ORES GROUP

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Workplace health, safety and welfare

A short guide for Employees

Health

The measures outlined in this section contribute to the general working environment of people in the workplace.

Ventilation

Workplaces need to be adequately ventilated. Fresh, clean air should be drawn from a source outside the workplace, uncontaminated by discharges from flues, chimneys or other process outlets, and be circulated through the workrooms.

Ventilation should also remove and dilute warm, humid air and provide air movement which gives a sense of freshness without causing a draught. If the workplace contains process or heating equipment or other sources of dust, fumes or vapours, more fresh air will be needed to provide adequate ventilation.

Windows or other openings may provide sufficient ventilation but, where necessary, mechanical ventilation systems should be provided and regularly maintained.

Temperatures in indoor workplaces

Environmental factors (such as humidity and sources of heat in the workplace) combine with personal factors (such as the clothing a worker is wearing and how physically demanding their work is) to influence what is called someone's 'thermal comfort'.

Individual personal preference makes it difficult to specify a thermal environment which satisfies everyone. For workplaces where the activity is mainly sedentary, for example offices, the temperature should normally be at least 16 °C. If work involves physical effort it should be at least 13 °C (unless other laws require lower temperatures).

Work in hot or cold environments

The risk to the health of workers increases as conditions move further away from those generally accepted as comfortable. Risk of heat stress arises, for example, from working in high air temperatures, exposure to high thermal radiation or high levels of humidity, such as those found in foundries, glass works and laundries. Cold stress may arise, for example, from working in cold stores, food preparation areas and in the open air during winter.

Assessment of the risk to workers' health from working in either a hot or cold environment needs to consider both personal and environmental factors. Personal factors include body activity, the amount and type of clothing, and duration of exposure. Environmental factors include ambient temperature and radiant heat; and if the work is outside, sunlight, wind velocity and the presence of rain or snow. Actions arising from your assessment may include:

- introducing engineering measures to control the thermal effects in a workplace environment, for example heat effects, may involve insulating any plant which acts as a radiant heat source, thereby improving air movement, increasing ventilation rates and maintaining the appropriate level of humidity. The radiant heat effects of the sun on indoor environments can be addressed either by orientating the building so that it doesn't suffer from the effects of solar loading, or where this is not possible, by the use of blinds or shutters on windows. Where workers are exposed to cold and it is not reasonably practicable to avoid exposure you should consider,
- restriction of exposure by, for example, re-organising tasks to build in rest periods or other breaks from work. This will allow workers to rest in an area where the environment is comfortable and, if necessary, to replace bodily fluids to combat dehydration or cold. If work rates cause excessive sweating, workers may need more frequent rest breaks and a facility for changing into dry clothing;
- medical pre-selection of employees to ensure that they are fit to work in these environments;
- use of suitable personal protective clothing (which may need to be heat resistant or insulating, depending on whether the risk is from heat or cold);
- acclimatisation of workers to the environment in which they work, particularly for hot environments;
- training in the precautions to be taken; and

■ supervision, to ensure that the precautions identified by the assessment are taken.

Further advice on thermal comfort in the workplace can be found on HSE's website at: www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/thermal

Lighting

Lighting should be sufficient to enable people to work and move about safely. If necessary, local lighting should be provided at individual workstations and at places of particular risk such as crossing points on traffic routes. Lighting and light fittings should not create any hazard.

Automatic emergency lighting, powered by an independent source, should be provided where sudden loss of light would create a risk.

Cleanliness and waste materials

Every workplace and the furniture, furnishings and fittings should be kept clean and it should be possible to keep the surfaces of floors, walls and ceilings clean. Cleaning and the removal of waste should be carried out as necessary by an effective method. Waste should be stored in suitable receptacles.

Room dimensions and space

Workrooms should have enough free space to allow people to move about with ease. The volume of the room when empty, divided by the number of people normally working in it, should be at least 11 cubic metres. All or part of a room over 3.0 m high should be counted as 3.0 m high. 11 cubic metres per person is a minimum and may be insufficient depending on the layout, contents and the nature of the work.

Workstations and seating

Workstations should be suitable for the people using them and for the work they do. People should be able to leave workstations swiftly in an emergency. If work can or must be done sitting, seats which are suitable for the people using them and for the work they do should be provided. Seating should give adequate support for the lower back, and footrests should be provided for workers who cannot place their feet flat on the floor.

Safety

Maintenance

The workplace, and certain equipment, devices and systems should be maintained in efficient working order (efficient for health, safety and welfare). Such maintenance is required for mechanical ventilation systems; equipment and

devices which would cause a risk to health, safety or welfare if a fault occurred; and equipment and devices intended to prevent or reduce hazard.

The condition of the buildings needs to be monitored to ensure that they have appropriate stability and solidity for their use. This includes risks from the normal running of the work process (eg vibration, floor loadings) and foreseeable risks (eg fire in a cylinder store).

Floors and traffic routes

'Traffic route' means a route for pedestrian traffic, vehicles, or both, and includes any stairs, fixed ladder, doorway, gateway, loading bay or ramp.

There should be sufficient traffic routes, of sufficient width and headroom, to allow people and vehicles to circulate safely with ease.

Horizontal swinging barriers used as gates at car park or similar entrances should be locked open or locked shut (preferably by padlock) so that they do not swing open and constitute a risk to oncoming vehicles. This guidance also relates to duties under the requirements of the Regulations covering doors and gates.

To allow people and vehicles to move safely, the best approach is to keep vehicles and pedestrians apart by ensuring that they use entirely separate routes. If people and vehicles have to share a traffic route, use kerbs, barriers or clear markings to designate a safe walkway and, where pedestrians need to cross a vehicle route, provide clearly marked crossing points with good visibility, bridges or subways. Make sure the shared route is well lit.

It is often difficult for drivers to see behind their vehicle when they are reversing; as far as possible, plan traffic routes so that drivers do not need to reverse. This can be achieved by using one-way systems and drive-through loading areas.

Set appropriate speed limits, and make sure they, and any other traffic rules, are obeyed. Provide route markings and signs so that drivers and pedestrians know where to go and what rules apply to their route, so they are warned of any potential hazards.

Loading bays should have at least one exit point from the lower level, or a refuge should be provided to avoid people being struck or crushed by vehicles.

Where a load is tipped into a pit or similar place, and the vehicle is liable to fall into it, barriers or portable wheel stops should be provided at the end of the traffic route.

Floors and traffic routes should be sound and strong enough for the loads placed on them and the traffic expected to use them. The surfaces should not have holes or be uneven or slippery, and should be kept free of obstructions and from any article or substance which may cause a person to slip, trip or fall.

Criteria for defects such as subsidence, unevenness, pot holes, collection of surface water, cracks and ruts should be determined and set, and maintenance systems developed to undertake repair when these limits are exceeded.

Open sides of staircases should be fenced with an upper rail at 900 mm or higher, and a lower rail. A handrail should be provided on at least one side of every staircase, and on both sides if there is a particular risk. Additional handrails may be required down the centre of wide staircases. Access between floors should not be by ladders or steep stairs.

Falls into dangerous substances

The consequences of falling into dangerous substances are so serious that a high standard of protection is required. Dangerous substances in tanks, pits or other structures should be securely fenced or covered. Traffic routes associated with them should also be securely fenced.

Duties to prevent falls from height in general are covered by the Work at Height Regulations 2005 (see *Further reading*).

Transparent or translucent doors, gates or walls and windows

Windows, transparent or translucent surfaces in walls, partitions, doors and gates should, where necessary for reasons of health and safety, be made of safety material or be protected against breakage. If there is a danger of people coming into contact with it, it should be marked or incorporate features to make it apparent.

Employers will need to consider whether there is a foreseeable risk of people coming into contact with glazing and being hurt. If this is the case, the glazing will need to meet the requirements of the Regulations.

Windows

Openable windows, skylights and ventilators should be capable of being opened, closed or adjusted safely and, when open, should not pose any undue risk to anyone.

Windows and skylights should be designed so that they may be cleaned safely. When considering if they can be cleaned safely, account may be taken of equipment used in conjunction with the window or skylight or of devices fitted to the building.

Doors and gates

Doors and gates should be suitably constructed and fitted with safety devices if necessary.

Doors and gates which swing both ways and conventionally hinged doors on main traffic routes should have a transparent viewing panel.

Power-operated doors and gates should have safety features to prevent people being struck or trapped and, where necessary, should have a readily identifiable and accessible control switch or device so that they can be stopped quickly in an emergency.

Upward-opening doors or gates need to be fitted with an effective device to prevent them falling back. Provided that they are properly maintained, counterbalance springs and similar counterbalance or ratchet devices to hold them in the open position are acceptable. Powered vertical opening doors that are powerful enough to lift an adult or child should be fitted with measures to prevent this.

Escalators and moving walkways

Escalators and moving walkways should function safely, be equipped with any necessary safety devices, and be fitted with one or more emergency stop controls which are easily identifiable and readily accessible.

Welfare

Sanitary conveniences and washing facilities

Suitable and sufficient sanitary conveniences and washing facilities should be provided at readily accessible places. They and the rooms containing them should be kept clean and be adequately ventilated and lit. Washing facilities should have running hot and cold or warm water, soap and clean towels or other means of cleaning or drying. If required by the type of work, showers should also be provided. Men and women should 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.

Drinking water

An adequate supply of high-quality drinking water, with an upward drinking jet or suitable cups, should be provided. Water should only be provided in refillable enclosed containers where it cannot be obtained directly from a mains supply. The containers should be refilled at least daily (unless they are chilled water dispensers where the containers are returned to the supplier for refilling). Bottled water/water dispensing systems may still be provided as a secondary source of drinking water. Drinking water does not have to be marked unless there is a significant risk of people drinking non-drinking water.

Accommodation for clothing and facilities for changing

Adequate, suitable and secure space should be provided to store workers' own clothing and special clothing. As far as is reasonably practicable the facilities should allow for drying clothing. Changing facilities should also be provided for workers who change into special work clothing. The facilities should be readily

accessible from workrooms and washing and eating facilities, and should ensure the privacy of the user, be of sufficient capacity, and be provided with seating.

Facilities for rest and to eat meals

Suitable and sufficient, readily accessible rest facilities should be provided.

Seats should be provided for workers to use during breaks. These should be in a place where personal protective equipment need not be worn. Rest areas or rooms should be large enough and have sufficient seats with backrests and tables for the number of workers likely to use them at any one time, including suitable access and seating which is adequate for the number of disabled people at work.

Where workers regularly eat meals at work, suitable and sufficient facilities should be provided for the purpose. Such facilities should also be provided where food would otherwise be likely to be contaminated.

Work areas can be counted as rest areas and as eating facilities, provided they are adequately clean and there is a suitable surface on which to place food.

Where provided, eating facilities should include a facility for preparing or obtaining a hot drink. Where hot food cannot be obtained in or reasonably near to the workplace, workers may need to be provided with a means for heating their own food (e.g. microwave oven).

Canteens or restaurants may be used as rest facilities provided there is no obligation to purchase food.

Suitable rest facilities should be provided for pregnant women and nursing mothers. They should be near to sanitary facilities and, where necessary, include the facility to lie down.

From 1 July 2007, it has been against the law to smoke in virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces in England, including most work vehicles. Similar legislation exists in Scotland and Wales. Further information is available at: www.smokefreeengland.co.uk.

I, _____ hereby declare that I understand the above Health & Safety policies of Ores Group Ltd.

Signature: Date: