

## Health and safety

### Health and safety

It is your responsibility to ensure that all appropriate and relevant Health and Safety rules and regulations are followed so as to meet the legal requirements of keeping your staff, volunteers and members of the public safe from harm or injury. To do this you need to have policies and procedures, carry out risk assessments and appropriate training to consider and avoid all possible hazards.

#### 1 | Health and safety policy

It is good practice for all organisations to have a health and safety (H&S) policy to ensure that you are meeting all your responsibilities although, in law, it is organisations with five or more employees who are obliged to do so.

#### 2 | Insurance

Appropriate insurance is very important in the event of an accident but too complex to cover in the fact sheet. As well as finding out the necessary insurance to cover your type of organisation and services do also remember that if holding an open day or fair for example, 'fun' entertainment, music, catering, etc, might need extra and different insurance cover. A risk, fire and first aid assessment will be needed to identify any extra hazards and dangers that might exist. See [Factsheet 18: Insurance](#).

#### 3 | Risk assessment

This is an assessment of the risks that exist. It is good practice to carry these out to give the best protection possible to staff, volunteers and service users. Risk assessments show that you have carefully considered all possible hazards and more importantly implemented methods of avoiding accidents.

- Look for potential hazards;
- Decide who may be harmed and how;
- Evaluate these risks and decide whether your existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done;
- Record and date your findings;
- Record and date your actions to make things safer;
- Regularly monitor and date your review of your previous assessment and revise if necessary.

#### 4 | Registering your premises

If your organisation has paid employees, you are required by law to register the existence of your premises and activities. Most voluntary organisations would need to register with the Environmental Health department within their local authority. Only if your activities involve manufacturing or repair (this includes printing) are you required to register with the local Health and Safety Executive.

#### 5 | First aid and assessment

Different organisations need different first aid arrangements depending on their activities and services. This means carrying out a first aid assessment.

As a minimum you must have someone on site who has basic first aid knowledge. They are known as the 'Appointed Person'. Your assessment may show that you need a trained First Aider who had attended an approved course. You must have at least one first aid box and a notice to tell everyone of its location. No tablets or medicine should be available in the box.

#### 6 | Accident book: recording accidents and incidents

We recommend that you should record any accidents, no matter how minor that occur on your

premises as good practice. By law, any workplace that has more than 10 employees must have an Accident Book. This should be used to record accidents or illnesses caused by work and any 'near-miss' accidents. Again a regular check of this book helps to monitor what is happening and help your risk, fire and first aid assessment reviews. Serious injuries have to be reported to those authorities you are registered with (see above).

## 7 | Fire risk legislation

Note – Fire Authorities no longer issue fire certificates and those previously in force will have no legal status. The new legislation has one simple instruction: *Any person who has some level of control in premises must take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire and make sure people can safely escape if there is a fire.*

There needs to be a 'responsible person' who makes sure a fire risk assessment is undertaken. Even if this role is passed to someone else the responsible person remains responsible in law. All employees need information and training about risks and fire marshals or responsible people will need more thorough training.

Make sure you have clear guidelines for everyone who might be on your premises about procedures in the event of a fire:

- Everyone knows where the nearest fire exit is;
- How the alarm will be raised;
- Where to assemble;
- How the roll call will be done to check everyone is safely out of the building; and
- Who will do this.

This may mean you need:

- A signing in and out book;
- A regular fire drill.

If holding an event, in- or outdoors, you should make procedures clear before you start and pay particular attention to people who may have disabilities or require special help.

## 8 | Food hygiene

If your organisation prepares and serves food, whether or not for sale, food safety regulations apply. Those handling food must be properly trained.

### Further help

#### Ask BVSC Helpline

0121 678 8888  
askbvsc@bvsc.org

#### Development Agencies website

Links and information for developing voluntary and community organisations, including links to health and safety policies and procedures.  
[www.birmingham-da.org](http://www.birmingham-da.org)

#### Health and safety training and first aid training

See local training providers or St Johns Ambulance, British Red Cross

#### Fire advice or information and simple guide to Fire Safety Risk Assessment

[www.firesafetyguides.communities.gov.uk](http://www.firesafetyguides.communities.gov.uk)  
or contact your local Fire Service

#### Food and Hygiene Training

See local training providers.

#### Health and Safety Executive

Publications, risk assessments.  
[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns)

#### Insurance cover and liability

NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations)  
[www.ncvo-vol.org.uk](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk)

Association of British Insurers  
[www.abi.org.uk](http://www.abi.org.uk) (look in 'Information Zone')

Charity Commission  
[www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk)