



Health and Safety Handbook

(HS.D.90 (rev01))



delivering promises, improving lives

Whilst WDH endeavours to provide a safe and healthy working environment under the Health and Safety at Work Act etc 1974, all employees (individually or collectively) must adhere to rules which are designated for the protection of themselves and other people who they may have contact with.

It is clearly recognised that good safety standards are closely related to good teamwork. Every job is inter-related and it is the responsibility of you as an individual to, as far as reasonably practicable, protect the safety and well being of both yourself and others.

Safety is one of the most important aspects of the training and instruction you will be provided with. The following pages contain safety rules and safety information that are common to the whole organisation; they will apply at all times during your work with WDH.

This handbook will help you identify the many key areas that can affect the safety and health of all employees, please read it carefully. Always remember, your safety and health and that of everyone in your workplace, depends upon your attitude and the way you conduct yourself whilst at work.

Your manager will be able to give you specific information relating to your particular work environment and duties.

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Introduction

The cost of an accident at work can be high, not only to the organisation in loss of productivity, but also to the person injured their families and friends. Any one of us could be held accountable if we are negligent in our duties and if someone is injured because of our negligence. Health and safety law lays down the minimum standards, to secure everybody's health, safety and welfare in the workplace.

Ignorance or negligence normally causes accidents. These accidents and damages can only be reduced through the education and training of both employers and employees. This safety handbook is designed to help ensure that you understand the part you can play in creating a workplace that is safe and healthy.

After reading this handbook you should:

1. know what can affect the health and safety of people at work;
2. know how to reduce the risk of accidents at work;
3. know how to lift and handle materials without risk of injury;
4. be aware of the risk when working with machinery, and equipment and know how to avoid them;
5. be aware of electricity and its dangers; and,
6. know your responsibility for your own and others safety under health and safety law.

This handbook provides basic information on health and safety matters; it is not a replacement for the Health and Safety Policies and Procedures already in place within the organisation.

If you are in doubt about any safety issues, speak with your supervisor or manager.

General health and safety

What is meant by?

Health? A state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity.

Safety? Safety suggests security, freedom from danger and risk of damage or injury.

What factors can affect our general health and safety?

Our basic requirements outside work can give some indication of what we need from our workplace.

We need:

- clean air;
- protection from the elements;
- a comfortable climate;
- avoidance of dangers;
- food and drink;
- toilet facilities;
- freedom from noise and dust; and
- a light and pleasant place of work.

**We have all these at home and we feel safe.
So why should our place of work be any different?**

Health and safety at work

What factors affect our health and safety at work?

Environmental - includes heating, lighting, ventilation and noise. They can all give rise to problems if we don't control them.

- High temperature can cause exhaustion.
- Low temperature can cause hypothermia.
- Poor lighting can cause eye strain or accidents.
- Dust can affect breathing.
- Too much noise can lead to deafness and lack of concentration.

Occupational Factors

- Maintenance employees risk back strain and injury.
- Kitchen employees risk burns and scalds.
- Office employees risk, Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSI) and Work Related Upper Limb Disorders (WRULDs).
- All employees including, maintenance employees, housing estate workers visiting officers, face threats and violence.
- Display screen users could suffer from eye strain.

The risk of accidents to all employees are treated seriously, the risks to employees include, for example:

- Sitting incorrectly at your desk, this can cause back and neck strain.
- Poor housekeeping can lead to tripping and slipping hazards.
- Injury through incorrectly lifting and moving of boxes, furniture tools and other equipment can cause back injury.
- Violence, verbal and physical can result in personal injury.
- Contact with chemical's can cause skin conditions, for example, dermatitis.
- Electrocution when using faulty electrical equipment can result in death.

The Human Factors

As a worker you can affect the health and safety of yourself and others, if you are **careless, irresponsible, unwell, inexperienced or untrained ...**

As your employer we will make sure you are properly trained for your job

Your manager and supervisors will ensure you have the equipment available to do the job safely

But how you behave is your own responsibility

Remember

Health and safety at work depends upon ...

heating, lighting, ventilation, the control of noise and dust
which make for:

a safe environment

While all jobs have an element of risk, such as slips, trips, falls, burns, scalds — you will be trained on every aspect of your job including how to:

recognise, avoid and reduce the risk of injury

You should **never** attempt any task that you are not capable of completing safely.

the rest is up to you

A safe and healthy place of work

The following are some steps that are needed to make the workplace safe for employers and employees, as well as visitors, tenants and contractors.

A safe place of work with a healthy environment

For example:

The building must be soundly constructed; it should have level floors and sound staircases;

Fire safety procedures must be in place for each work location, these will include evacuation procedures, including what you should do in the event of a fire.

Having lighting and good ventilation together with good standards of hygiene will make for a safer environment.

These include toilets, catering and washing facilities.

You can influence your working environment by:

Working in a tidy manner, cleaners cannot clean a workplace properly if, for example, they cannot gain access to your desk.

Opening windows when appropriate, to allow an exchange of air. Close curtains blinds in hot weather before the sun heats the room, close them overnight if the room gets early morning sun.

Wear clothing, footwear that is suitable and appropriate for the work that you do.

Safe systems of work and safe equipment and machinery

Meaning:

- All machinery and equipment must be safe to use.
- Any risks will be identified and practices of work must be designed to minimise or eliminate any risks.
- You should work in a safe manner whilst employed by WDH.

Not working safely for example includes:

- Propping fire doors open, especially with fire extinguishers
- Leaving electrical or phone cables trailing across the floor where people walk
- Not putting into practice what you have been taught and how you have been trained

Safe storage, handling and transport of goods and substances

All things need to be handled carefully; this will help to avoid the risk of injury.

Substances such as cleaning chemicals will hurt and damage the skin if contact is made, you will need to be especially careful and follow the guidelines produced in the 'Control of Substances Hazardous to Health' (COSHH).

Office equipment should be used properly and everybody must be taught how to lift and carry goods and equipment.

If protective clothing and footwear are needed to handle any goods, equipment or substance, then they will be provided, but you **must** wear them for your own safety.

Information, instruction and training

WDH sees instruction and training as very important, throughout your employment.

Everything you do, how you do it, what equipment you use, how you use it, will all be effective and safe if you receive proper instruction and training.

We have in place:

- a system of safety rules and induction for new employees; and
- training will be provided for any specialist equipment you are likely to use.

Your line manager will help and advise you.

Your responsibility as a worker

You have a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

Employees should look after themselves and others.

The law says every employee should take reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by what they do in the workplace, or what they don't do whilst at work.

So, if someone spills something and does not clean it up, or someone props a fire door open with the fire extinguisher, or any other object, and someone is injured because of this, then the person who spilled the liquid, or propped open the fire door could be held responsible for their actions.

You should avoid actions that could result in injury to yourself and others, such as:

- horseplay;
- playing practical jokes;
- climbing on furniture;
- using equipment you are not trained to use;
- misusing or interfering with anything provided for your safety;
- obstructing a fire escape route or exit — this would be interfering with people's health and safety;
- propping open a fire door;
- defacing safety signage; and
- not wearing any personal protective equipment provided.

