

Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

Business Information Factsheet

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Introduction

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 require that all workplaces meet the health, safety and welfare needs of all employees.

The Regulations cover all areas of non-domestic premises where employees work or have access to while they are at work. They place duties on employers and on anyone else who has any degree of control over the workplace, such as premises owners or landlords.

The Regulations apply in England, Wales and Scotland. In Northern Ireland, similar provisions are made under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993.

This factsheet outlines the key health, safety and welfare requirements that must be met and the penalties for non-compliance.

Health

- **Ventilation.** Workplaces must be kept well ventilated, either by an adequate supply of fresh air from outside or by using a ventilation system.
- **Temperature.** In indoor workplaces, temperatures must provide reasonable comfort without the need for special clothing.
- **Lighting.** Lighting must be sufficient to allow people to move about and work safely, without eyestrain.
- **Cleanliness and waste.** Workplaces must be kept clean. Waste must be stored in suitable containers.
- **Room dimensions and space.** Rooms where work is carried out must have enough space for employees to move freely and perform their work without restricting their movements.
- **Workstations and seating.** Workstations must be arranged to allow work to be carried out safely and comfortably, taking into account the needs of particular individuals and their tasks.

Safety

- **Maintenance.** Premises and equipment must be kept well maintained to avoid risks to health, safety or welfare.
- **Floors.** These must be safely constructed and free of obstructions. Ramps, stairs and slopes may need handrails or fencing.
- **Windows, doors and gates.** Windows must be capable of being opened and cleaned safely. Doors and gates must be suitably constructed and fitted with safety devices where necessary.
- **Transparent surfaces.** Where necessary for safety, windows and transparent partitions, doors and gates must be made of safety material and marked to ensure visibility.
- **Traffic routes.** These include routes for pedestrians, vehicles or both. Routes must allow pedestrians and vehicles to travel around safely and must not endanger those working nearby.
- **Falls into dangerous substances.** Tanks, pits or other structures where there is a risk of a person falling into dangerous substances must be securely covered or fenced. Where this is not possible, effective measures should be taken to prevent falls.

Welfare

- **Toilets and washing facilities.** Enough toilets and washing facilities must be provided to ensure that employees have ready access to them. Separate toilets must be provided for men and women, unless each toilet is in a separate room that can be locked from the inside. Women's toilets must have a means of disposing of sanitary towels and tampons.
- **Drinking water.** Adequate supplies of clean drinking water must be available at all workplaces. Drinking vessels must be provided unless water is supplied from a drinking fountain.
- **Clothing storage and changing rooms.** Suitable secure facilities must be provided to store employees' own clothing that is not worn at work and to store work clothing that is not taken home. Changing facilities must be provided if employees have to change into special clothing.
- **Facilities for rest and meals.** There must be a suitable, clean seating area for employees to take rest breaks. Where workers regularly eat meals at work, rest areas must include suitable facilities for this purpose.

Enforcement and penalties

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) are the independent regulators responsible for workplace health and safety. They operate in partnership with local authorities to enforce the Regulations.

Where necessary, health and safety inspectors can issue notices that require health and safety improvements. Failure to comply with these can lead to unlimited fines and a prison sentence of up to two years. Company directors can face disqualification orders for a period of up to 15 years.

Useful resources

'Have the Right Workplace Facilities'

HSE

www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/workplace-facilities/welfare.htm

'Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare: Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.
Approved Code of Practice and Guidance'

HSE

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l24.htm

'Welfare at Work: Guidance for Employers on Welfare Provisions'

HSE

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg293.htm

'Temperature in the Workplace'

HSE

www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/index.htm

'Welfare Facilities'

HSENI

www.hseni.gov.uk/articles/welfare-facilities

Related factsheets

BIF002 Summary of UK Health and Safety Legislation

BIF122 Fire Safety Responsibilities on Business Premises

BIF181 First Aid Requirements in a Small Business

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