Monitor and maintain health and safety

Note: This section is in two parts

Maintain good standards of health and safety for self and others

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PART 2

Maintain good standards of health and safety for self and others

Health and Safety Roles

The maintenance of a safe working environment involves a partnership between the employer and the employees.

Employer’s role

It is the employer’s duty to provide a safe working environment, which will include:

i. Providing safe and suitable tools, equipment and machinery for the task.
ii. Maintenance carried out to manufacturer’s specification.
iii. Training in the safe use of the equipment.
iv. Using safe systems of work.
v. Selection and provision of suitable PPE.

Employee’s role

It is your responsibility to work in a safe manner:

i. Only to use tools, equipment or machinery on which you have been trained.
ii. To report any accidents, damage to equipment or property, breakdowns, other problems or hazards at once.
iii. To be aware of the safety of yourself, others and the environment at all times.
iv. To wear suitable PPE when necessary and follow safe systems of work.
Reporting

Communication is vitally important at work and takes many forms.

a) Reporting personal health information

This is vital and should include:

i. Illness.  
ii. Disability.  
iii. Conditions.  
iv. Medication.  
v. Psychiatric.  
vi. Any other.

If your employer is aware of the problem, he can ensure you or others are not put at risk through it.

b) Reporting hazards or dangers

Often you are your employers' eyes and ears. It is vital that you help create a safe environment by making the employer aware of any problems.

c) Reporting accidents

Reporting of accidents and first aid procedures are covered in Part 1 of this handout, section 'Accident procedures'.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

After carrying out risk assessments and putting control measures in place to reduce the likelihood of an accident, the use of PPE is implemented as a last resort. You must develop the habit of wearing suitable PPE when required.

Where PPE is provided, your employer will make it mandatory to wear it at relevant times. If you are found not wearing the relevant PPE, your employer will take disciplinary action against you.

   i. Employers must supply PPE free of charge.
   ii. Employees must look after the PPE and report any problems.

A) Examples of PPE

PPE must pass the basic performance criteria for its intended use, either the CE mark (European standard) or if no European standard exists, kite marked (BSI standard).

a) Gloves
Suitable gloves should be available to each task area e.g. if working with chemicals, then a pair of Nitrile gloves should be used. If pruning shrubs, then a pair of rigger gloves should be available.

b) Visors/eye protection
A suitable face shield for carrying out tasks such as strimming or brushcutting should be provided and the shield should offer full protection to cover the face from flying debris. Other shields may be required for specialist task such as welding or spraying chemicals.

c) Head protection
Lightweight, comfortable and adjustable helmet/hardhats should be provided to offer protection to the head.

There are various designs of helmet and can be purchased with face visors and ear defenders fitted as one complete unit.

d) Foot protection
There is a vast range of protection offered by different manufacturers for your feet. You have to ask yourself “Do I need steel toecapped boots to protect the toes from being crushed, broken or cut? Do I require a steel midsole to prevent nails and other sharp objects from piercing the foot or cutting through it? Do I require boots that will give me adequate ankle support if I am working on steep banks?”

It is usually required that boots will keep your feet dry while working in the rain as well as being comfortable to walk in. It could be advisable to have both boots and Wellingtons with steel toe-caps and midsoles.

e) Ear defenders
Your ears are very sensitive to noise and as such any loud or prolonged period of noise will damage your hearing that may not be noticed until much later in your life.

Employers should identify when hearing protection should be worn when using their equipment and/or machinery. This can be done by carrying out noise measurement (this requires specialist equipment and training) or using information provided in the manufacturers’ handbooks and by reading hazard warning signs and details on the machine.
Hearing protections should be used which will be suitable for the purpose (adequately controls the noise that you are exposed to), comfortable, adjustable and fit fully over the operators’ ears. Alternatively, earplug inserts could be used where they prove more practical and comfortable.

f) Overalls and waterproof clothing
You may require a one piece overall which will prevent clothing from becoming dirty or contaminated or to prevent loose clothing from being caught in moving parts of machinery. There may be a need to provide high visibility clothing, to make you more visible in areas where machinery is travelling. It should also be close fitting at the ankles and wrists with an elasticated waist for a tight fit.

