

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT (HWSA) 1974

The basis of British health and safety law is the HSWA. It sets out the duties that employers have towards their employees and members of the public, and those that employees have towards each other. The duties are governed by the principle of 'so far as is reasonably practicable': looking at what the risks are, and taking sensible measures to prevent them. Employers **MUST** perform a risk assessment.

The Health and Safety Commission and Executive (HSC/E) consults widely with various industries, produces publications and is responsible for inspections. Its publications include:

Guidance:

- helps to interpret what the law says
- helps companies comply with the law
- gives technical advice
- guidance is not compulsory, but if followed the law will usually be complied with

Approved Codes of Practice:

- have special legal status
- practical advice on how to comply with law
- examples of good practice
- if not followed employers have to show they are complying with law in another way

Regulations:

- these are law, approved by parliament
- made under HSWA following proposals from HSC
- no choice but to obey!

These cover all sorts of things at work:

Arranging for training

Manual handling

First Aid

Safe ventilation, heating, lighting, seating, desks, computer screens etc

Safety of equipment and machinery

Construction site safety

RIDDOR (system for reporting occupational injury, disease and dangerous events)

COSHH (Control Of Substances Hazardous to Health)

Noise, electrical and gas safety

Employer insurance

Risk assessment and implementing necessary measures