadlines
» conflicting demands or exerting too much pressure
» lack of challenge or boredom
» little or no freedom or influence on how to deliver the work
» incompetence or not having been trained to do the work
» inadequacies of others in the team affecting quality of work or reputation
» humiliation, ridicule, mockery, intimidation, threats
» unwelcome attention or interest
» unfair treatment with regard to aspects of work.

Am I at risk?
You, your business and staff may be at risk, if there are signs of:
» demands for unacceptable productivity
» staff being asked to cut corners which are unacceptable or illegal
Risks to your wellbeing

» work building up
» failures in an individual’s punctuality, quality of work or productivity
» festering, long-standing or unresolved conflicts
» staff being ignored, humiliated or subjected to rumours or gossip
» discrimination or unacceptable treatment on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, religion or belief or sexual orientation
» staff being treated unfairly for a specific reason
» unfounded threats to job security, promotion or personal safety.

What should I do?
» Identify the risk factors.
» Identify who is at risk and why.
» Develop control measures and procedures.
» Monitor the effectiveness of the control measures and procedures.
» Talk to staff and identify any issues they may have.
» Seek help (e.g. medical, managerial, coaching) promptly.

» Ensure control measures you provide are used correctly and maintained.
» Consult employees or their representatives on matters affecting their health and safety.

What should I avoid?
» Demanding unacceptable productivity targets or behaviours.
» Failing to provide training, support and facilities to deliver the work.
» Subjecting workers to verbal, physical or mental abuse.
» Failing to minimise conflicts between teams and individuals.
» Tolerating offensive, malicious, humiliating or unfair behaviours.
» Misuse or abuse of power causing stress to recipients.

Where can I get help?
» Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, tel: 0800 019 2211 or www.healthyworkinglives.com
» Health and Safety Executive, www.hse.gov.uk/stress
For further details see ‘Where to get extra help and support’ on pages 83–89.
Additional information

Stress at work is an unwanted reaction that occurs when a person experiences too much pressure, other types of demands, or is subjected to unacceptable behaviours. It is often a symptom of poor employment relations.

Exerting or being subjected to unreasonable pressure at work is different from the positive challenges, demands, competition and timescales that occur at work.

Examples of positive signs and approaches for minimising stress at work include the following:

Demands
» Staff say they are able to cope with the demands of the job.
» Staff skills and abilities are matched to the job and its demands.
» Targets and productivity demands match salaried hours of work.
» Work facilities (e.g. lighting, workstations) take account of individuals’ needs.

Control
» Staff report that they are able to have a say about the way in which their job is done.
» Staff are encouraged to use initiative and skills to deliver the job.
» Staff are encouraged or helped to develop existing skills, and learn or develop new skills.
» Staff are consulted on work patterns and breaks and have some freedom on pace of work.

Support
» Staff say they receive adequate information and support from colleagues and management.
» Policies and procedures adequately support the staff.
» Staff encouraged to support colleagues.
» Staff know what support and resources are available and how to access them to do the job, develop new skills and seek career progression.
» Staff are provided with regular feedback and encouragement.
Relationships:
» Staff say they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours.
» Policies and procedures promote positive behaviours, minimise conflicts, ensure fairness and help to resolve conflicts and unacceptable behaviours.
» Staff share information to help job delivery and staff development.

Role:
» Staff say they understand their roles and responsibilities.
» Staff are provided with information that enables them to understand their roles and responsibilities.
» The roles and responsibilities of individual staff are clear to the member of staff concerned, and others.

Change:
» Staff say they are involved and consulted on organisational changes.
» Timely information (including the reasons) is provided.
» Adequate consultation and opportunities are provided to influence proposals.
» Timetables for changes (including the reasons) are made known.
» Adequate support and training are provided to cope with changes (e.g. job, role, environment, location).

You should have systems in place for each of these issues to deal with individual concerns.

This is not a full list.
WHERE TO GET EXTRA HELP AND SUPPORT

Contact Healthy Working Lives at: www.healthyworkinglives.com

Telephone
Healthy Working Lives (Scotland): 0800 019 2211
Health for Work (England): 0800 0778844
Work Boost Wales: 0845 609 6006
Health & Safety Works NI: 0300 020 0030
Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives (SCHWL)

SCHWL is part of the NHS in Scotland and provides free and confidential advice and support to help you manage the safety and health problems within your workplace. The Centre can do this in a number of ways.

