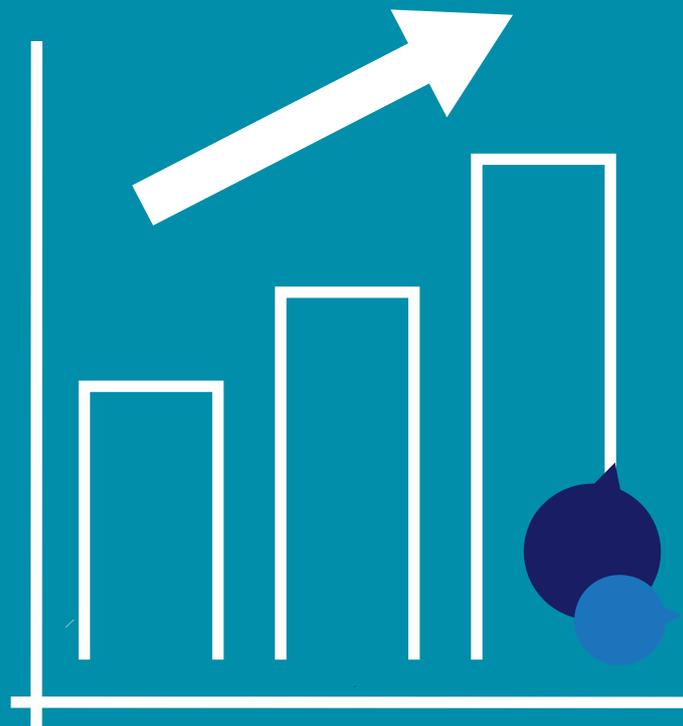


Big tips for small businesses



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Know your responsibilities:

1. Why is health & safety important?

Whatever sort of business you are, there is always the possibility of an accident or damage to someone's health. All work exposes people to hazards, be they: loads which have to be manually handled; dangerous machinery; toxic substances; electricity; working with display screen equipment or even psychological hazards such as stress.

In 2011/12, 27 million working days were lost due to work-related illness and workplace injury

The reason there are not even more accidents and diseases caused by work is because systems of prevention are in place which have been built up over generations. Safety does not come about by accident: most accidents happen because they have not been prevented.

Attention to health and safety is not just about being socially responsible. It also makes good business sense and you should regard it as just as important as the achievement of any other key business objectives.

Even small businesses have accidents. Accident rates in small businesses can be higher than in large operations. For instance the fatality rate in SME manufacturers is twice that of large ones.

175,000 injuries resulting in a work absence of over 7 days occurred in 2012/13

Know your responsibilities:

2. The Law

All people have a legal right to be protected from work related risks.

In general the law imposes a range of duties on employers, the self employed and employees as well as others such as designers, manufacturers or suppliers of articles and substances for use at work. These are expressed as broad general duties in the Health and Safety at Work (HSW) Act but are spelt out in more detail in subsidiary regulations such as those dealing with the management of health and safety and specific health and safety issues.

While most modern health and safety law applies 'across-the-board', there are also additional regulations covering industry sectors such as construction, agriculture, railways, mines and quarries and major hazard and nuclear installations.

If you employ more than five people, by law you must have a health and safety policy statement which you must bring to their attention. You must also record the results of your risk assessments. Although relatively few words are required to satisfy these legal requirements, it is well worth spending a little time to combine your policy statement and assessment record into your own tailor made health and safety action plan.

Know your responsibilities:

3. What needs to be in place?

Working out what modern health and safety law means for your business can be quite a headache. But don't be put off. Yes, on the face of it there do seem to be a lot of regulations and there is a lot of supporting guidance, but the underlying principles are really quite straightforward. Essentially you have to ensure absence of risk to the safety and health of employees and others 'so far as it is reasonably practicable'. So what does that involve?

A health and safety management system

You need to be able to show how you plan, organise, control, monitor and review preventative measures. And you need to appoint a competent person(s) to help you comply with your legal obligations.

Identify hazards

You have to identify your main hazards (things that could cause harm).

Assess risks

You have to assess your risks (the probability that significant harm will occur) and again, if you employ more than five, record the results of your assessment.

Risk control measures

For the most part the law sets out certain health and safety goals to be achieved and indicates appropriate 'benchmarks' to help you work out whether your controls are up to 'reasonably practicable' standards.