Waterproof clothing will be required if you are working in the rain and should keep you dry for the period of time that you are working.

When applying plant protection products, spraying suits are required for this specialist area and these are usually a one piece with a hood, which are chemically resistant and can be re-useable or disposable.

g) Respiratory Protection (RPE)
There is a wide variety of respirators and breathing masks available, which include:

- Nuisance masks – Simply designed to restrict odours.
- Particulate/dust – To prevent inhalation of dusts.
- Vapour – To prevent inhalation of vapours.
- Gas – To prevent inhalation of toxic fumes.

i. Select the appropriate respirator (RPE)
Although the use of certain RPE may overlap, no respirator is ideal for all applications and care should be taken to understand the limitations of any respirator before selection.

ii. Training
Once the respirator has been correctly selected for the hazard, the application and the individual wearer, it is essential to train the wearer in the correct fitting, use, maintenance and care of the respirator.

Your respirator training programme and individual respirator training should be recorded.

B) Maintenance and replacement
This is essential and should include, where appropriate:

i. Testing.
ii. Cleaning.
iii. Examination.
iv. Repair.
v. Replacement (especially for disposables).

For some PPE/RPE recording maintenance and use is mandatory (respirators) but for most it is just a question of common sense.
C) Storage
Once issued, equipment should be kept in good order. Employers should supply facilities, usually separate lockers for contaminated and clean PPE.

D) Training and instruction
This applies not only to users but also to those who test, store and repair PPE.
i. Theoretical training to recognise limitations and risks.
ii. Practical training in safe and proper uses.
iii. Repeat training as needed.
iv. Enforcing the use of PPE.
Manual handling

The specific legislation which covers this area is the "Manual Handling Regulations 1992".

The term "manual handling" includes transporting and supporting a load by lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving by hand or by bodily force. The weight of the load is only one factor in regard to hazard and risks involved. Posture and centre of gravity are also important factors in safe manual handling. The two main thrusts of the regulations are:

A) Manual handling risk assessment
Where possible, manual handling should be avoided. If it cannot be avoided, a risk assessment should be carried out. (See Part 1 of this handout, section 'Basic guide to health and safety regulations – Manual Handling Operations Procedures).

B) Training in safe handling, lifting and carrying
Handling, lifting and carrying.
Learn the lifting code.

- THINK before you do anything.
- STAND as close to the load as you can and spread your feet to form a stable base. If the object to be lifted is on a shelf or rack, slide the load closer to you.
- BEND your knees, keeping your back in a natural line. Do not bend down: if you bend your knees too much, it will reduce your power to lift.
- GRASP the load firmly with your hands, not just your fingers. If the load is rough or awkwardly shaped, remember to wear protective gloves.
- RAISE your head up as you start to lift.
- LIFT, using your legs, not your back. Move your feet.
- HOLD the load close to the centre of your body as you move.
- MAKE sure that you can see where you are going.
Hygiene

At work you could be handling equipment and materials which are dirty and contaminated.

A) Some simple hygiene rules to follow
   i. Use barrier creams to protect hands from contaminates.
   ii. Thoroughly wash all contaminated skin with hot water and soap. The product used should be able to remove ingrained grime, oil and grease e.g. Swarfega. It should also be safe to use and environmentally friendly.
   iii. Moisturise hands to prevent dry skin conditions developing such as dermatitis.
   iv. If there are any cuts or abrasions to the skin, then an anti-bacterial cream will have to be used to prevent infection. Have you had a tetanus inoculation and is it up-to-date?
   v. Always remember to follow these simple steps before breaks and finishing for the day. Do not eat, drink or smoke until hygiene procedures have been carried out.

