## Health and safety legislation - Summary

**Health and Safety At Work Act 1974**

The Health and Safety At Work Act 1974 lays down general principles to secure and provides a broad framework within which health and safety law can be regulated.

The Act is couched in general terms and the duties on employers are qualified with the words ‘so far as is reasonably practicable’.

It imposes criminal liabilities on employers. Offences under the Act can lead to the jailing and/or heavy fining of companies and company directors and senior managers for breaches of the Act.

Overarching general duty on employers to:

* ensure the safety, health and welfare at work of their employees – this includes the mental, as well as physical health, of staff. In particular, employers must:
* provide and maintain plant and systems at work so that they are safe and without risks to health
* make arrangements for ensuring the safe use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances
* provide health and safety information, instruction training and supervision
* maintain the workplace (where it is in the employer’s control) so that it, and access to and exit from it, are safe and without risks to health
* provide and maintain a safe working environment and adequate welfare facilities.
* Any employer with more than 5 staff must prepare and keep up to date a written statement of [health and safety policy](http://www.hse.gov.uk/smallbusinesses/must/policy.htm?hseid=aHR0cDovL3d3dy5oc2UuZ292LnVrL3NtYWxsYnVzaW5lc3Nlcy9tdXN0Lmh0bQ==) and bring the policy to the attention of its staff.
* Employers must consult safety representatives of recognised trade unions about the making and maintenance of health and safety arrangements and, where requested by 2 or more safety reps, set up a safety committee.
* Employers must ensure that their activities do not endanger anybody not in their employment.
* Employers cannot charge employees for anything done, or equipment provided, for health and safety purposes.
* Personal liability will fall on any director or manager if an offence under the Act has been committed with their consent or connivance or through their neglect.
* It's not all on the employer – section 7 of the Act places duty on employees to take reasonable care that they do not endanger themselves or anyone else who might be affected by their work activities.

[**Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1999/19993242.htm)

The [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1999/19993242.htm) are important because they clarify how employers must comply with their duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Central to the regulations is the requirement that all employers must carry out [risk assessment](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf)s . This should address what happens in the workplace and must consider all groups of employees and others who might be affected. It must identify employees who might be particularly at risk, e.g. pregnant staff and young workers.

The topics covered by the regulations are preventative and protective measures. Employers must:

* Carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessment
* make arrangements for implementing the health and safety measures identified as necessary by the risk assessments
* provide necessary health surveillance
* appoint competent people or safety specialists to help implement safety arrangements and measures
* set up emergency procedures for serious and imminent danger
* provide clear information and training for employees and
* work together (co-ordinate and co-operate) with other employers sharing the same workplace on risk control measures.

Two particular areas should be noted: young workers and new and expectant mothers:

* Employers must protect those aged under 18 from risks to their health and safety arising from lack of experience or maturity and must not employ a young person for which is beyond their physical/psychological capacity; involves exposure to harmful agents; involves the risk of accidents which may not be recognised/avoided because of the young person’s inexperience; or involves a risk to health from extreme cold, heat, noise or vibration.
* Where an employer receives written notification from an employee that she is pregnant, has given birth within the previous 6 months, or is breastfeeding, it must carry out a specific risk assessment. Action must be taken to remove, reduce or control any risks identified. If the risk cannot be removed, an employer must temporarily adjust her working conditions or, if that is not possible, offer her suitable alternative work (at the same rate of pay), or suspend her from work on paid leave for as long as necessary to protect her health and safety and that of her child.

[**Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992**](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1992/Uksi_19923004_en_1.htm)

The [Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1992/Uksi_19923004_en_1.htm) specify minimum standards for the workplace, the working environment and welfare facilities. They apply to every workplace.

The following areas are covered by the regulations:

* maintenance
* ventilation
* temperature – must be ‘reasonable’ (usually at least 16°C); there is no maximum; see [HSE guidance](http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/faqs/temperature.htm)
* lighting
* cleanliness
* space
* workstations and seating
* condition of floors
* falls or falling objects
* transparent surfaces and windows
* door and gates
* organisation of traffic routes
* escalators and moving walkways
* sanitary, washing and drinking facilities
* clothing and changing
* rest and eating facilities

[**Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992**](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1992/Uksi_19922966_en_1.htm)

The [Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1992/Uksi_19922966_en_1.htm) require employers to:

* assess risks and select suitable protection
* ensure that all personal protective equipment (PPE) is maintained, cleaned and replaced and kept in efficient working order and in good repair
* ensure PPE is stored properly to protect it from contamination, dirt, loss or damage
* inform and train employees how to use the PPE and about maintenance
* Any PPE provided must be suitable and employers have to take reasonable steps to ensure that staff use the equipment provided properly – it's not enough just to make it available.

An employer cannot ask for money from an employee for PPE, whether it is returnable or not. This includes agency workers if they are legally regarded as employees.

[**Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992**](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1992/Uksi_19922793_en_1.htm)

The [Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1992/Uksi_19922793_en_1.htm) apply wherever manual handling operations are carried out, i.e. lifting, carrying or moving any load. There are no maximum weight limits but rather employers have to risk assess the task, load and working environment. a worker may be at risk if he/she: is physically unsuited to carry out the tasks in question, is wearing unsuitable clothing, footwear or other personal effects, does not have adequate or appropriate knowledge or training. Does not have suitable lifting and handling aids or assistance.

Employers have to avoid hazardous manual handling operations (so far as reasonably practicable) by:

* redesigning the task to avoid moving the load or by automating/mechanising the process
* carrying out a risk assessment of operations that cannot be avoided
* reducing the risk of injury to as low a level as reasonably practicable, giving particular consideration to providing mechanical help
* providing training and information to employees, including general indications and, where reasonably practicable, specific information about the load

[**Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992**](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1992/Uksi_19922792_en_1.htm)

The [Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1992/Uksi_19922792_en_1.htm) specify minimum safety and health requirements for work with VDUs.

Employers must:

* Assess and reduce the risks to a user’s health from workstations.
* Assessments must be kept up to date and reviewed.
* Make sure risk controls are in place.
* Make sure there is enough workspace.
* Provide Information and Training.
* Provide suitable desk with space underneath to move legs and an adjustable chair and footrest if required.
* Provide adjustable, well-defined screen, free from flicker, free from glare, adjustable key board with space to support hands and arms.
* If a workstation is shared by more than one user, an assessment must be prepared for each user.
* Users must be given free eye and eyesight tests on request, and further tests at regular intervals. Regularity of testing should be at the clinical judgment of an optometrist or doctor. Testing can either be done in the workplace or, if off site, paid time off must be allowed.
* Where tests show that spectacles are needed, they must be provided free. This is limited to the cost of a basic appliance – an employer does not have to pay for designer frames.
* Periodic breaks from DSE work must be scheduled.
* Environment should have sufficient space, adequate lighting free from reflections and glare. Heat, Humidity and Noise must be controlled to comfortable levels.
* Employers must train staff how to adopt good posture, adjust chairs and other furniture, organising desk space to work comfortably, adjusting the screen and lighting to avoid reflections and glare, to take breaks and changes of activity, contributing to risk assessments, how to report problems and the arrangements made for health and safety in their DSE work, and how they can apply for an eye test.

[**Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995**](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1995/Uksi_19953163_en_1.htm) **(RIDDOR)**

The law requires the more serious accidents at work to be reported under the [Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1995/Uksi_19953163_en_1.htm) (RIDDOR).

There is one central contact point for all reports – the HSE's Incident Contact Centre (ICC), tel: 0845 300 9923 or via the ICC website.

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR), place a legal duty on:

* employers;
* self-employed people;
* people in control of premises;

to report to the Enforcing Authority:

* [work-related deaths](http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/guidance.htm#reportable)[1],
* [major injuries](http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/guidance.htm#reportable)[2] or [over-seven-day injuries](http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/guidance.htm#threeday)[3] which involves a worker being unable to do their normal job for more than 7 days.
* [work related diseases](http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/guidance.htm#disease)[4], and
* [dangerous occurrences (near miss accidents)](http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/guidance.htm#dangerous)[5].
* Records of any reportable major injury or over-seven-day injuries, (plus any injury to a workers which involves them being unable to do their normal job for more than 3 days),
* disease or dangerous occurrence must be kept. This must include the date and method of reporting; the date, time and place of the event; personal details of those involved;
* and a brief description of the nature of the event or disease.

**Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977**

* Trade Unions have the legal right to appoint safety reps.
* Safety representatives possess an array of legal rights under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (SRSCR) which set out employer obligations. The main provisions of the SRSC are:
* safety reps have the right to represent their constituents,
* safety reps have the right to make representations to the employer and management and have access to the employer without delay.
* safety reps have the right to represent their constituents in consultations with the HSE or other enforcing agencies,
* Safety reps have the right to be consulted by their employer in good time on the introduction of any measure which may impact upon the health and safety of employees,
* Safety reps are entitled to inspect designated work places at least once every three months and conduct further more frequent inspections if work practices or conditions have altered, new hazard information has come to the reps attention and inspect relevant health and safety documents.
* Safety reps can investigate potential hazards, complaints from employees, the causes of accidents, dangerous occurrences and diseases.
* Safety reps have the right to investigate safety concerns raised by employees, Meet privately with employees during inspections and after accidents, Keep employees continuously informed of health & safety issues and Publicise inspection results throughout the workplace.
* Safety reps are also entitled to receive information from HSE inspectors and local authority environmental health officers (EHOs) during their work site visits.
* Safety Reps are exempt from any legal liability when discharging their safety functions.
* Safety Reps are protected from being unfairly treated or suffering a detriment because of their role.
* The employer must establish a safety committee within three months of a request by two or more safety reps.
* The employer must provide safety representatives with information and knowledge over and above that necessary for employees generally to enable the Safety Rep to play an informed part in promoting health and safety at work
* The employer must provide facilities and assistance to safety representatives as they may reasonably require to perform their functions(including facilities for independent inspections and investigations and private discussions with employees)" during formal inspections.
* The employer must provide safety reps with paid time off work to perform their safety duties and to attend TUC or Union training courses. Safety Reps must suffer no financial disadvantage as a result of becoming a Safety Rep.

\*If an employer fails to accept the appointment of a safety rep, fails to make information available to a safety rep, denies certain facilities to a safety rep or ignores a request to establish a safety committee and the matter cannot be resolved by the Trade Union, an HSE inspector can enforce the law and issue an improvement notice.

**IMPORTANT:** Where Trade Union Safety Representatives have been appointed to cover a workplace and agrees to represent all workers (Union and Non Union) under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (SRSCR), the [Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1996/Uksi_19961513_en_1.htm) do not apply.

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**[Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1996/Uksi_19961513_en_1.htm).**

* Employers must consult staff not covered by union safety representatives under the [Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1996/Uksi_19961513_en_1.htm).
* Employers under the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 must consult any employees not within groups covered by trade union safety reps. The employer has the choice of consulting directly with the employees or through elected representatives. If representatives are to be elected, the employer has to make arrangements for the election of Representatives of Employee Safety (ROES). ROES are the representatives elected by the constituency of employees with whom they work. Trade union members are eligible to contest elections and can represent a workforce, even if the union is not recognised. The regulations permit unions the opportunity to increase recruitment by demonstrating that union members are most effective representatives of the workforce.
* Representatives of Employee Safety (ROES) have: Rights to time off, training and protection from harassment which are basically the same for TU Safety Reps but ROES do not possess the rights to inspect the Workplace or to establish a safety committee.
* An employer has a duty to consult employees either directly or via elected Representatives of Employee Safety (ROES) on matters regarding health and safety at work, including:
	+ - Before introducing any measure or any change which potentially affects significantly health and safety at work
		- The procedures for appointing competent people or Safety Specialists to assist the employer or comply with health and safety laws
		- Information on the risks present in the workplace and the measures to eliminate or control the risks, including what action should be taken by employees
		- The planning of health and safety training
		- The health and safety implications of introducing new technology or new work practices
		- The provision of information, including the results of risk assessments

## Stress

There is no specific law aimed at workplace stress, BUT employers have duties under both common law and statute law which are very relevant to stress issues. Employers have duties under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1999, to assess the risk of stress-related ill health arising from work activities; and under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, to take measures to control that risk. They have a legal and morale duty to ensure that their workers and others that visit their premises are not injured or made ill because of the work they do. The HSE proposes an approach based on a set of Management Standards that provide guidance which is intended to help and encourage employers to meet these existing legal obligations. There are practical things that organisations can do to manage the risks associated with work related stress.

The HSE Stress Management Standards identify six key areas that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and well being, lower productivity and increased sickness absence.

The HSE Management Standards looks at:

* **Demand** – Issues like workload, work pattern and the work environment.
* **Control** – What say the person has about the way they do their work.
* **Support** – Including the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the employer, line management and colleagues.
* **Relationships** – Including promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
* **Role** – Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles.
* **Change** – How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

HSE’s approach to tackling work related stress is guidance only. HSE will undertake enforcement action where duty-holders fail to carry out the legally required suitable and sufficient risk assessment. An organisation would be unlikely to be subject to enforcement action by HSE provided it could demonstrate it had adequately assessed the risks and was taking steps to address any problems identified. Over the last few years there have been several Improvement Notices served on organisations

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**Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002**

[1]Many products or substances used at work can be harmful. Most businesses use substances, or products that are mixtures of substances. Some processes create substances, fumes, dust etc. These could cause harm to employees, contractors and other people. Sometimes substances are easily recognised as harmful. Common substances such as paint, bleach or dust from natural materials may also be harmful. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 place duties on employers to control hazardous substances at work so that they do not cause ill health. The COSHH Regulations require employers to assess the risk to their employees, and to prevent or adequately control those risks. This can prevent or reduce workers' exposure to hazardous substances by:

* finding out what the health hazards are;
* deciding how to prevent harm to health through risk assessment [2];
* providing control measures to reduce harm to health;
* making sure they are used ;
* keeping all control measures in good working order;
* providing information, instruction and training for employees and others;
* providing monitoring and health surveillance in appropriate cases;
* planning for emergencies.

HSE Control Measures in order of priority:

* 1 Eliminate the use of a harmful product or substance and use a safer one.
* 2 Use a safer form of the product, e.g. paste rather than powder.
* 3 Change the process to emit less of the substance.
* 4 Enclose the process so that the product does not escape.
* 5 Extract emissions of the substance near the source.
* 6 Have as few workers in harm’s way as possible.
* 7 Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, coveralls and a
* respirator. PPE must fit the wearer.
* If your control measures include 5, 6 and 7, make sure they all work together.

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**Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER).**

Generally, any plant, tools and equipment which is used by an employee at work is covered, for example hammers, knives, ladders, drilling machines, power presses, circular saws, photocopiers, lifting equipment (including lifts), dumper trucks and motor vehicles. Similarly, employees using their own equipment, will be covered by PUWER and your employers need to make sure it complies with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER).

Employers must **ensure** that the work equipment provided to the workforce meets the requirements of PUWER. In doing so,

the Regulations require that equipment provided for use at work is:

* suitable for use, for the intended purpose and conditions in which it is used so that people’s health and safety is not at risk;
* Maintained in safe a safe for use condition, maintained in a safe condition and, in certain circumstances;
* inspected to ensure this remains the case and continues to be, safe for use. Any inspection should be carried out by a competent person and a record kept until the next inspection;
* used only by people who have received adequate information, instruction and training; and
* accompanied by suitable safety measures, e.g. protective devices, guards, markings, warnings, system control devices (such as emergency stop buttons) and personal protective equipment; used by workers following the safe systems of work.
* A combination of these measures may be necessary depending on the requirements of the work and the risk assessment of the work involved.

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[[[[[[**The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/disability.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/disability.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/disability.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/disability.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/disability.asp)

The fire safety law - the Regulatory Reform 'Fire Safety' Order 2005 (RRO) requires the 'Responsible Person' to carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment of the risks to which 'Relevant Persons' are exposed and identify the general fire precautions needed to comply with the legislation.

