

WORKPLACE HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE

WORKPLACE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

INTRODUCTION

The **Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992** cover any premises or part of premises (excluding domestic premises) which are made available to any person as a place of work. They cover a wide range of basic health, safety and welfare issues. Employers have a general duty under section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their employees at work. A duty to non-employees is contained in section 4 of the Act.

The term '**workplace**' also includes the common parts of shared buildings, private roads and paths on industrial estates and temporary work sites. '**Work**' means work as an employee or self-employed person. '**Premises**' means any place including an outdoor place.

THE LAW

A) HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Ventilation - should be adequate; in many cases windows and doors will be sufficient; if mechanical ventilation is used it should be properly maintained (including filtration system & with regard to potential for legionellosis)

Temperature - should be reasonable: normally at least 16°C unless the work involves physical effort when it should be at least 13°C unless exemptions apply for reasons of practicality or where food or other products have to be kept cold. An acceptable zone of thermal comfort for most people in the UK lies roughly between 13°C and 30°C.

Where not reasonable throughout the workroom, local heating and cooling should be provided. As a last resort, protective clothing, rest facilities and suitable work systems should be provided/ensured. Thermometers should also be provided.

A range of factors, personal and environmental, contribute to thermal comfort. Thermal comfort is not measured only by use of a thermometer but also the effects of humidity and air movement need to be considered lowering the effective air temperature by 1 to 3°C. The best you can realistically hope to achieve is a thermal environment which satisfies the majority of people in the workplace.

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Lighting - should be suitable and sufficient for people to work and move about safely. (See Lighting element of this manual); maximise natural lighting where possible; windows should be cleaned regularly.

Cleanliness & waste materials - to be kept 'sufficiently' clean (the standard varying according to the type of work). Painting etc. to be carried out as necessary. Suitable waste storage & removal.

Room dimensions & space - enough free space to allow people to move about with ease. The volume of the (empty) room divided by the number of people working in it, should be at least 11 cubic metres. (This may be insufficient depending on the layout, contents and the nature of the work).

Workstations & seating - to be ergonomically suitable and matched to the task/worker. Seating should give adequate support for the lower back & foot rests should be provided where necessary.

B) SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Maintenance of the workplace, certain equipment, devices and systems in efficient working order.

Floors and traffic routes - These include routes for pedestrians and vehicles or both; 'routes' include stairs, fixed ladders, loading bays, ramps etc. Should be sufficient width & headroom to allow people/vehicles to circulate safely. Routes to be of sound construction & adequate strength/stability. Surfaces not to have holes, be uneven or slippery and should be kept free of obstructions. Restrictions should be clearly indicated; consideration to be given to one-way systems, visibility mirrors, speed limits, protective barriers, marking of routes. Open sides of staircases to be fenced with an upper rail at 900mm or higher and a lower rail. Handrail to be provided on at least one side of every staircase. Loading bays to have at least one exit point from the lower level or a refuge to avoid crushing.

Falls and falling objects - A high standard of protection is required, i.e. secure fencing. If a person might fall 2 metres or more, fencing to be at least 1.1 metres high and have top & bottom rails, with toe boards as necessary. Safe systems needed for temporary removal of fencing when necessary. Fixed ladders are permitted, where it is impractical to fit a staircase, and certain safety criteria apply. Roofwork also covered (permanent access, barriers, safe systems, signage). Changes of level to be made conspicuous or fenced where appropriate. Goods should be

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stacked so as they are not likely to fall and cause injury. Racking should be of adequate strength and stability.

Glazing - Transparent/translucent surfaces in doors, gates & walls etc. to be either safety material or protected against breakage where necessary for reasons of health and safety. i.e. there is a foreseeable risk of people coming into contact with it and being hurt.

Windows & window cleaning - should be capable of safe opening, adjustment etc. and there should be provision for safe cleaning if they cannot be cleaned from the ground.

Doors & gates - should be suitably constructed and fitted with safety devices if necessary. (See Element on Doors)

Escalators - to function safely; have any necessary safety devices and have one or more easily identifiable and readily accessible emergency stop controls.

C) WELFARE REQUIREMENTS

Sanitary conveniences & washing facilities - at readily accessible places; to be kept clean, adequately ventilated and lit. Washing facilities to have running hot water and cold or warm water, soap and means of hand drying. Men and women to have separate facilities unless each facility is in a separate room with a lockable door and is for use by only one person at a time.

Minimum numbers are as follows (separate calculations needed for men & women)

(a) Number of people at work	(b) Number of WCs	(c) Number of Wash Stations
1-5	1	1
6-25	2	2
26-50	3	3
51-75	4	4
76-100	5	5

and for male sanitary accommodation (instead of (b) above).

Number of people at work	Number of WCs	Number of Wash Stations
1-15	1	1
16-30	2	1
31-45	2	2
46-60	3	2
61-75	3	3
76-90	4	3
91-100	4	4

Drinking water - adequate, wholesome, readily accessible, conspicuously marked where necessary; sufficient drinking vessels.

Accommodation for clothing - adequate, suitable & secure (i.e. clean, warm/dry & ventilated). Minimum provision would be a coat peg for each worker.

Changing facilities - for special work clothing; to be readily accessible from workrooms; washing & eating facilities; need to ensure privacy of users.

Facilities for rest and to eat meals - suitable, sufficient and readily accessible. Rest areas should be large enough, and have sufficient seats with backrests and tables, for the number of workers likely to use them at any time. They should include suitable facilities to eat meals where meals are regularly eaten in the workplace. Suitable facilities should be provided for pregnant women and nursing mothers and, where necessary, include the facility to lie down.

Rest areas should include arrangements to protect non-smokers from discomfort caused by tobacco smoke.

CHECKLIST - WORKPLACE HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE

1. Do you meet the requirements of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 with regard to the following:-

Health

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|----|
| • Ventilation | YES | NO |
| • Temperature | YES | NO |
| • Lighting | YES | NO |
| • Cleanliness & waste materials | YES | NO |
| • Room dimensions & space | YES | NO |
| • Workstations & seating | YES | NO |

Safety

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----|----|
| • Maintenance | YES | NO |
| • Floors and traffic routes | YES | NO |
| • Glazing | YES | NO |
| • Windows & window cleaning | YES | NO |
| • Doors & gates | YES | NO |
| • Escalators (if applicable) | YES | NO |

Welfare

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| • Sanitary conveniences | YES | NO |
| • Washing facilities | YES | NO |
| • Drinking Water | YES | NO |
| • Accommodation for clothing | YES | NO |
| • Changing facilities | YES | NO |
| • Facilities for rest and to eat meals | YES | NO |

REFERENCES/FURTHER DETAILS

- **1. Leaflet IND(G) 170(L): Workplace, health, safety and welfare - a short guide for managers. HSE. www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg244.pdf
- *2. Approved Code of Practice L24 - Workplace health, safety and welfare. HSE ISBN 0-7176-04136
- *3. Booklet HSG187: Control of Diesel Engine Exhaust Emissions in the Workplace. (HSE)(ISBN 0-7176 1662 2)(£6.95)
- *4. Thermal Comfort in the Workplace- Guidance for employers. (HSE)(HSG194)(ISBN 0 7176 2468 4)(£3.50)

NB Appendix 1 to booklet L24 contains an extensive list of 76 references relating to this subject.

- * Available to view by prior arrangement at Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Environmental Health Services, Council House, Coton Road, Nuneaton. CV11 5AA
- ** Free copy available from Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council at the above address.

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