

Using the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council Health and Safety Information System

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This system has been put together to provide Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) with basic information on health and safety at work. It has been prepared by a local authority and is primarily directed at premises in the service sector for which local authorities are the enforcing authorities for health and safety. Such premises include shops, warehouses, offices, catering services, provision of residential accommodation, leisure and cultural services, and consumer services.
- 1.2 The source materials for the information in this system include Health and Safety Executive (HSE) publications (both free and priced), trade publications and 'open' circulars (LACs) giving advice to local authority enforcement officers. LACs are periodically reviewed. Users of the manual are advised to check with the enforcing authority for the current status of particular LACs. All documents used are detailed in the References/Further Details section of each element. **Users of the system are advised and positively encouraged to view/obtain relevant publications.**
- 1.3 By design, the information in this system is an **overview** of legislation/guidance. For it to be otherwise would have resulted in an unwieldy publication of much greater size and complexity. Consequently, it cannot and should not be seen as giving definitive guidance on health and safety at work. Although it does set out information on the responsibilities of employers, employees and others under health and safety legislation, the advice on implementing safe systems of work is guidance **only**, and alternative equally effective steps could be taken instead.
- 1.4 Health and safety legislation and guidance can often be subject to periodic change and clarification. Although Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council undertakes to update this information system as necessary, there will always be a potential for some of the information to be out-of-date if some time has passed since you received your copy.

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It is intended that the Council's website will maintain the most current version of an element, the details of which can be found in the documentation control boxes at the foot of every page.

When premises are visited for the purposes of a general health and safety inspection, a 'standard' manual of the most relevant elements will always be offered, together with any other elements appropriate to that business.

You should always establish for yourself the current legal position and requirements and the content of any national guidance. This can be done either by obtaining the appropriate document(s) directly or by seeking the advice of your enforcing authority for health and safety. Contact details are contained in the 'Useful Contacts' section of this system.

2.0 THE GUIDANCE

- 2.1 The main part of each element is an **overview** of the main legislative requirements and/or technical guidance relating to the subject. This has been summarised from key publications listed in the References/Further Details section, which also contains other key publications that may be of use or interest. This overview serves to introduce employers to key issues which can then be followed up in greater depth as necessary.
- 2.2 The next section provides a **checklist** which employers may use to assess, or facilitate, compliance with legal requirements. The questions should serve to gauge compliance with legislation or good practice. **Not all questions may be appropriate to all businesses.** There are recurrent themes which underpin action to ensure a health and safe working environment as follows:
- An **assessment** of risk (eg. general, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health, Display Screen Equipment, Manual Handling, Personal Protective Equipment, Noise, Asbestos and Lead)
 - The **identification** of measures or standards, as part of the risk assessment process, that will control the risks identified. This includes:

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- a) Providing and maintaining **plant and systems of work** that are safe and without risks to health
- b) Arrangements for ensuring safety and absence of risk to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of **articles and substances**.
- c) Providing such **information, instruction, training and supervision** as is necessary to ensure the health and safety at work of employees
- d) Maintenance of **safe and healthy workplaces** (including safe access and egress)
- e) Providing and maintaining a **safe working environment**, without risks to health and with adequate welfare facilities and arrangements.

So far as is reasonably practicable

- **'Management'** of health and safety, involving

- planning
- organising
- controlling
- monitoring
- reviewing



work activities with regard to improving health and safety standards and performance

- Ensuring effective **communication** at all levels
- Keeping **records** (maintenance, training, audits, etc) to help monitor performance and establish compliance.

3.0 USING THE SYSTEM

3.1 Although aimed primarily at the smaller business, the contents of this manual may be of use to larger businesses. To ensure that a consistent health and safety message is delivered, for larger firms it is advised that you make your safety officer/team aware of this document and consider if, and how, it could complement existing company information/procedures.

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3.2 In using the Checklist/Action List sections, you may wish to copy/separately file the relevant sheets to facilitate their use as a working document. Equally you may wish to separately identify them by copying them onto coloured paper. Firms may also wish to establish their own, personalised checklists from those suggested.

3.3 Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council actively seeks the participation and involvement of local businesses, trade unions and employees in the maintenance/development of the health and safety matters manual. It invites your:

- comments
- criticisms
- suggestions
- corrections
- amendments

and a feedback questionnaire is enclosed with every manual for your use. Every feedback sheet received means that the manual becomes more useful and effective for the benefit of all businesses in the area.

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