This probably sounds like a lot of work, luckily there are a couple of useful documents that can help you understand more: [Health and Safety Made Simple](#)

Developing a Safety System:

3. Getting started

Let's start with a little exercise, all you need is a blank piece of A4 paper:

Write down **your overall health and safety objectives**. Obviously, this needs to be bespoke to your business, but the following examples should help you:

- Avoid accidents and damage to people's health and cutting corners on health and safety to try and save time and money
- Ensure that we pay as much attention to health and safety as any other key business objective
- Always follow safe systems of work
- Avoid buying in unsafe products
- Work to legal requirements as a minimum standard to be achieved
- Always insist on high standards of health and safety when dealing with others
- Strive for continuous improvement in health and safety performance

Underneath this, write down the responsibilities of all employees – from director level right down to the newest recruit:

- Managing director has overall responsibility for health and safety in the company
- Supervisors must make sure safe systems of work are always followed and carry out regular monitoring
- Every member of staff must co-operate in following safe procedures, report problems and make suggestions for improvements
- Our contractors and suppliers must provide us with all necessary safe information and co-operate with our health and safety requirements

Developing a Safety System:

2. The current situation

Of course, life is considerably easier if you have aspects of your safety system in place already. On the other side of your A4 paper make a list of the arrangements you currently have in place that help create a safe working environment. For example:

- Carrying out risk assessments
- Providing necessary training and information
- Monitoring health and safety performance accident/incident reporting
- First aid
- General fire safety
- Obtaining professional advice

To help you accurately assess how well you are doing, RoSPA has developed an online questionnaire that looks at the above issues, as well as many other aspects of workplace health and safety. You can take the questionnaire [HERE](#)

Developing a Safety System:

3. Risk assessments - hazards

Carrying out risk assessments is a fundamental aspect of a strong health and safety system. It doesn't have to be complicated, so we've broken it down into a few simple steps:

Hazards

Classify your work activities in order to identify workplace **hazards** at each operational phase e.g. work equipment, substances, activities which could cause harm, for example: dangerous machinery; heavy loads; slipping, tripping and falling hazards; toxic and flammable substances; display screen equipment; vehicles; or violence from the public. Be systematic. Inspect the workplace. Study documentation and sector guidance. Consult your workforce and their representatives. Observe work practices.

To help you get started, here are some examples of common workplace hazards:

- Slipping, tripping hazards
- Working at height
- Flammable gases
- Electricity
- Noise
- Vibration
- Radiation
- Biological hazards
- Violence
- Stress
- Machinery/work equipment
- Hand tools
- Transport
- Pressure systems
- Manual handling
- Chemicals
- Dust and Fumes
- Confined spaces
- Repetitive manual work
- Temperature
- Lifting Plant
- DSE
- Seating
- Work Station design

- Use a hazard prompt list
- Write down what you think your main hazards are
- Use a simple pro forma with three columns

Developing a safety system:

3. Risk assessments - risks

Work out how likely it is that each hazard might cause an accident or ill health and how serious the consequences might be (in other words, the **risk**). Consider how many people are exposed to each hazard, how often and for how long? Study sources of information such as:

- Accident and ill health statistics (in house and sector) and records
- Legislation and official guidance; workforce experience
- Evidence of 'near-misses'
- Manufacturers' information. Again, observe workforce practices

Use your judgements about likelihood and consequences of harm occurring to determine whether risks are: trivial, tolerable, moderate, substantial; or intolerable. Prioritise risks to help you determine where you should be putting preventive effort.

- A hazard is something with the potential to cause harm.
- Risk is the likelihood of that potential being realised.

Developing a safety system:

3. Risk assessments - control

Control measures

Now determine whether or not 'reasonably practicable' control measures are in place for each risk.

- Check to see that these measures reduce risks to a tolerable level and/or that they comply with relevant legislation and/or official guidance or other standards. Improve where necessary
- Always go for risk avoidance, control at source or risk reduction before selecting controls which rely only on use of personal protective equipment and/or training
- Take account of employee's personal characteristics. Also ensure that adequate emergency arrangements are in place (for example, first aid or evacuation procedures) in case controls should fail
- Decide if you need health surveillance to assess fitness for work or to look for early signs of health damage

Make sure that competent people and appropriate procedures are in place so that control measures continue to be effective, such as:

- Necessary supervision and work authorisation
- Instruction; information and training
- Cooperation and communication maintenance programmes
- Inspections
- Investigation of accidents/problems and 'near misses'!

Record your findings in writing (if you employ 5 or more people you are obliged to do this by law) and communicate them to employees and others affected.

Developing a safety system:

3. Review

A safety policy should never be 'set in stone,' but rather employers must revise their policies as often 'as may be appropriate'.

Review your assessments at least once a year (or sooner if things change) to check that you are achieving adequate risk control. Remember, the aim is to learn from experience to ensure that you are addressing all sources of foreseeable harm to your workforce and/or the public - and that you are taking all 'reasonably practicable' steps to prevent it happening.

Remember, employees must be aware of the policy and its contents. In particular they must understand the arrangements which affect them and what their own responsibilities might be. They may be given their own copy (for example, within an employee handbook) or the policy might be displayed around the workplace. Detailed briefings may be necessary, for example as part of induction training, to ensure full dissemination within the organisation.

The purpose of risk assessment is to confirm that risks have either been eliminated or are being adequately controlled.
If you think it's just a form filling exercise, you've missed the point!

Find the right course:

1. IOSH Managing Safely

IOSH is the Chartered body for health and safety professionals; aiming to raise standards and regulate the profession. Its work includes developing and promoting a code of conduct, as well as developing and accrediting safety training courses.

Our IOSH Managing Safely training will give you a superb grounding in the practical actions you need to handle health and safety in your team.

Managing Safely is IOSH's flagship course. It's designed for managers and supervisors in any organisation or sector. It's a pragmatic course, with a sharp business focus, which is held in high esteem by delegates and is delivered over three, four or five days at locations throughout the UK, or as an in-company option, or online for those overseas or who simply wish to learn from the comfort of their own desk.

We also offer a range of other IOSH courses, click on the links below to find out more...

[IOSH Managing Safely](#)
[IOSH Managing Safely E-learning](#)
[IOSH Refresher Course](#)

[IOSH Managing Safely in Aviation](#)
[IOSH Work Placement Assessors](#)
[IOSH In-company](#)

Find the right course:

2. NEBOSH Health and Safety at Work

NEBOSH training courses offer globally recognised vocationally related qualifications designed to meet health, safety and risk management needs, in all places of work. Qualifications are recognised by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) and the International Institute of Risk and Safety Management (IIRSM).

It's simple: if your job role involves safety, there's a NEBOSH course for you.

The NEBOSH Health and Safety at Work qualification is the ideal place to start your career in health and safety. In short, it is a basic safety training course offering a thorough introduction to health and safety principles and practices in the workplace. The course covers a wide range of topics including:

- The foundations of health and safety
- The responsibility for health and safety
- Health and safety risk assessment and control
- Transport safety
- Hazards and control associated with electricity
- Fire safety
- Hazards and control associated with manual handling and repetitive movement
- Hazards and control associated with hazardous substances
- Hazards and control associated with the working environment

[NEBOSH Health and Safety at Work](#)
[NEBOSH Certificate](#)
[NEBOSH Distance Learning](#)
[NEBOSH International Certificate](#)
[NEBOSH Construction Course](#)
[NEBOSH Diploma](#)
[NEBOSH Revision](#)
[NEBOSH Fire Certificate](#)
[NEBOSH Exams](#)
[NVQ 5 Vocational Safety](#)

Find the right course:

3. Manual Handling

More than 1/3 of all workplace injuries which result in someone being off work for more than 3 days are caused by poor manual handling.

Many of these injuries could be prevented if people used correct manual handling techniques, or 'principles of efficient movement' as they are now known.

Top tips for Manual Handling



- 1 **Conduct a Manual Handling Risk assessment**
- 2 **Ensure employees have the correct Manual Handling training**
- 3 **Use mechanical aids wherever possible**
- 4 **Plan the route before you start**
- 5 **Work from a stable base**
- 6 **Hug the load**
- 7 **Bend your knees**
- 8 **Avoid twisting or leaning**
- 9 **know your limits** (10Kg)
- 10 **Keep your head up**
- 11 **Push a load rather than pull it**

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RoSPA offers a broad range of manual handling courses, so take a look at the options below and find the course that's right for your business...

- [BTEC Manual Handling Trainers](#)
- [Principles in Manual Handling](#)
- [Manual Handling Risk Assessors](#)
- [Manual Handling Trainers Re-certification](#)
- [Manual Handling & Postural Awareness](#)
- [Manual Handling Training for Logistics](#)

Find the right course:

4. DSE Assessors

Display screen equipment assessments are not only a legal requirement - done properly they can actually help combat the musculoskeletal disorders, reduced concentration levels and other ill-health effects that are symptomatic of time spent at poorly-designed workstations.

Computer workstations or equipment can be associated with neck, shoulder, back or arm pains, fatigue and eyestrain. These aches and pains are sometimes called upper limb disorders (ULDs) or repetitive strain injuries (RSI), but these problems can be avoided by following good practice.

The following tips will help you and your colleagues avoid problems:

-  **Take a break** – make sure you spend time away from your screen.
Take short breaks every hour and avoid fatigue
-  **Adjust your screen** – Make sure your screen is clear, adjustable, stable and free from glare
-  **Choose your keyboard** - The space in front of the keyboard needs to be sufficient to provide support for the hands and arms of the operator
-  **Get the right seat** - The work chair must be stable and give you freedom of movement and a comfortable position
-  **Lighting** - Room lighting or spot lighting should ensure satisfactory lighting conditions and an appropriate contrast between the screen and the background environment
-  **Test your eyes** – When did you last have an eye test?

You can become a DSE assessor by taking RoSPA's [DSE Assessors and Ergonomic Principles](#) course. This course will enable you to carry out DSE assessments in the workplace, thus fulfilling that aspect of the employer's duty of care to employees.

Back pain accounts for over 7 million lost working days per year in the UK!

Find the right course:

5. Working at height

More than a million British businesses and 10 million workers are estimated to carry out jobs involving some form of work at height every year. Falls are one of the biggest causes of death and serious injury at work.

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 place duties on employers, the self-employed, and any person that controls the work of others (for example facilities managers or building owners who may contract others to work at height).

As part of the regulations, duty holders must ensure:

- All work at height is properly planned and organised
- Those involved in work at height are competent
- The risks from work at height are assessed and appropriate work equipment is selected and used
- The risks from fragile surfaces are properly controlled
- Equipment for work at height is properly inspected and maintained

If you are responsible for people working at height then a good [Working at Heights training course](#) will provide you with vital information including:

- An overview of working activities involving risk of injury from working at height and typical injuries
- Legal responsibilities including an overview of the Working at Height Regulations
- Basic hazards and factors affecting risk
- Main precautions to prevent falls and falling materials
- Safe working practices for common forms of access equipment
- Inspection requirements for scaffolds

Find the right course:

6. COSHH

Do you or your employees come into contact with any of the following?

-  Chemicals
-  Fumes
-  Dust
-  Vapours
-  Mists
-  Nanotechnology
-  Gases
-  Asphyxiating gases
-  Biological agents

If your business comes into contact with any of the above our [chemical safety training course](#) will equip your employees with an understanding of how substances can harm health. Study with RoSPA, and we'll help ensure your business complies with regulations. It covers the basics of identifying, measuring and controlling exposure to harmful substances.

COSHH training will allow employees to identify, measure and control the exposure to harmful substances, and as a result will safeguard your employees. A COSHH training course should provide you with:

- An understanding of how and which substances can harm health
- Knowledge and definitions of exposure limits
- Skills to understand exposure and to conduct COSHH risk assessments
- A greater understanding of practical control measures and safe systems of work

About RoSPA

RoSPA (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) is a registered charity and one of the UK's leading safety organisations. Through our [workplace safety training](#), [consultancy](#), [fleet](#), [awards](#) and [membership services](#), we work with organisations within the UK and overseas.

Why choose RoSPA training?

RoSPA offers one of the widest ranges of health and safety training courses and in-company safety training in the UK, from operative level right up to director and board level. We are one of the leading providers of NEBOSH and IOSH accredited courses, manual handling, safer people handling, auditor training and core health and safety training courses, covering a wide range of topics within the areas of risk assessment and the management of occupational safety.

We also lead the way in practical health and safety consultancy and audits. Tailored services provide a service that suits and ensures you're fully compliant and - above all - safe.

Which courses does RoSPA offer?

[NEBOSH Courses](#)

[IOSH Courses](#)

[Safer People Handling](#)

[Manual Handling](#)

[Core safety skills](#)

[Practical skills](#)

[Auditor training](#)

[In-company training](#)

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accidents don't have to happen

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