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Health and Safety

part of the  learner good practice series

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 For information

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Leading learning and skills

A Pocket Guide to Supervising

This booklet is intended to highlight some of the main health and safety considerations when taking a new young person into the workplace.

February 2006

Of interest to those supervising learners

A Pocket Guide to Supervising Learner Health and Safety

Any person under 18 years of age in the workplace is recognised as vulnerable in law and extra precautions may be needed due to their relative inexperience and possible lack of physical abilities and risk perception.

Employers' Role

Employers are required (amongst other things) to provide a:

- safe place of work
- safe plant and equipment
- safe methods of working; and
- safe means of handling and storing items.

To ensure the above is delivered in the workplace, supervision of the young person is of critical importance. Studies have shown more than 50 per cent of accidents to young people in the workplace are associated with unsafe methods of working and inadequate supervision.

Employers need to provide supervisors with adequate time, training, resources and support to enable them to supervise young people.

A supervisor of young people may not necessarily be someone with the title of supervisor or team leader. It could just as well be a co-worker who has the necessary competence to show a young person the safe and correct way of carrying out a task.



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i For information



Supervisory Support for the Young Person

You as the supervisor have a key role to play in relation to the learner as a guide, coach, mentor and role model.

To carry this out you will need to be able to build a rapport with the learner, have good communication skills and be competent in managing the hazards to minimise risks. Where the risks are not acceptable for the learner with the controls in place, then the task should be prohibited to the learner. This is particularly relevant to work experience candidates as they are not undergoing detailed and prolonged training towards a recognised occupational qualification.

Close liaison with any learning provider who is responsible for co-ordinating the learning programme is essential. Any accidents, incidents or absences owing to occupational illness should be reported to the provider immediately. They need to liaise with the Learning and Skills Council on accidents, ill health, harassment or bullying of sponsored learners.

[See HSE publication and video INDG364 'The Right Start' and the DVD 'Risk It'](#)

Occupational Risks

Some occupations carry greater inherent risks than others and require stricter control measures to prevent ill health and accidents occurring.

Example:

Higher risk occupations include construction, engineering, motor vehicle repairs, agriculture and catering.

Moderate risk occupations include warehousing, engineering, electronics, beauty treatment and hairdressing.

Lower risk occupation examples include retail, sales and education sectors.

Sources of harm (hazards) requiring control include work equipment, substances, work environment, work methods, people, biological substances and psycho-social pressures.

Risk assessments need to be carried out prior to a learner starting a task for the first time. This involves identifying the hazards present in the task and assessing the likelihood of an injury and the severity of the injuries that may occur. Risk is a combination of the likelihood of an event happening and how serious the consequences would be if it happened.

Remember, what may be considered safe for an experienced adult may not be safe for the younger employee. Restrictions may include prohibiting certain tasks or equipment, or using one-to-one supervision whilst the task is carried out.

Measures to prevent injury need to be made clear to everyone and should be recorded in the risk assessment and should be part of the safe work procedures people follow.

Controlling Risks

There is a hierarchy of control measures which must be applied in managing health and safety risks. These are given below in order of effectiveness.

- **Elimination** of the risk completely, for example, prohibiting a certain practice or the use of a certain hazardous substance.
- **Substitution** by something less hazardous or risky.
- **Enclosure** of the risk in such a way that access is denied.
- **Guarding** or the installation of safety devices to prevent access to danger points or zones on work equipment and machinery.
- **Safe systems or methods of work** that reduce the risk to an acceptable level..
- **Written procedures**, for example, job safety instructions, that are known and understood by those affected.
- **Adequate supervision**, particularly in the case of young or inexperienced persons.
- **Training** of staff to appreciate the risks and hazards.
- **Information**, for example, safety signs, warning notices.
- **Personal protective equipment (PPE)**, for example, eye, hand, head and other forms of body protection.

In practice, a combination of the above is usually used.



Remember the degree of supervision required is proportional to the risk.



Prohibitions and Restrictions

The following are not intended to be a complete list of prohibitions but are offered as examples. Further details may be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive, local environmental health officer and your local education authority.

Employees under 18 are prohibited from carrying out work which:

- is beyond their physical capacity
- involves exposure to harmful agents that are toxic or carcinogenic
- involves the risk of accidents which may arise due to their immaturity, lack of experience and training; and/or
- exposes them to harmful radiation.

They are also prohibited from carrying out work which poses a risk to their health from:

- noise
- vibration; and / or
- exposure to extreme heat, noise, vibration or cold.

Young people over the minimum school leaving age can do this work under special circumstances, which are as follows.

- The work is necessary for their training.
- The work is properly supervised by a competent person.
- The risks are reduced to the lowest level, so far as is reasonably practicable.