As your employer WDH has a lot of responsibilities for your health and safety at work. Once you have been trained how to do your job and you know the safety rules, you should always follow them.

The best way to prevent injury and damage is to **always** follow the rules and to work safely, putting into practice what you will be taught.

Your manager's and supervisors are there to help and advise you on things to do with your work, for example:

- lifting and moving;
- fire procedures and drills;
- care with electricity;
- notifying accidents;
- first aid;
- using substances — COSHH; and
- equipment and machinery.

Know your responsibility - always follow any procedures and systems of work designed to protect you.

To summarise

- A safe place to work with a healthy environment.
- Equipment that is safe as well as systems and methods of work that enables us to do our jobs safely.
- Safe handling, storage and use of every article and substance that we use at work
- Instruction, training, information and supervision on all aspects of safety
- Safety policies, which are relevant and updated regularly - all employees should know of these policies
- Introducing arrangements to protect the health, safety and welfare of visitors, contractors and tenants
- Providing information that is accessible and relevant to every job or every employee - this includes safety signage

Accidents and incidents

Accidents can be defined in many ways, the most accepted is:

‘any unplanned events, which may or may not result in damage or injury’

Although there is a link between the accident and the damage or injury, an accident does not mean the same as an injury, the accident may not result in injury.

What causes accidents?

There are many causes as there are accidents; some of them are:

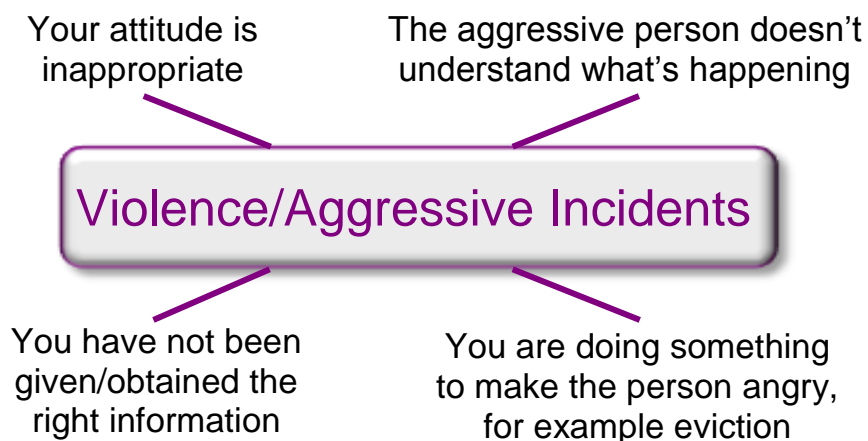
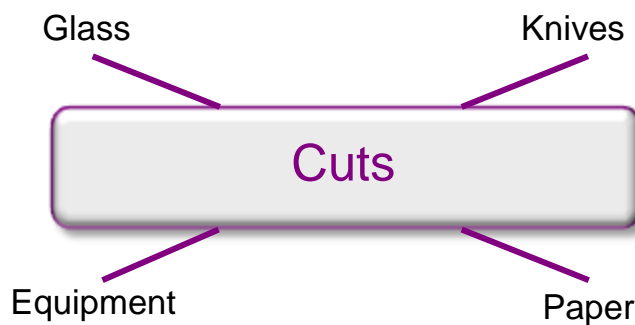
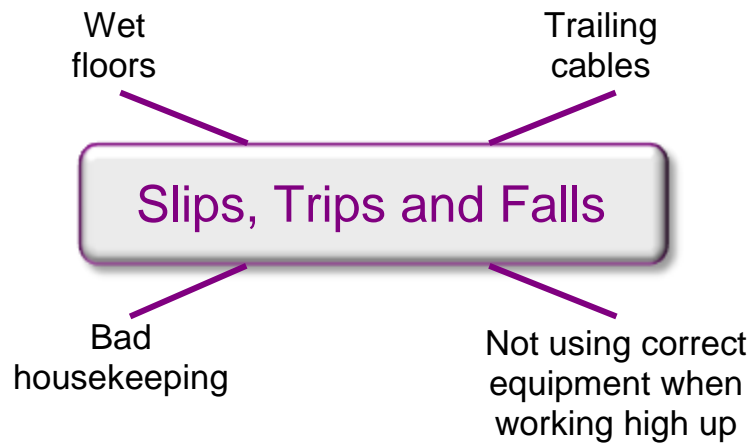
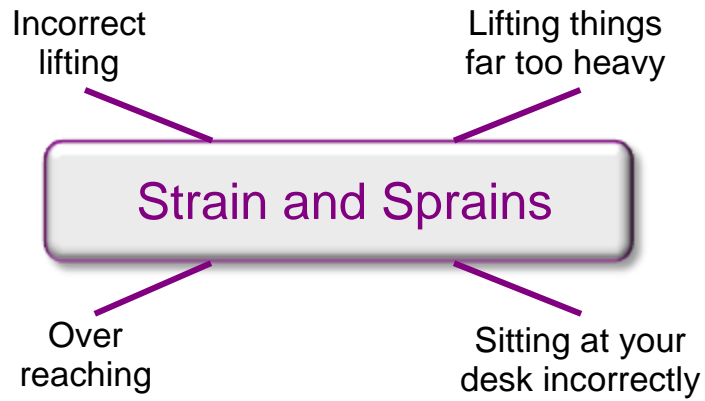
poor environment – untidy work areas, slippery floors, careless use of substances, badly maintained equipment, wrong use of tools equipment and machinery, poor lighting, poor heating.

physical unsuitability – poor eyesight, tiredness, illness, alcohol, allergy, and disability. These and many more will make for unsafe conditions.

lack of knowledge or skill – untrained, inexperienced, uninformed employees are not safe. Well trained employees who are well supervised will always work safer.

attitude – it is often said, “your safety and that of everyone in your workplace depends on your attitude”. If you are careless, irresponsible or believe accidents can’t happen to you, then your attitude will threaten everyone’s safety.

Injuries to WDH employees are mainly from:



Accidents and incidents

Firstly

We must all learn to identify hazards, if you are not sure; mention it anyway, it is better to be safe than sorry.

Secondly

Any system and practice of work must seek to reduce any risk.

Never

- Lift, or try to lift anything that is too heavy for you.
- Use incorrect lifting and handling techniques.
- Obstruct or block fire escape routes or fire points.
- Walk past any spillage or anything that may cause people to slip or fall.
- Tamper with electrical equipment.
- Use machinery and equipment unless you have been trained properly.
- Climb or step on fixtures or fittings.

Always

- Work the way you have been instructed and trained.
- Use recognised lifting and handling techniques.
- Wear any protective clothing provided as and when required.
- Wear sensible clothes and shoes.
- Report any defects or faults to your manager.
- Follow the rules and never indulge in horseplay.
- Make sure that guards are fitted and working properly on any machinery that has them.
- Use a ladder or steps when working at height.
- Use products from the departments approved product list.
- Bend your knees and use your leg muscles when lifting.

If you have been trained in your duties, but are still not sure what to do,
or you did not understand what you were told, then...

ask your manager or supervisor!

How we all can prevent accidents / incidents

All accidents, no matter how small, including those where no injury occurs, also strains, sprains, violence, sickness etc; **must** be reported immediately to your manager or supervisor.

In addition, accidents and injuries involving, visitors or contractors **must** also be reported to your manager.

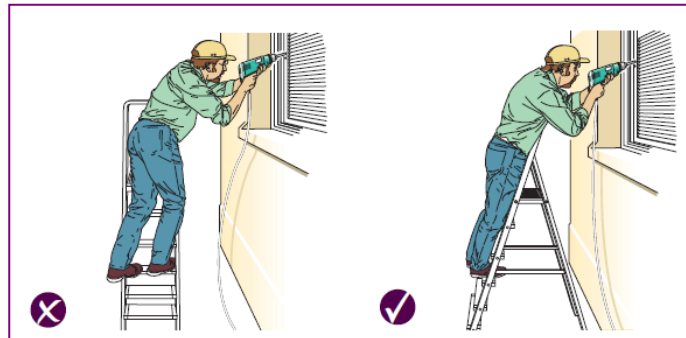
We can all prevent them by:

- identifying hazards;
- minimising risks; and
- following WDH policies and procedures.

Make sure you know all the methods for reducing risks and follow them

Safe use of ladders

Many accidents occur due to the misuse of ladders/stepladders and the failure to inspect them. More than half of the accidents involving ladders/stepladders occurred because the ladders were not securely fixed, of these many happened when the work was of 30 minutes or less.



Other causes of accidents involving ladders are:

- Climbing with loads.
- Over reaching or overbalancing.
- Grease, oil or other slippery substances transferred to ladder rungs from the soles of shoes.

Before using a ladder you should ask yourself:

Can the job be done more safely in a different way?

Other things you should consider before using a ladder are:

- Is the ladder in good condition?
- Can the ladder be securely fixed against slipping outwards or sideways?
- Site conditions (exposure to adverse weather), movement of land people or vehicles.
- Will the user have a safe handhold and be close to the work?
- Is the ladder so long as to cause it to be flexible, this will cause the ladder to sway and vibrate, which may cause loss of balance?
- The ability, training and experience of employees.
- The strength, the surface condition and the type of structure against which the ladder rests.
- the work and the type of tools required to do the job, the weight of the article to be fixed (if applicable).

Guidelines for the safe use of ladders

The following guidelines must be adhered to; this will minimise the chance of any accidents occurring.

1. Use only authorised equipment.
2. When extended, ensure platforms, stays etc. are locked in position.
3. Ensure the ladder is placed on firm solid ground which is free from grease, oil or other slippery substances.
4. Set the ladder at right angles to the work area; 75 degrees (that is about one out four up).
5. Make sure you position the ladder so that you do not have to over reach. Keep a three point contact with the ladder, that is two feet one hand.
6. Rest the head of the ladder on a solid surface, it must be able to withstand the imposed loads.
7. If the head of the ladder is to rest on a fragile or brittle surface, then ladder stays must be used.
8. Secure the ladder at the top. If this is not possible, a second person should be stationed at the foot of the ladder to prevent slipping.
9. Make sure you have good sound footwear when climbing a ladder.
10. Beware of wet or greasy rungs.
11. Only one person should climb a ladder at any one time.
12. Do not stand on the top rung or platform.
13. If the ladder has reinforced stiles or rungs, then the reinforcing should be on the underside when the ladder is in use.
14. Metal ladders or ladders with metal reinforcement and wet ladders must not be used where live conductors are exposed and there is a risk of short circuit.

15. It is important that mud or grease etc is cleaned off footwear before any attempt is made to climb a ladder.

Stepladders

Stepladders and trestles are not designed to withstand any degree of side loading.

Ensure that the stepladder is extended to its fullest.

Ensure that the stepladder is positioned properly and is on level ground.

Place the stepladder at right angles to the work if at all possible.

Do not stand on the top shelf or platform, unless there is a handrail that extends above the top of shelf or platform.

The cords or chains fitted to prevent over extension should be of equal length and kept in good order, they should be renewed if found to be defective.

Only one person at a time should use a stepladder.

If the stepladder is to be used in a doorway, the door should be wedged open and secured.



Accidents

Every accident/incident, whether to a work colleague, visitor or contractor **must** be reported to your manager as soon as possible.

Every accident/incident to employees regardless of whether or not an injury or damage occurs **must** be recorded in the accident book. Any accident that results in a major injury, ie any broken bones, (except fingers and toes), any electrocution or any accident that results in loss of consciousness or three day absences should be reported to the Health and Safety Manager within seven days, any fatalities must be reported immediately.

In addition, an Accident/Incident Report, HS3a must be completed and sent to the Health and Safety Manager on the individual's record on Cascade.

You should make yourself aware of where the Accident Book and Accident/Incident forms for your workplace are kept.

Statistics show that for every accident/incident that results in a serious injury, there are a number of similar accidents with less serious outcomes. One research suggests that for every single major injury, there are 29 minor injuries and 300 accidents that result in no injury.

If we can find out about the 300 'no injury' accidents/incidents and why they happen, then we have a good chance of preventing the more serious accidents.

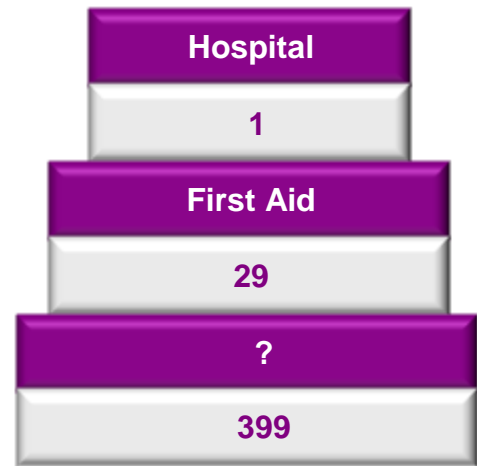
An investigation may take place to find out why and how the accident/incident happened. The causes are generally found to be:

- **People doing something they should not, for example:**

- lifting incorrectly, and lifting things far too heavy for them;
- using products not approved by the safety section; and
- using machines without proper instruction.

- **People not doing something they should, for example:**

- not cleaning up spillages;
- wearing and using protective clothing and equipment provided;
- asking for help when needed; and
- using appropriate manual handling techniques.



First aid

Within WDH you will find that many of your colleagues have been trained to give first aid. They will take charge if you are injured or taken ill whilst at work.

Make sure you know whom your First Aiders are and where they can be contacted. Their names and where they can be found will appear on notices around your workplace.



The First Aiders should also keep a record with details of any medical conditions, which may affect your first aid treatment. Providing this information to the First Aider is voluntary, but not providing the information could effect the treatment you receive. They should also hold details of the emergency contact person for you if you are injured or taken ill whilst at work. Ask the First Aider for an 'Emergency Contact and First Aid Information' form

Remember – all accidents/incidents and near misses, including anger, aggression and violence at work must be reported to your manager

Summary

- Accidents / incidents / injuries do not just happen, they are caused and so can be prevented.
- There is no such thing as a minor accident.
- Accidents / incidents / injuries are prevented by safe workers using safe methods of work in safe conditions.
- All accidents / incidents **Must** be reported to your Line Manager.
- Certain accidents / incidents / injuries and certain dangerous occurrences or diseases will have to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive or, to the Environmental Health Manager. You must also tell the Health and Safety Section who can do this for you.
- The result of any accident / incident could be anything from a near miss to death.

Useful information

My nearest First Aider is:

Room:

Section:

My nearest Fire Exit is:

My Fire Monitor is:

My Safety Representative is:

Phone Number:

Cross infection

Infection control is an important part of effective risk management, legal and ethical duties require that appropriate steps are taken to minimise the risk of infection.

Employees who care for others and first aiders are at particular risk of cross infection, and in the course of their work they may come into contact with:

- blood;
- vomit;
- urine;
- sputum;
- fluid from open wounds;
- vaginal wound; and
- faeces.

This list is not an exhaustive list.

It is not always possible to identify people who may be infected. You may be carrying a germ that, whilst harmless to you, could cause infection to others. It is important that precautions are taken by everyone, to prevent the spread of infection. These precautions must be followed at all times when care is being provided to others.

Certain basic infection control principles should be adopted, these are called **universal precautions**.

It is important that employees take the necessary precautions against exposure to blood and body fluids at all times, this should be the case regardless of what is or what is not known about the person's status relating to infections.

All blood and body fluids are potentially infectious, precautions are necessary to prevent exposure to them.

Hand washing

Organisms responsible for the spread of illness can be transmitted on the hands of employees. Scrupulous hand washing is the most effective way of preventing the transfer of infection.

The aim of hand washing is to remove, or reduce to an acceptable level, harmful organisms.

You should wash your hands even if you have been wearing disposable vinyl gloves



Protective Clothing

Contaminated clothing can spread contamination; you should follow the following principles to avoid cross contamination.

- When you are dealing with, incontinence or other body fluid **you must** wear non sterile disposable gloves and aprons.
- When assisting people toileting then disposable gloves and aprons must be worn.
- Disposable gloves and aprons must be discarded after attending to each person.
- You must then wash your hands.

Needlestick injuries

Needle stick injuries are punctures caused by hypodermic needles; all workers are at some risk of a needle stick injury if they work in the community.

Needle stick type injuries are on the increase, many employees working for WDH will find used needles when carrying out their work.

Knowing what to do in the event of a needle stick injury can save many weeks of anguish and uncertainty, especially if you are unsure if the person who used the needle was infected with Hepatitis or HIV viruses.



If you are unfortunate enough to receive a needle stick injury, the first thing you should do is encourage the wound to bleed, holding the injury under warm running water will help this. Keep the wound bleeding for at least five minutes, this will clean out any dirt or infection that may be carried deep into the wound. **Do Not** suck the wound.

Report to the nearest accident and emergency unit within an hour of sustaining the injury.

Enter any details into the accident book and inform your line manager if you receive a needle stick injury. Your manager will investigate the circumstances surrounding the injury and complete the Accident/Incident HS3a Report on your individual record on Cascade.

Viewing:	
HS HS3A (NEAR MISS REPORTING) ▾	
Is it Hazard or Near Miss? *	<input type="button" value="Hazard"/> ▾
Date of Incident *	<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Calendar"/> <input type="button" value="Close"/>
Time of Incident *	<input type="text"/>
Location of Incident *	<input type="text"/>
Describe what happened *	<input type="text"/>
Near miss reported by *	<input type="text"/>
Near miss reported to... *	<input type="text"/> ▾
Has the Hazard or Near Miss been resolved? *	<input type="button" value="Yes"/> <input type="button" value="No"/>

Food hygiene

Food hygiene is the responsibility of everyone who is involved in the handling, preparation and serving of food.

Food hygiene is not simply about hygienic conditions for producers, there are many other practices, which complement the legislation. They include:

- identifying and controlling potential food hazards;
- protecting food from the risk of contamination;
- preventing any bacteria on the food from multiplying; and
- destroying any bacteria on the food.

All cooks within WDH are required to hold a City and Guilds Certificate in Food Preparation, other full time kitchen employees will be required to hold, or undertake the Environmental Health, 'Basic Food Hygiene' Certificate.

If your work requires you to handle, prepare or serve food, on an occasional basis, you will have the opportunity to attend the in-house 'food safety' course.

If any worker is unsure about their particular responsibilities with regard food safety, they should discuss these with their line manager.

Food poisoning can kill

Personal hygiene

Personal hygiene for the food handler is one of the most important elements of food safety. Many of us carry food poisoning bacteria around, it is on our skin and in our nose, throat, hair and bowels. The bacteria can spread onto food by careless food handlers.

Hands – these are a prime culprit in spreading bacteria, hands must be kept clean at all times. Fingernails should be kept short and clean at all times, nail varnish should not be worn on the nails as this can flake off into the food.

Food handlers **must** always wash their hands thoroughly on the following occasions.

- 1 On entering the kitchen or food preparation room.
- 2 After visiting the toilet.
- 3 After blowing their nose.
- 4 After touching their hair.
- 5 After handling waste food.
- 6 Between handling raw and cooked food.
- 7 After smoking, (remember it is illegal to smoke in food preparation areas).

Hair should be tied back and covered.

Anyone who is suffering from diarrhoea or vomiting must report this immediately to his or her line manager. They must not be involved in the preparation, handling or cooking of food whilst suffering from the above.

Personal safety

Many WDH employees work alone, in isolation and away from the office. These groups of employees need to be very conscious of their own personal safety when out and about.

Violence, when it happens is very traumatic, not only for the victim, but for work colleagues as well.

Facts

- Compared with other crimes, the ones involving violence are rare.
- The average persons chances of being attacked are one in a hundred years.
- There are things you can do to prevent yourself becoming a victim.

If you are away from the office visiting a tenant, then you should follow some simple rules.

- Inform a work colleague where you are going, tell them what time you will be back.
- If visiting more than one tenant, telephone the office after each visit, take the office mobile phone if available.
- If visiting a tenant for the first time and you are unsure of their response to your visit, attend with a colleague.
- If you experience verbal abuse, try to calm the situation, try not to panic, breath slowly and think clearly about how to react.
- If you experience physical abuse, report this not only to your manager but also to the police.
- If you find yourself in difficult circumstances and you have a personal alarm use it to attract attention, if you do not have a personal alarm, then make as much noise as possible.
- Always give your bike, bag, purse or wallet away rather than fighting, they can be replaced, you can't.
- If you have any genuine fears about visiting a particular tenant or property, discuss your concerns with your line manager.

Travelling in the car

- Ensure the car is roadworthy.
- Make sure you have enough petrol to complete your journey (especially at night).
- Keep the car doors locked and windows closed in built up areas but unlocked on motorways.
- Keep valuables locked away out of sight.
- Park in well-lit areas, think about what the area will be like when it is dark.
- Always lock your car, even if you are leaving it for a few seconds.
- Check the back seat before getting in.

If you feel threatened whilst driving

- Do not get out, keep everything locked and drive to a public place.
- If another car forces you to stop, keep all doors and windows locked, reverse as far as you can, turn on the hazard lights and sound the horn.
- If another car driver causes you concern, slow down and let them pass. If they persist drive to a public place and phone for help.

When you're out walking

- Go the way you know best and stick to well lit streets, avoid dangerous shortcuts.
- Try to walk with a friend or stay near a group of people.
- Look confident but don't exaggerate. Bullies tend to target people who look like an easy target.
- Walk facing the traffic to avoid kerb crawlers.
- Be aware of stationary cars with their engines running, cross the road if need be.
- Keep hands free at all times, not in your pockets.
- **Do not** take short cuts through parks or common land, it may be quicker but help is further away.
- **Do not** wear headphones and listen to a walkman, you won't hear trouble approaching.

If you feel threatened whilst walking

- Avoid or get away from the trouble - **do not** fight back, you may get hurt.
- If you think you are being followed, keep moving towards the nearest public place, crossing and re crossing the road.
- If someone pulls up next to you, walk in the opposite direction.



Travelling by bike

- Keep your bike in good shape, check lights, brakes and tyres regularly.
- Make sure you can be seen at night, wear luminous strips or bright clothing.
- Wear a helmet for safety.
- Avoid dangerous shortcuts, even if you are in a hurry.
- Always lock your bike, even if you leave it for a moment.
- If someone signals for help, acknowledge them with a wave, keep moving and report the incident at the next convenient phone.



Asbestos

Not everyone who works for WDH will come into contact with asbestos containing materials, however it is important that you know about the uses and risks of asbestos products.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral, it is found in most homes in different forms.

Asbestos products are only dangerous when they are damaged, worn or worked on with power tools, this is because they can release fibres into the air. Asbestos dust is made up of tiny fibres, which if inhaled are harmful to the lungs.

The levels of exposure to which asbestos fibres cause ill health effects are not known. What we can be sure of is that the more asbestos fibres people are exposed to, the greater the risk of ill health.

Where might you find asbestos?

Asbestos is used in many products found in and around the home. Asbestos was used for a specific purpose, either to provide heat resistance (behind gas fires) or provide rigidity (as in asbestos cement garages).

All buildings used by WDH employees have been surveyed for asbestos containing materials, if asbestos has been found, then risk assessments have been completed to ensure that employees are safe to work in the building with the asbestos present. A survey report has been produced and all areas where asbestos was found are clearly marked within the report.

A copy of the plan of the building showing the location of any asbestos should always be in the building and someone should take responsibility for its safekeeping. The plan should always be referred to when any work takes place in the building.



Vibration white finger

Working with power tools for significant periods can cause a number of conditions, these range from vibration white finger to hand arm vibration. Vibration white finger is the most common injury from working with power tools, if your job entails you working with such equipment, then you should wear suitable gloves that offer thermal protection. WDH has commenced an exercise measuring the vibration of hand held powered equipment. The measurements will determine the safe period of time each tool can be used, the time is the actual time the trigger is activated and not the time the tool is available on the job.



As a WDH employee you have a duty to use each tool in accordance with policy and manufacturers recommendations, if the equipment is faulty you should report it to your manager or supervisor, the equipment should be returned for repairs or servicing at the required intervals.

If you show any signs of vibration white finger or any other work related illness injury, you must report this immediately to your manager. The signs of vibration white finger are, numbness in the fingers, mainly the index finger or trigger finger, the finger appears white, especially in cold weather.

Lifting and handling

We all get involved in jobs that require us to:

Handle	Lift	Carry
	Push	Pull

Lifting and handling covers any animate or inanimate object, including people and animals

Over 100,000 injuries every year occur due to poor manual handling, these injuries range from cuts, bruises, fractures, strains, sprains and hernias. If we pick something up from the floor weighing 25 kg (55 lbs) and we lift with a bent back using the back muscles and not our leg muscles, it will exert a pressure on our lower back of over 500 kg (1100 lbs). It is no wonder then that people often hurt their backs when undertaking lifting and moving tasks.

If you lift the same weight (25 kgs) but this time keep your back straight and using your legs as the main power, then the pressure is more evenly spread so that about 150 kg of weight is experienced.

Within WDH, maintenance employees have one of the highest risk jobs when it comes to manual handling. Maintenance employees often have to lift and move heavy items. The health and safety section run mandatory courses on lifting and moving. As part of your training you will be informed of ways to reduce lifting and moving risks and how to conduct a personal risk assessment for your lifting and moving tasks.

Here are some general safe handling rules:

Try to determine the weight of the item, this will be printed on the packaging, if not lift one corner to see how heavy the item is and if it is liable to shift when carrying

Always handle any item with care; note any sharp edges, hot parts, and movable parts.

If you have to carry anything a long way, then use a trolley or other device with wheels, pushing is easier than carrying.

Divide any heavy loads into more manageable weights.

Use mechanical means where possible. If a hoist is identified as the safest way to move someone then use it.

Carry the load as close to your body as is possible.

Do not pick things up by bending forward at the waist (top heavy bending) bend your knees.



Do not twist when lifting and moving any load.

Do not lift things from above shoulder height; use stepladders or step ups to enable you to reach the load safely.

Do not overfill boxes, apart from being too heavy they can collapse.

Do not try to lift anything that is too heavy for you, lift one corner and try to assess its weight.

Six steps to safer handling

1. Weigh up the task

Think about the size, weight and shape height of the load.

Is it too heavy? Do you need to use a hoist?

2. The correct stance

Stand correctly with your feet shoulder width apart and one foot in front of the other. (This is your lifting base)

The front foot should point in the direction of travel.

3. Nose above and in line with toes

Bend your knees keeping your back straight, the strain on your back muscles will be reduced.

Tuck in your chin this will assist in the correct posture.

4. Good grip

Use the palm of your hand or base of the fingers rather than the fingertips. Wear gloves if necessary.

Watch out for your fingers when setting the load down.

5. Arms close to body

Whenever possible keep your arms straight and close to the body.

The load will then be closer to your own centre of gravity.

6. Get help

Do Not lift more than you can safely handle. Get help if necessary

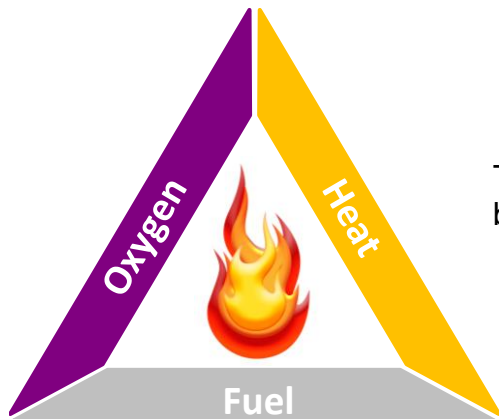
Know your own limitations

Remember these guidelines at home as well as at work

Fire

What is fire?

It is a chemical reaction consisting of three elements:



The removal of any of these three elements will break the fire triangle and the fire will go out.

Fires are dangerous because ...

Toxic fumes are produced by burning materials.

Smoke is produced which reduces vision, chokes and often induces people to panic.

Burning occurs causing anything from minor burns to those, which often completely disfigure.

Fires can prove fatal
Fires also cause damage to property, equipment and machinery

How do fires start?

According to fire brigade statistics, 19% of all fires are associated with electrical appliances, 8% are associated with smoking and matches.

Over 40% of fires are started deliberately

Fire monitors

Every workplace should have a Fire Monitor; the fire monitors have specific duties.

Their duties include

- Overseeing the signing in/out sheets to ensure employees and visitors comply with the requirements.
- Fire monitors in reception area's need to liaise with receptionists who must, ensure that all visitors sign in and out.
- Notifying the Fire Safety Liaison Officer/Marshal of non compliance.
- Collecting the signing in/out sheets at the time of evacuation.
- Ensuring the area of the building they are responsible for is evacuated.
- Taking a role call at the assembly point.
- Reporting to the Fire Officer or Unit Manager if the Fire Officer is not in attendance.

Some fire monitors have also been taught how to use the fire extinguishers; if it is safe for them to fight a fire they may do so.

**Make sure you know who
your fire monitor is**

The fire drill procedure

This procedure must be adhered to in order that we can assure the safety and well being of employees, tenants, and visitors in the event of a fire breaking out.

On discovering a fire: Do Not Panic

- 1 Raise the alarm immediately by operating the nearest fire alarm point!
- 2 Follow the fire evacuation plan for your building.
- 3 Assemble at the roll call point.

Circumstances will dictate whether the person discovering the fire attempts to fight the fire. It should always be remembered that:

fighting a fire is secondary to saving a life

If you do attempt to fight a fire only do so **after** you have raised the alarm. You should only attempt to fight a fire if you know:

- how to operate the fire extinguisher;
- which type of extinguisher to use on which type of fire; and
- you can do so safely without putting yourself at risk.

If you are unsure, Do Not attempt to fight the fire

There are four types of extinguishers:

Water	Suitable for most fires except those involving flammable liquids or live electrical equipment
Foam	Suitable for most fires involving flammable liquids
Carbon	Suitable for fires involving flammable liquids or Dioxide electrical equipment
Dry Powder	Suitable for fires involving flammable liquids or electrical equipment
Fire Blanket	Suitable to smother a fat fire

At the present time the colour of the fire extinguishers denotes the fire fighting substance, ie:

You will find in the future as each extinguisher reaches the end of its life, it will be replaced by a fire extinguisher coloured all red. These new extinguishers are to comply with new European Legislation on fire extinguishers. Each extinguisher will have a coloured band or coloured writing on to help you identify the fire-fighting substance.



Make sure you check if any of these extinguishers arrive at your workplace.

The position and general condition of all fire fighting Equipment should be checked on a **monthly** basis, any defects should be reported to the Fire Officer, Building Manager.

Fire evacuation procedures

On hearing the fire alarm, employees, tenants and members of the public must leave the building by the nearest emergency exit and meet at the designated assembly point.

Do Not stop to collect personal belongings, handbags, coats etc, always ensure that you close the doors behind you as you leave the building.

Under no circumstances should anyone re enter the building. Managers should assign an employee to prevent this.

In independent living schemes with the Aqua Mist system installed, a stay put policy may be in operation

Once the employees, tenants and members of the public (if they have signed in) are assembled the fire monitor must take a roll call. The fire monitor should then report to the fire officer or the unit manager if the fire officer is not in attendance.

Only when the roll call is complete and everyone is accounted for should employees notify their line manager.

Remember once the fire alarm is raised the 'Fire Monitors' will organise the evacuation of the building. Wherever it is safe to do so the monitors will close doors windows to prevent the spread of **fire** and **smoke**.

All employees must leave in an orderly manner and go to their designated assembly point.

Make sure you know where to go

Never re-enter the building until you are told to do so by a senior member of management or a fire officer gives the all clear.

Do not stop to collect personal belongings

Make sure you know:

- The fire drill procedure for your workplace
- Who your fire monitor is
- All the emergency exits in your workplace, not just the nearest to where you normally sit
- Where your fire assembly point is

Never, ever block or obstruct a fire evacuation route or a fire exit

So remember

- Leave the building by the **nearest** safest exit, or in accordance with the evacuation plan for your building
- Leave the building in an orderly manner, **do not** run or panic.
- **Never** use the lift.
- **Go straight** to your assembly point.
- **Report** to your fire monitor.

Remember – fighting a fire is secondary to saving a life

Electricity at work

It is hard to imagine a world without electricity. Almost all the equipment and machinery we use at work and at home uses electricity to power it. One of the big problems with electricity is that we all take it for granted. Simply put electricity is the flow of electrons between two points, what pushes the electricity along its route can be called 'electrical pressure' or voltage.

Electricity flows along a **live (brown)** wire to where it is needed, it then flows back through the **neutral (blue)** wire to complete its circuit.



How electricity affects the body

The two main effects on the body caused by contact with electricity are:

- **Electric shock**
- **Burns**

Electric shock can affect the nervous system or individual organs, ie if the heart is shocked it may stop and death will follow in a few minutes.

Burns as a result of electrical contact may be visible on the skin, or the burns may be deep in the body tissue.

Because electricity is potentially dangerous, various methods of protection have been introduced. They are:

Insulation: wood, plastic, rubber etc, are able to prevent the flow of electricity. If the electric motor is surrounded by some form of insulation then this keeps the current safely contained inside the conductor.

An earth: electricity, like water, will always find the easiest route or the line of least resistance. The 'earth' wire is there to ensure that the electrical supply from the power station is literally connected to the ground. The 'earth' wire in the home is connected to the water pipes that go into the ground for the same reason.

A fuse: the flow of electricity can cause a conductor to heat up. A fault in an appliance may cause more current to flow, this may result in the appliance overheating and catching fire.

A fuse is a short piece of metal wire, which is inserted into the live wire and is designed to melt when it gets too hot when the fuse melts it, stops the flow of electricity.

Remember

Fuses are there to prevent fires and damage to equipment; they will not prevent electrical shock or burns

Residual Circuit Breakers

These are provided to employees who may have cause to use electrical equipment not owned or checked by Housing Services. The 'Circuit Breaker' must be used when using such equipment; it will prevent any overload of the equipment and so prevent electrical shock, and burns. Employees must report any defects in their circuit breaker to their manager immediately on discovering the fault.

Who should check and work on electrical equipment

If you notice defects with the equipment you should report them to the manager, who should record the defect on the 'Electrical Equipment Inspection Record'. The equipment should not be used until a qualified electrician has repaired it.

Individual Responsibilities - Anyone using electrical equipment **must**, use that equipment for the purpose for which it was intended and in an environment for which it was designed and constructed.

Before using the equipment the user should also undertake a general visual check looking for signs that the equipment is not in a safe condition (see above).

If there is any doubt about the equipment it should not be used until a qualified electrician or contractor has undertaken the necessary checks/repairs.

Remember

If you have been supplied with a Residual Circuit Breaker you must use it when using any electrical equipment, unless you are sure that the building has an integral residual current device.

General knowledge on electricity

- If a switch, plug or socket feels hot then there is a fault.
- Check all electrical equipment before using it.
- Only use electrical equipment for its intended purpose.
- Never use defective electrical equipment or appliances.
- Report any defects/faults immediately.
- If in doubt report it to your line manager.

**Electricity can be dangerous!
Treat it with respect.**

Only use authorised electrical equipment

Summary

- Electricity flowing through the body will cause burns, unconsciousness or death.
- Insulators are materials which stop electricity flowing through them.
- If there is a fault, the 'earth' lead allows electricity to pass safely to the ground.
- Fuses will blow if too much current passes through them.
They protect the appliance and the wiring.
- **Never** tamper or interfere with electrical equipment, switch off before cleaning it.
- Water and electricity **do not** mix.

COSHH – The control of substances hazardous to health

The 'Control of Substances Hazardous to Health' Regulations 1988 impose a duty on all employers to:

- risk assess hazardous substances in use;
- prevent exposure, or control the exposure to the hazardous substance;
- promote information relating to the substances used at work; and
- monitor and review the use of substances.

The chemicals and substances used within WDH are varied, only those that have the COSHH Risk Assessment completed and are included on the list of Risk Assessed Products should be purchased and used in the workplace.

In the community it is harder to control the substances used by employees, therefore it is important that employees know how to use the products safely. Information regarding the safe use of substance can be found on the product label, employees using these products should always read this information and ensure that they understand the information before using any product.

If employees are unsure of how to use any product safely, then they should contact their line manager, or the health and safety section for guidance.

Product Information

Many products for use at home and at work carry safety information on the label. The label may also have a safety sign denoting the hazardous nature of the product.

The signs that you may see on the label and their meanings are:



Explosive



**Highly
Flammable**



Harmful



Corrosive



Toxic



Oxidising



Harmful to the Environment

It is important that you take great care when using substances, make sure you heed the labels on the containers, and do not indulge in 'horseplay'.

Protective Equipment

Goggles and gloves may be required when using certain products. Gloves and other protective equipment will be supplied if they are required. If they are required for certain operations and products, it is important that you use them. Information and instruction on the correct use of any protective equipment will be given.

You should use any protective equipment that the employer provides properly and effectively, **never** use any defective or faulty equipment. Report any defects or faults to your line manager immediately.



Take care with all substances

Rules when using any chemical or substance

- Only use substances from the approved products list.
- **Always** wear any protective clothing required for use with the substance.
- **Always** read the produce label before use.
- **Always** dispose of empty packaging correctly.
- **Always** report any ill effects when using any substance to your line manager.
- **Do not** bring in any substance from home to use at work.
- **Do not** decant into containers any chemicals / substances, they should remain in their original container.

Stay in the office

People who work in small offices do not figure prominently in national accident statistics. The average major accident rate for office employees is; nine per 100,000 people (HSE Office wise leaflet IND(G)173L).

Nevertheless the fact that any major accidents occur in the office environment should be a warning to everyone. We should all strive to make the office a safe place of work.

Some of the more obvious risks in the office are slips, trips and falls, risks from the use of electrical equipment, (see section on electricity at work) other risks arise from substances used in the office (see the section on COSHH) and the use of visual display screen equipment.

Slips, trips and falls account for most of the accidents in the office, many of them occur when employees are moving or carrying loads. They do not just happen because of the condition of the floor, but many happen because of poor housekeeping, trailing cables, spillage's, bags, briefcases and personal items stuck out from under desks all these contribute to the risk of a slip, trip, or fall.

Remembering a few simple guidelines can prevent such accidents.

- **Do not** allow trailing leads to create a tripping hazard.
- **Do not** block passageways or corridors.
- **Do not** cause a hazard with your personal belongings; store them away safely.
- **Do** clear up any spillages immediately.
- **Do** report any defects in carpets, floor coverings etc.

Visual Display Screen Equipment (VDU)

Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

There are no differences between a DSE or VDU. The term 'visual display screen equipment' and 'display screen equipment' mean exactly the same thing.

VDUs have been blamed for a wide range of health problems, (often wrongly). In fact only a small proportion of VDU users actually suffer ill health as a result of their work. Health problems are caused by the way the equipment is used.

Some users of DSE and VDUs experience aches and pains in their hands, wrists, arms, neck and shoulders, these aches and pains often occur after long periods of uninterrupted work at the VDU. 'Repetitive strain injury' has become the popular name for these aches and pains, this can be misleading as it can mean different things to different people. A better medical name for the whole group of conditions is 'work related upper limb disorders' (WRULDs)

Many of the problems associated with working at a display screen can be prevented; special keyboards are available for people who are suffering from RSI or any other keyboard related syndrome. Correct positioning of equipment is important, it can prevent eye strain and eye fatigue by ensuring that no glare is present on the monitor screen, make sure that the screen is the correct distance and position from you and your eye line. Take frequent breaks away from the equipment, change to alternative work for at least 10 minutes every hour. Most software packages allow for the adjustment of the text and font size, use this to ensure you do not have to strain your eyes to see the text.



Some common questions asked by VDU users

How can I avoid WRULDs?

Good workplace design can help prevent the aches and pains associated with WRULDs, (see keeping healthy in the office) take frequent short breaks away from the VDU, 10 minutes every hour doing some other task will help. Prevention is always better than cure, if action is taken early enough then these symptoms will subside.

Can working with VDUs affect my eyesight?

There has been extensive research into working with VDUs and its effect on the user's eyesight, so far no evidence that VDUs cause disease or permanent damage has been found. Long periods of VDU work can lead to tired eyes and discomfort, by giving your eyes more demanding tasks may make you aware of an existing eyesight problem. Make sure that the VDU is correctly positioned and properly adjusted for you, make sure that the lighting is suitable and adequate, if it is not see your manager. WDH offer eyesight screening every two years, however if you are experiencing difficulties with your eyes ask your manager for an eyesight test.

How long should I work at a VDU?

There is no legal limit to how long you can or cannot work at the VDU, what you should do is break up long spells of VDU work, (up to 10 minutes away from the VDU every hour).

Do VDUs give out harmful radiation?

No. VDUs give out visible light, this allows us to see the screen. They also give out electromagnetic radiation which can be harmful if it is above a certain level. However the levels of radiation emitted by VDUs are well below the safe levels set out in international recommendations.

What should I do if I am pregnant?

If you become pregnant and your job is working with a VDU you do not need to stop working with the VDU. Past concern about the reports of miscarriages and birth defects, has not been borne out by more recent research.

If you are anxious about your work with VDUs, or about work generally during pregnancy, you should speak to your line manager.

Can VDU work cause headaches?

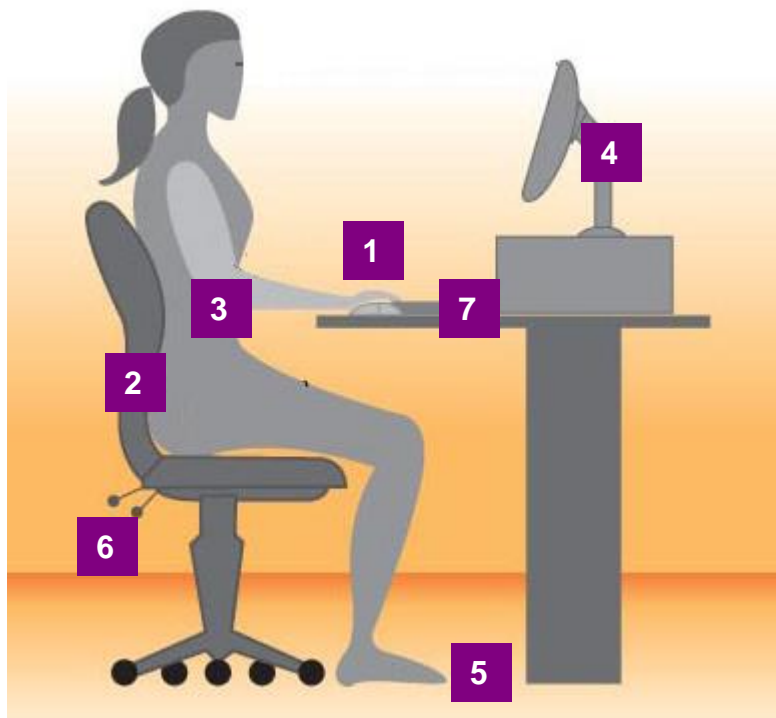
Headaches can result from many things associated with VDU work, such as:

- screen glare;
- poor image quality;
- a need for different spectacles;
- stress from the pace of the work;
- anxiety about new technology;
- reading the screen for long periods of time without a break; and
- poor posture.

Many of the above things can be put right once the cause of the problem has been identified.

The Workstation

If you are working at the VDU for long periods of time, you should adjust your chair to suit you. There is no such thing as an 'ideal posture' but sitting upright with the lower back supported, feet on the floor or footrest will help reduce the possibility of muscle tiredness.



Adopt a neutral posture:

1. Wrists unbent.
2. Back supported.
3. Elbows and hips bent at 70-90 degree angle.
4. Tilt and swivel screen.
5. Feet flat on the floor or footrest.
6. Adjustable chair.
7. Adjustable keyboard.

Further guidance on making the workstation suitable for you can be found on the WDH Health and Safety Intranet page, [Link to Information/Instruction, Display Screen Equipment](#).

The law relating to health and safety at work

The 'Health and Safety at Work Act etc' 1974 replaced many of the old laws, many of which were not fully understood by both employers and employees.

The 1974 Act covers almost every workplace activity including those covered by job training schemes.

Who has a duty under law?

The 1974 Act makes us all responsible in some way for our own and others health and safety, whether we are:

- **Employers**
- **Employees**
- **Manufacturers**

Employers have to:

- provide and maintain safe equipment and safe systems of work;
- ensure proper storage, handling use and transportation of materials;
- provide a safe place of work;
- provide a safe working environment;
- provide a written safety policy (when they employ five or more employees);
- talk to recognised trade union representatives;
- provide information, instruction, training and supervision; and
- look after the safety and health of other people in their workplace.

Your responsibility as an employee

You have a legal duty under the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act.

Employees should look after themselves and others.

The law says every employee should take reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by what they do in the workplace, or what they don't do whilst at work.

So, if someone spills something and does not clean it up, or someone props a fire door open with the fire extinguisher, or any other object, then the person who spilled the liquid, or propped open the fire door could be held responsible for their actions.

You should avoid actions that could result in injury to yourself and others, such as:

- horseplay;
- playing practical jokes;
- climbing on furniture;
- using equipment you are not trained to use;
- misusing or interfering with anything provided for your safety;
- obstruct a fire escape route or exit, this would be interfering with people's health and safety;
- propping open a fire door; and
- defacing safety signage.

As your employer WDH has a lot of responsibilities for your health and safety at work. Once you have been trained how to do your job and you know the safety rules, you should always obey them.

To know the procedures and follow them is cooperating with your employer.

You and your work area

- Always keep your work area clean and tidy.
- Continually move rubbish and waste.
- Clean up any spillage's immediately.
- Always wear protective clothing if you are required to - especially goggles and gloves.
- Clean your work area in a safe manner.
- Keep fire exits and routes clear at all times.

Your work habits

- Lift and carry correctly.
- Wear sensible clothes and footwear.
- When using machinery or equipment concentrate on the job.
- Always switch off electrical equipment when cleaning.

Smoking

Only smoke in designated area.

Alcohol and drugs

Alcohol and drugs can affect how you work and so increase the risk to your colleagues and your own safety in the workplace.

If you think you may have a problem then talk to your line manager or personnel officer, they will be able to direct you to where help can be found.

Your safety representative

Within the organisation, trade unions have recognised health and safety representatives. These people have been elected by the workforce to represent them in health and safety matters. Find out who your health and safety representative is, if you have any concerns regarding health and safety you will know whom to contact.

Write their name here if you wish.

How is health and safety law enforced?

The health and safety law is enforced by two main groups of people:

1. Environmental Health Officers (EHOs).
2. Health and Safety Inspectors.

They have powers to:

- enter at any reasonable time any workplace;
- investigate and examine after accidents incidents;
- take photographs;
- seize articles and papers;
- see documents;
- ask questions of anyone and get answers;
- stop any work they feel is a danger to people; and
- issue improvement notices.

They can also prosecute

The cost of poor health and safety at work

Personal costs

- Pain and suffering to victims of accidents.
- Effect on family and friends of the victim.
- Loss of earnings during treatment and recovery.
- Reduces earning capacity if full recovery is not possible.
- Possible legal costs.
- Possible fines if found to be at fault.

Cost to the employer

- Lost productivity.
- Damage to equipment and machinery.
- Bad publicity.
- Closer attention from the health and safety inspectors.
- Cost of compensation.
- Loss of morale amongst the workforce.
- Cost of fines and legal expenses.

Cost to the nation

- Cost of medical or hospital treatment.
- Cost of investigation and monitoring procedures.

The benefits of good health and safety

- Good working conditions.
- Good employee morale.
- Lower employee turnover.
- Compliance with the law.
- Lower insurance premiums.

Keep this booklet handy and refer to it as and when you need guidance or information around health and safety matters.

The booklet is not intended to replace policy/procedures within WDH, neither does it cover every health and safety issue. The booklet is designed to provide you with basic information about your employers and your own responsibility towards health & safety and offer advice and guidance on how to work in a safe and healthy environment.

We all can play a part in protecting visitors, tenants our colleagues and ourselves, from any risk to theirs and our own well being.

Remember if you are injured at work and suffer a long term illness/injury, no amount of compensation paid to you will adequately compensate you for the loss of quality of life.

If you require any further information around health and safety please first contact your manager, if they are unable to help then contact WDH's Health and Safety Manager.



Vision

to create confident communities

Mission

to inspire transform and promote excellence

Values

to be creative, inclusive and work with integrity

delivering promises, improving lives