

Welfare Regulations

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 2002, cover a wide range of basic health, safety and welfare issues in most workplaces. These regulations do not apply to domestic premises.

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 2002 expands on duties in the Health and Safety at Work Act, sections 2 and 4; and are intended to ensure adequate welfare facilities are provided for people at work, including those with disabilities. The following is a summary of measures covered by the Welfare Regulations:

Health

Ventilation

Workplaces should be adequately ventilated. Fresh, clean air should be drawn from a source outside the workplace. Ventilation should remove and dilute warm humid air and provide air movement which gives a sense of freshness without causing a draught. Windows and other openings may provide sufficient ventilation but where necessary, mechanical ventilation systems should be provided and maintained regularly.

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 must 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

The workplace, furniture, furnishings and fittings, surfaces of floors, walls and

ceilings should be kept clean. Cleaning and waste removal should be carried out as necessary and effectively.

Room dimensions and space

Workrooms should have enough free space to allow people to move about with ease. The Health and Safety Executive recommends that the volume of the room when empty divided by the number of people normally working in it should be at least 11 cubic metres.

Workstations and seating

People should be able to leave workstations swiftly in an emergency. Seating should give adequate support for the lower back. Footrests should be provided for workers who cannot place their feet flat on the floor.

Temperature in indoor workplaces

For workplaces where the activity is mainly deskbound, the temperature should normally be at least 16°C while those that require physical effort should be at least 13°C, (unless other laws allow 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. Those working in high air temperatures, high thermal radiation or high levels of humidity are at risk of heat stress while those working in cold stores, food preparation areas and in open air in winter are at risk of cold stress.

Assessment of the risks to workers' health from working in either a hot or cold environment needs to consider both personal and environment 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 assessments may include:

- ▲ engineering measures to control the thermal effects in a workplace;
- ▲ restriction of exposure by re-organising tasks to fit in rest periods and other breaks from work.
- ▲ medical pre-selection of employees to ensure they are fit for work;
- ▲ personal protective clothing – either heat resistant or insulating depending on whether the risk is from heat or cold;
- ▲ slow acclimatisation of workers to the environment in which they work, particularly hot environments;
- ▲ training and supervision to ensure the precautions identified by the assessment are taken and that workers can spot the symptoms of heat and cold stress.

Further advice on thermal comfort in the workplace can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/thermal

Safety

Maintenance

The workplace, certain equipment, devices and systems should be maintained in efficient working order. The condition of all buildings needs to be monitored to ensure they have appropriate stability and solidity for their use.

Floors and traffic routes

Traffic route refers to pedestrian traffic, vehicles or both and includes any stairs, fixed ladder, doorway, gateway, loading bay or ramp. These routes should be of sufficient width and headroom to allow people and vehicles move safely with ease.

Vehicles and people

should have separate traffic routes or there must be clear markings, barriers or kerbs for safe walkways. Speed limits should be set and obeyed. Loading bays should have at least one exit point from the lower level or a refuge to avoid people being struck or crushed

by vehicles. Traffic routes should be planned so drivers do not need to reverse – it is difficult for drivers to see behind their vehicles when reversing.

Open sides of staircases

These should be fenced with an upper rail at 900mm 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. Access between floors should not be by ladders or steep stairs.

Falls into dangerous substances

Dangerous substances in tanks, pits or other structures should be securely fenced and covered & Traffic routes securely fenced. The Work at Height Regulations 2005 concerns duties to prevent falls.

Visibility and safety of doors and windows

Transparent or translucent doors, windows, etc should be made of safety material or be protected against breakage or marked or incorporate features to make it noticeable.

Windows, skylights and ventilators

These 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.

Doors and gates

should be fitted with safety devices if necessary. Doors and gates which swing both ways should have a transparent viewing panel. Power assisted 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.

Escalators and moving walkways

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

Welfare

Sanitary conveniences and washing facilities

Facilities need to be suitable and sufficient and should be provided at readily accessible places. They and the room 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 a means of drying. Showers should be provided if required by the type of work. 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

Adequate supply of high-quality drinking water with suitable cups should be provided. Water should be provided in refillable enclosed containers where it cannot be obtained directly from a mains supply.

Accommodation for clothing and facilities for changing

Adequate, suitable and secure space

should be provided to store workers' own clothing and special clothing. Where possible, the facilities should allow for drying clothing. The facilities should be readily accessible from workrooms and must ensure privacy of the user, be of sufficient capacity and be provided with seating.

Facilities for rest and to eat meals

Facilities should be suitable, sufficient and readily accessible. Seats with backrests and tables should be provided for breaks in a place where personal protective equipment need not be worn. Rest areas should be large enough for the number of workers likely to use them at any one time.

Eating facilities

Facilities should include a facility for preparing or obtaining a hot drink, and a means for obtaining and /or heating food. Canteens or restaurants may be used as rest facilities provided there is no obligation to purchase food.

Rest facilities

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

From *Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare – A short guide for managers* (www.hse.gov.uk). Further information can be also obtained from the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 on the same website.

Factsheets online www.lhc.org.uk London advice 020 7794 5999



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