[[[[[[Under this order, the 'responsible person' in the workplace (ie the employer/owner/person in control) is required to take general fire safety precautions to ensure the health and safety of staff and others, such as pupils/students. These precautions include:](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/disability.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/disability.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/disability.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/disability.asp)

* [[[[[[assessing the risk of fire, paying particular attention to those who may be especially vulnerable, eg children](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/disability.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/disability.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/disability.asp)
* [[[[[[ensuring that there are effective means of escape](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/disability.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/disability.asp)
* [[[[[[making sure the workplace is well-equipped with appropriate fire-fighting equipment/detectors/alarms](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/disability.asp)
* [[[[[[adopting appropriate fire-fighting measures](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)
* [[[[[[nominating an adequate number of suitably trained and equipped competent persons to implement these measures.](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)

[[[[[[The order contains duties relating to safety drills and emergency routes/exits, which employees must be made aware of at their induction. See our section on [fire safety](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/fire-safety.asp)for more detailed information.](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/accidents-and-first-aid/first-aid.asp)

The 'Responsible Person' is required to ensure compliance with the RRO Regulations.

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**Loan Working**

There are no absolute restrictions on working alone; it will depend on the findings of a risk assessment.

There are two main pieces of legislation that will apply:

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974: Section 2 sets out a duty of care on employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees whilst they are at work.

The Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations 1999: Regulation 3 states that every employer shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of -

* the risks to the health and safety of his employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work; and
* the risks to the health and safety of persons not in his employment arising out of or in connection with the conduct by him of his undertaking

The HSE have produced the following publication:

Although there is no general legal prohibition on working alone, the broad duties of the HSW Act and MHSW Regulations still apply. These require identifying hazards of the work, assessing the risks involved, and putting measures in place to avoid or control the risks.

Control measures may include instruction, training, supervision, protective equipment etc. Employers should take steps to check that control measures are used and review the risk assessment from time to time to ensure it is still adequate.

When risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, arrangements for providing help or back-up should be put in place. Where a lone worker is working at another employer's workplace, that employer should inform the lone worker's employer of any risks and the control measures that should be taken. This helps the lone worker's employer to assess the risks.

Risk assessment should help decide the right level of supervision. There are some high-risk activities where at least one other person may need to be present. Examples include some high-risk confined space working where a supervisor may need to be present, as well as someone dedicated to the rescue role, and electrical work at or near exposed live conductors where at least two people are sometimes required.

Lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees. This may require extra risk-control measures. Precautions should take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, e.g. fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. Employers should identify situations where people work alone and ask questions such as:

* Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
* Is there a safe way in and a way out for one person? Can any temporary access equipment which is necessary, such as portable ladders or trestles, be safely handled by one person?
* Can all the plant, substances and goods involved in the work be safely handled by one person? Consider whether the work involves lifting objects too large for one person or whether more than one person is needed to operate essential controls for the safe running of equipment.
* Is there a risk of violence?
* Are women especially at risk if they work alone?
* Are young workers especially at risk if they work alone?
* Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
* What happens if the person becomes ill, has an accident or there is an emergency?

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## Smoking

* Since 2007 all premises and workplaces in the UK must be smoke free if they are enclosed or substantially enclosed. Employers must display prominent 'No Smoking' signs. Company Vehicles must be entirely non-smoking also.

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### [[[[[The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/computers.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/asbestos/control-asbestos.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/asbestos/control-asbestos.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/asbestos/control-asbestos.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/asbestos/control-asbestos.asp)

[[[[[These place a duty on employers to assess all foreseeable risks associated with work activities involving electricity. Employers are required to install safe systems of working, with well-maintained equipment, covering everything from power lines to kettles. All installation and repairs should be undertaken by a qualified electrician or those who have appropriate technical knowledge, though some minor repairs, inspections, fitting of plugs, etc may be undertaken by suitably trained staff.](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/computers.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/computers.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/asbestos/control-asbestos.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/asbestos/control-asbestos.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/asbestos/control-asbestos.asp)

[[[[[See our section on [electrical safety](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/electrical-safety.asp) for more information.](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/computers.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/computers.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/work-environment/computers.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/asbestos/control-asbestos.asp)](http://www.atl.org.uk/health-and-safety/asbestos/control-asbestos.asp)