B) Tetanus infection (Lockjaw)
   This particularly dangerous infection results from tetanus germs in a wound, which produce a toxic substance. This spreads to the body’s nerves causing severe muscular spasm, particularly in the jaw, hence the name "lockjaw". It is a difficult condition to treat and, if not treated at an early stage, can lead to death of the person infected.

   Every wound carries the risk of tetanus infection, but the disease is preventable by immunisation. You should be inoculated against tetanus and get a booster injection every 10 years or as advised by your GP.

C) Leptospirosis (Weil’s disease)
   Two forms of this disease exist and one form is where the disease is transmitted from cattle to humans. The other is where there is contact with the urine of infected rats.

   Early symptoms are similar to influenza such as fever, headache, aches and pains etc.

   It is normally caught through cuts, scratches, mouth, nose or eyes after contact with infected urine or contaminated water such as in sewers, ditches, ponds and slow moving rivers.

D) Hepatitis
   There are several forms of this disease and vaccinations are available for the most common types. This disease can be caught by contact with contaminated human sewage or body fluids.

   **Be careful here!**

   We often get asked to unblock a sewer or drain which will be carrying body fluid.

   Drug addict hypodermic needles pose a threat and great care should be taken.

E) Workplace hygiene
   Get in the habit of taking a regular look around the workshop and rest facility, checking for potential dangers. The work area should always be kept clean, neat and free of slip or trip hazards.
i. All debris should be swept up and removed.
ii. Tools should be stored on tool boards.
iii. Any paper and boxes should be collected and taken to the refuse area to minimise any possible outbreak of fire.
iv. Contaminated rags with oils and paints etc. should be placed in a sealed bag for disposal by contractor.
v. Always clean up spillage immediately with absorbent material.
vi. Always store equipment and materials in their designated area after use.
vii. Empty bins daily.
viii. Do not leave food or crumbs lying out.
ix. Keep food preparation areas, tools and equipment clean at all times.
Accidents and emergencies

Whether it is because of a simple nosebleed or a major heart attack, the chances are that at some point in your life you are going to be glad to see a first aider on the scene.

While some industries are certainly more hazardous than others, under the First Aid at Work Regulations 1981, every employer has a duty to provide adequate first aid provision for his or her employees.

It is a legal requirement to have trained first aiders on site and well stocked first aid boxes.

A) Accident procedures
(See Part 1 of this handout, section 'Basic guide to health and safety regulations – 'Accident procedures').

IMPORTANT NOTE: The information given in these notes is provided for information ONLY it does not in any way provide you with the skills and knowledge to become an Appointed Person or a First Aider. This can only be achieved by attending a training course that has been approved by the Health and Safety Executive.

B) First aid
First aid is carried out in order to stabilise the patient. Know your procedures and who is trained to give first aid and make decisions, especially in regard to more serious cases.

Do not make decisions beyond your training and ability. However, everyone should be aware of basic first aid.

a) In the event of an accident:
Do you know what to do in an emergency? How would you respond if a falling box knocked one of your workmates unconscious or if a colleague has a heart attack?

Different situations obviously require different approaches, but whatever the situation, in the first instance call for help.

However, while you are waiting for the first aider to arrive, or if you are in a situation where it may take a while to get help, there are some basic techniques worth knowing.

b) Is the casualty unconscious?
Even if an unconscious casualty does not need resusctating, it is important to make sure that there are no barriers to their breathing.

So while you are waiting for trained help to arrive, remove any obvious obstructions from the mouth.

This can be done by placing two fingers under the point of the chin and lifting the jaw. At the same you should place your other hand across the forehead and gently tilt the head back.
c) **Breathing**

Next check to see if the casualty is breathing. Place your head near his or her mouth and:

- **LOOK** to see if there is any chest movement;
- **LISTEN** for the sound of breathing;
- **FEEL** for breath on your face.

Always continue these checks for at least five seconds before concluding the casualty is not breathing. Rash decisions could cost someone their life, so try to keep a clear head whatever the situation.

**Is the casualty breathing?**

d) **Pulse**

If breathing is not evident and the first aider or other help has still not arrived, check for a pulse.

Tilt the head back and use your fingers to feel for the casualty's Adam's apple. Carefully slide your fingers back into the gap between the windpipe and the muscle that runs alongside it and feel for another five seconds for the pulse.

Even if these basic steps are all you take, you will at least have valuable information to give help when it arrives.

e) **Recovery position**

1. If your unconscious casualty is breathing, it is important to get him or her into the recovery position. Do this by kneeling beside the casualty and lifting the chin – as described on the previous page – to open the airway. The arms should be straight with the arm nearest to you positioned at right angles to the body, elbow bent and the palm of the hand facing upwards.

2. Secondly, bring the other arm across the chest placing the hand against the casualty's cheek with the palm outwards. Use your other hand to take hold of the thigh furthest away from you and pull the knee keeping the feet on the ground.

3. Now with your hand still on the thigh, pull the casualty towards you, maintain support of the head and making sure his or her other hand, the one held against the cheek, stays in position. Tilt back the head to ensure breathing is not obstructed.

4. Is the casualty in the position illustrated? If so, you have managed to get him or her into the recovery position and should repeat checks of breathing and pulse regularly. If there is still no trained help at hand, perhaps because you are working in a remote spot or because there is nobody else on site, now is the time to seek extra help. If a safe system of work is in operation, provision should already have been made for dealing with a situation like this. If not, find a telephone and ring for help but do not leave the casualty alone for too long.
f) **Resuscitation**

If your unconscious casualty is not breathing but he or she still has a pulse, you might need to try mouth-to-mouth ventilation.

Again start by making sure the airway is open and that the head is tilted back. Pinch together the casualty’s nostrils between your thumb and index finger. Take a deep breath and place your lips around the casualty’s mouth.

Blow in through the mouth and keep blowing until you can see the chest rise. Then move your mouth away and allow the chest to fall. This process should be repeated every six seconds remembering to keep the nostrils pinched shut.

Be sure that the casualty is not breathing before using mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

If the unconscious casualty is not breathing and has no pulse, then in addition to the above you might need to use chest compression to get the heart started again.

This method should only be used if you are certain there is no pulse; used inappropriately, it could even kill the patient. Please note that artificial respiration and chest compression should only be carried out by a qualified first aider. If the casualty dies through your actions, you could be held responsible. By the same token, used correctly, it could save their life. So it is certainly worth discussing it with your first aider now before an incident where you might have to use it unexpectedly.

*Are you certain the casualty has no pulse?*  
*Check again.*

g) **Bleeding**

If someone is badly cut in a workplace incident (or for that matter if the same happens in the home or elsewhere), you should remove clothing to reveal the wound and use your hands and fingers to apply pressure.

To avoid infection, it is best to use a clean dressing or pad from the first aid box to do this but otherwise use anything else suitable you might have to hand, such as a clean handkerchief.

Keeping the pressure firmly applied, raise and support the injured part and get help.

If the bleeding is very heavy and the first aider has not arrived on the scene, make sure someone calls for an ambulance.
h) *Broken bones*
Moving someone who has just broken their arm or leg could complicate the injury. Tell the casualty to keep as still as possible, supporting the injured limb with your hand. Get help.

i) *Burns*
In the event of a fire, your first reaction should be to call the fire brigade and follow the evacuation procedures set down by your employer. Do you know what they are? Have you had a fire drill lately? If the answer to either of these questions is no, speak to your employer about it.

If you see a workmate whose clothing has caught fire, prevent him or her from running outside. Try to either lie them down, with the flames on the upper side and pour water on them or wrap them in a coat or rug to starve the flames of air.

j) *Chemical burns*
Your employer’s assessment under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) should mean the risks from dangerous chemicals are kept to a minimum.

If a potentially dangerous substance splashes a workmate, do what you can to protect yourself from danger – for example by wearing gloves – and get the casualty to cold running water, which will relieve the pain.

Clothing and jewellery near to the burned area should be removed, but do not remove anything that sticks to the burn – this could make any injuries worse.

k) *Eye contamination*
All eye injuries are potentially serious because particles may perforate the eyeball resulting in internal damage, possible infection and blindness.

Particles of dust or grit or loose eyelashes are the most common foreign bodies found in the eyes. They stick to the outer surface of the eyelid, normally the upper lid, causing considerable discomfort and inflammation. In most cases these can easily be removed. However, never attempt to remove a foreign body if it is on the coloured part of the eye (pupil and iris) or embedded in the eyeball; seek medical aid immediately.

i. **Symptoms and signs**
- Casualty’s eye is painful and itches.
- Casualty’s vision may be impaired.
- Watering of affected eye.
- Casualty’s eye is red.
ii. Aim
Remove particle gently. If unsuccessful, take the casualty to hospital.

iii. Treatment
■ Advise the casualty not to rub their eye.
■ Ask them to sit down in a chair facing the light and lean back.
■ Stand behind the person with their head resting against you. Use the index finger and thumb of one hand to separate the affected lids. Ask them to look right, left, up and down so that you can examine every part of the eye.
■ If you can see the foreign body try to wash it out with a sterile water solution and an eye irrigator. If these are not available, irrigate the eye with tap water. Incline the casualty’s head towards the injured side so that the water will drain out over the cheek away from the sound eye and pour water from a jug.
■ If this is unsuccessful or no water is available and the foreign body is not sticking to the casualty’s eye, lift the foreign body off using a moistened swab or the damp corner of a clean handkerchief.
■ If the foreign body is under the upper lid, ask them to look down. Grasp the eyelashes and pull the upper lid downwards and outwards over the lower lid. If the lashes of the lower lid do not brush the foreign body off, get the casualty to blink the eye under water in the hope that it will float off.
■ If you cannot remove the foreign body, cover the affected eye with an eye pad or a piece of gauze wrapped around a soft pad of cotton wool. Secure it lightly in position and seek medical aid.

If the eye has been contaminated with chemicals wash out the eye immediately and seek medical assistance.

The first aid that you provide could save someone’s life. It may just be reassuring the casualty or comforting them but it will make a difference.

These are just guidelines and in the first instance a qualified first aider should be called to the scene.

Please be aware of your limitations and if you are not sure what to do, then wait for assistance.
Lone working

Where possible this should be avoided. Try to work in groups or pairs. Lone working is particularly dangerous on large or isolated sites.

- Reduce the risk by:
  1. Not doing the task unless at least two workers are present.
  2. Making sure people know where you are and when you will return.
  3. Using mobile phones and 2-way radios to make contact regularly with other staff members.
  4. Physically checking on people.
Environmental awareness

If there is any chance of environmental damage on your site or any surrounding areas, an environmental assessment must be carried out. Being proactive is essential. Think about: people, animals, insects, plants, water etc.

Guidance

i. Only certified pesticide licence holders are allowed to use chemicals.
ii. Always store chemicals in their container in a locked safe.
iii. Check calibration for spray operations and fertiliser applications to minimise leaching or run-off.
iv. Never allow chemicals to pollute water, ditches or drains.
v. Never pour oil or any other chemical into the ground to soak away.
vi. Always try and minimise wastage of materials and equipment whilst working.
Recycling

Some work activities generate lots of waste material and these are quite often dumped with no thought for the environment. The ideal solution to this problem is where you can think of a need for the waste material, re-use it, therefore reducing unnatural changes to the environment.

Here are some examples:

i. Use grass clippings as a mulch and around tree bases or for composting.

ii. Tree and shrub cuttings could be fed through a chipper creating woodchips for paths and bedding areas.

iii. Hollow cores could be used to fill potholes and depressions on fairways.

iv. Sub-soil removed from drainage operations could be used for areas of landfill.

v. Storing waste oil from machinery to be collected and recycled by commercial oil disposal service.