See HSE publications:

[HSG165 'Young people at work'](#)

[HSG199 'Managing health and safety on work experience'](#)

Workplace Assessment

Your Handy Checklist

ITEM	OK		COMMENTS
	YES	NO	
Fire exits clear			
Aisles clear			
Fire extinguishers in place			
Storage/housekeeping			
Machine guards			
Ventilation			
Heating			
Washing facilities			
Safety signs			
Cleanliness			
PPE worn			
Safe work methods in use			
Lighting			
Floor surfaces			
Electrical items			
First aid			



Information, Instruction and Training

You will need to provide adequate information, instruction, training and supervision according to the learner's needs.

This starts with an induction into the organisation and workplace. Besides organisational and job information, it should include as a minimum:

- emergency procedures
- prohibitions and restrictions
- introduction to key staff
- tour of premises
- hazards, risks and precautions
- how to report any accidents
- who to report any accidents to
- the names of the supervisor and deputy
- the named competent person for health and safety
- location of the health and safety policy; and
- employees'/learners' health and safety duties.

It is good practice to record any health and safety training you have given and check understanding afterwards.

You are also there to act as a role model in health and safety matters and to reinforce rules and procedures.

Once the individual has received information, instruction or training, you will need to maintain supervision until the individual gains competence at the task.

From time to time you will need to provide refresher and update training depending on the complexity and changing nature of the job and the individual learner's ability.



Supervisors' Support for the Learner

Mentoring

Acting as a guide, coach, counsellor and instructor.

Instructing

Explaining how things are carried out and the standards required; often through a demonstration or a toolbox talk.

Training

Assisting others to gain new knowledge/skills through structured and planned tasks.

Motivating

Providing encouragement to enable the learner to work to their potential.

Supporting

Providing the appropriate work culture and supervisory support to encourage maximum benefit for the learner.

Clarifying

Ensuring communications are clearly understood through the use of questioning and feedback.

Checking

Using observation and questioning to check the learner's understanding and the work standards.

Advising

Suggesting possible courses of action to achieve a given result based on your own experience and opinions.

Enforcing

For example, rules on safe behaviour, possibly through disciplinary measures.

Role model

Acting as an exemplary model of good practice.

National Occupational Standards	
Unit A	Ensure your own actions reduce risks to health and safety.
Unit B	Monitor procedures to control risks to health and safety.
Unit C	Develop procedures to control risks to health and safety.
Unit D	Review health and safety procedures in the workplace.
Unit E	Promote a health and safety culture in the workplace.
Unit F	Investigate and evaluate incidents and complaints in the workplace.
Unit G	Conduct an assessment of risks in the workplace.
Unit I	Prepare, supervise and support the learner for Health and Safety in a work placement.
For more details contact ENTO on 0116 251 7979	

Supervisory development
www.iosh.co.uk
www.ceih.org
www.rosipa.co.uk
www.britishsafetycouncil.co.uk
www.nebsmgmt.co.uk

Useful Information Sources

Health and Safety Information

www.hse.gov.uk

www.safelearner.info

www.young-worker.co.uk

HSE Infoline Tel: 08701 545 500.

HSG165 'Young people at work', HSE publication.

HSG199 'Managing health and safety on work experience', HSE publication.

INDG163Rev 'Five steps to risk assessment', HSE publication.

INDG275 'Managing health and safety, five steps to success', HSE publication.

INDG213 'Health and safety training', HSE publication.

HSG65 'Successful Health and Safety Management', HSE publication.

BS8800:1996 'Guide to occupational health and safety management systems', BSI publication.

OHSAS18001:1999 'Specification for occupational health and safety management systems', BSI publication.

Feedback

We hope you have found the information of use in this booklet and welcome suggestions on:

024 7682 3239

Your local LSC office is

Further Reading

Additional information is available in two good practice guides, which include case studies:

**Supervising Learners' Health and Safety:
A Good Practice Guide for Employers**

**Health and Safety Supervision of Learners in the Workplace:
A Good Practice Guide for Providers**

**Aide memoir
Standards for Health and Safety**

These are available from www.safelearner.info

Other useful publications are:

HSG65 'Successful health and safety management'

HSG165 'Young people at work: a guide for employers'

HSG199 'Managing health and safety on work experience'

These are available from HSE Books

www.hsebooks.com

This information is provided by the LSC solely to promote and encourage good practice in learner health and safety. It is not a legal commentary or authoritative guide. Definitive guidance should be sought from the Health and Safety Executive.

Further Information

For further information on health and safety please visit:

www.safelearner.info

www.hse.gov.uk

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/>