1. The Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives website at: www.healthyworkinglives.com

In the Advice section of the website, you will find safety and health information under the following headings:

» Workplace hazards
» Minimising risks
» Personnel and staffing issues
» Work equipment and safe working methods
» Managing work-related ill health and injuries

Under each of these headings there are links to specific guidance pages; for example, follow: Advice: Workplace Hazards: Skin and Respiratory Sensitisers.

You can also download resources such as risk assessment forms and worked examples on topics such as COSHH by using the Resources page.

You can keep up to date with news and events in your area, sign up for a free newsletter and find out more about Healthy Working Lives and its partners via the website. In addition, you will find information on a range of other related topics, such as:

» sickness absence
» occupational health
» violence and aggression
» safety issues
» vocational rehabilitation
» employability
» promoting health at work.
2. The Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives Adviceline, on 0800 019 2211, is staffed by health and safety and occupational health professionals with vast experience in many business sectors. They can help you with specific questions, guide you through the website, arrange free workplace visits and help identify other organisations that can help you further. You can also email a query to the Adviceline team via the website.

3. The Adviceline team can put you in touch with Healthy Working Lives staff in your area who can carry out free and confidential workplace visits to assist you in identifying safety and health issues, and then work with you to control and manage these issues in a way that suits your working needs.

Contact Healthy Working Lives at:
www.healthyworkinglives.com
Telephone free on: 0800 019 2211

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

The HSE’s job is to prevent death, injury and ill health to those at work and those affected by work activities.

The HSE shares responsibility with local authorities for regulating health, safety and welfare for those at work and for those affected by work activity, including the public. Councils regulate health and safety in workplaces employing more than half the Scottish workforce, and the HSE is responsible for the rest. The sectors overseen by councils and HSE include the following:

**Councils**
- offices
- shops
- hotels
- restaurants
- pubs and clubs
- care homes
- warehouses
- places of worship

**HSE**
- factories
- farms
- building sites
- nuclear installations
- mines and quarries
- hospitals
- government premises
- schools and colleges
The primary responsibility for health and safety at work lies with those who own, manage and work in organisations and businesses, including the self-employed. The HSE visits individual businesses on the basis of risk, and concentrates its work where risks are likely to be highest.

Working together with local authorities, the HSE also provides advice and guidance to help people meet their health and safety responsibilities. By working in partnership with employers, trade unions, professional and trade bodies and other organisations, the HSE:

- develops guidance and good practice standards
- identifies and concentrates on activity where the risks are likely to be highest; for example, where there is evidence that health and safety performance is poor, either in an individual business or sector, or where the type of work has a high rate of injury or ill health
- delivers campaigns; for example, ‘Bad Hand Day’ to tackle dermatitis among hairdressers; ‘The Hidden Killer’ to raise awareness of asbestos among plumbers, electricians and decorators; and ‘Slips, Trips and Falls’ to highlight the biggest cause of death and injury.

The emphasis is on prevention, but the HSE and local authorities will enforce health and safety legislation if they find businesses putting themselves and others at risk and when the law is being deliberately flouted.

The HSE can help you in a number of ways.

You will find comprehensive information, downloadable guidance and resources relevant to many work situations and sectors at:
www.hse.gov.uk

Local authorities also offer free advice on health and safety. Check your council’s website for details.
Safety Groups UK (SGUK)

Is the coordinating body for all Occupational Health and Safety Groups throughout the UK. SGUK works closely with the following organisations:

» HSE
» SCoS
» RoSPA
» SCHWL
» The International Institute of Risk and Safety Management (IIRSM)
» The Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)
» British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS)

It also works with various other partners and supporters, with the aim of providing a forum for work-related health and safety in the UK. The function of SGUK is to liaise between the various groups and individuals who have an interest in health and safety throughout the UK. SGUK members are locally managed occupational health and safety groups which themselves are made up of member companies from a variety of industry sectors, and are able to give advice and support to individuals and organisations in their local areas. In addition, they encourage good practice by recognising the achievements of the members, and provide various opportunities for networking. Safety Group members offer to assist, and where possible, mentor smaller organisations to ensure that they are receiving positive health and safety advice.

You are welcome to contact any of the safety groups throughout the UK where additional help and support with regard to Health Risks at Work is available, or attend any local safety group meeting. Safety Groups can be contacted through the website at www.safetygroupsuk.org.uk and following the link to ‘Find your local group’.

You can email the secretary of your local safety group and they will arrange for a member of the group to contact you to assist further should you require any additional help, advice or support with regard to Health Risks at Work or other safety-related issues.
Scottish Chamber of Safety (SCoS)

The Scottish Chamber of Safety is the coordinating body for all Occupational Health and Safety Groups throughout Scotland. SCoS works closely with the following organisations:

» HSE
» Safety Groups UK (SGUK)
» RoSPA
» SCHWL
» The International Institute of Risk and Safety Management (IIRSM)
» The Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)

It also works with various other partners with the aim of providing a forum for work-related health and safety in Scotland. The function of the Chamber is to liaise between the various groups and individuals who have an interest in health and safety in Scotland. SCoS members are locally managed occupational health and safety groups which themselves are made up of member companies from a variety of industry sectors, and are able to give advice and support to individuals and organisations in their local areas. In addition, they encourage good practice by recognising the achievements of the members, and provide various opportunities for networking. Safety Group members offer to assist, and where possible, mentor smaller organisations to ensure that they are receiving positive health and safety advice. SCoS is fortunate in having Lord Cullen of Whitekirk as its active Honorary President.

You are welcome to attend events or join your local Safety Group. Groups can be contacted through the Scottish Chamber of Safety website at www.scos.org.uk and following the links to ‘local groups’.

Contact SCoS at: www.scos.org.uk
POOSH Scotland conveys information to and from the Partnership on Health and Safety in Scotland (PHASS). PHASS was set up by the Health and Safety Commission (HSC), and is supported by Scottish and UK Ministers.

POOSH Scotland was established in 2005 to promote coordinated action to improve workplace health and safety. It brings together a wide variety of bodies whose aim is to improve occupational health and safety in the workplace.

POOSH Scotland provides a similar framework to POOSH in England and Wales, which exists to promote the continuous improvement of the practice of occupational safety and health through education, communication, and the encouragement of cooperation between all persons and agencies involved in the provision of a healthy and safe working environment.

Members of POOSH include:
- Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Occupational Health and Ergonomics
- British Occupational Hygiene Society
- Division of Occupational Psychology-Scotland
- Ergonomics Society
- Faculty of Occupational Medicine
- Institution of Occupational Safety and Health
- RCN OHN Forum Scotland
- Partnership on Health and Safety in Scotland
- Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland
- Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives
- Scottish Chamber of Safety
- Society of Occupational Medicine

Contact POOSH members at: www.healthyworkinglives.com/about/partners and at www.poosh.org
Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) was established more than 90 years ago. It is a safety charity that is widely recognised as a key stakeholder within the UK’s health and safety system, and is well respected for its mission ‘to save lives and reduce injuries’.

RoSPA campaigns on key issues which have the potential to significantly reduce the number of people killed, injured or made ill by their work. It also works to prevent accidents on the roads, in the home and during leisure activities, and promotes safety education.

Working in conjunction with a wide range of government partners, including the Scottish Government, Health and Safety Executive, Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives and UK central government departments (e.g. Department for Transport, Department of Health, Department for Children Schools and Families), RoSPA is always at the forefront of developments.

From its base in Edinburgh, RoSPA Scotland seeks to influence Scotland’s health and safety agenda, and it makes available a wealth of free information and advice through its website, www.rospa.com

To support its charitable mission, RoSPA also offers a broad range of products and services, including posters and publications, conferences and seminars, training and consultancy support and membership.

RoSPA has the experience and expertise to offer organisations of all types and sizes a complete ‘health and safety solution’.

Contact RoSPA at:
www.rospa.com
Telephone: 0121 248 2000
Supporting organisations

The Health Risks at Work initiative has been developed in Scotland by:


For additional information and support on Health Risks at Work in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, contact your local safety group.

www.safetygroupsuk.org.uk

The Health Risks at Work initiative is promoted through recognised champions and is supported by:

www.IOSH.co.uk                                              www.bohs.org                                      www.POOSH.org
www.bsif.co.uk                                                www.iirsm.org                                     www.cbhscheme.com
www.stuc.org.uk                                    www.ergonomics.org.uk                www.safety-health-expo.co.uk
www.nebosh.org.uk                                    www.britsafe.org                 www.healthandsafetyevents.co.uk

www.healthrisksatwork.com