

Health and safety for disabled workers and people who work with them: An easy read guide



Contents

Who we are: **Page 3**

What this guidance is about: **Page 4**

Health and safety for disabled workers: **Page 5**

Disabled workers and risk assessments: **Page 6**

How to do a risk assessment: **Page 7**

What employers should do in a risk assessment: **Page 8**

What employers must not do: **Page 9**

Examples of changes employers can make: **Page 10**

More examples: **Page 11**

Contact us: **Page 13**

Information: **Page 14**

Words list: **Page 17**

Who we are

We are the Health and Safety Executive. We make sure that:

- people at work are kept safe;
- the work people do does not make them ill;
- workers and employers follow the law to keep everyone at work safe.

We call all these things health and safety.

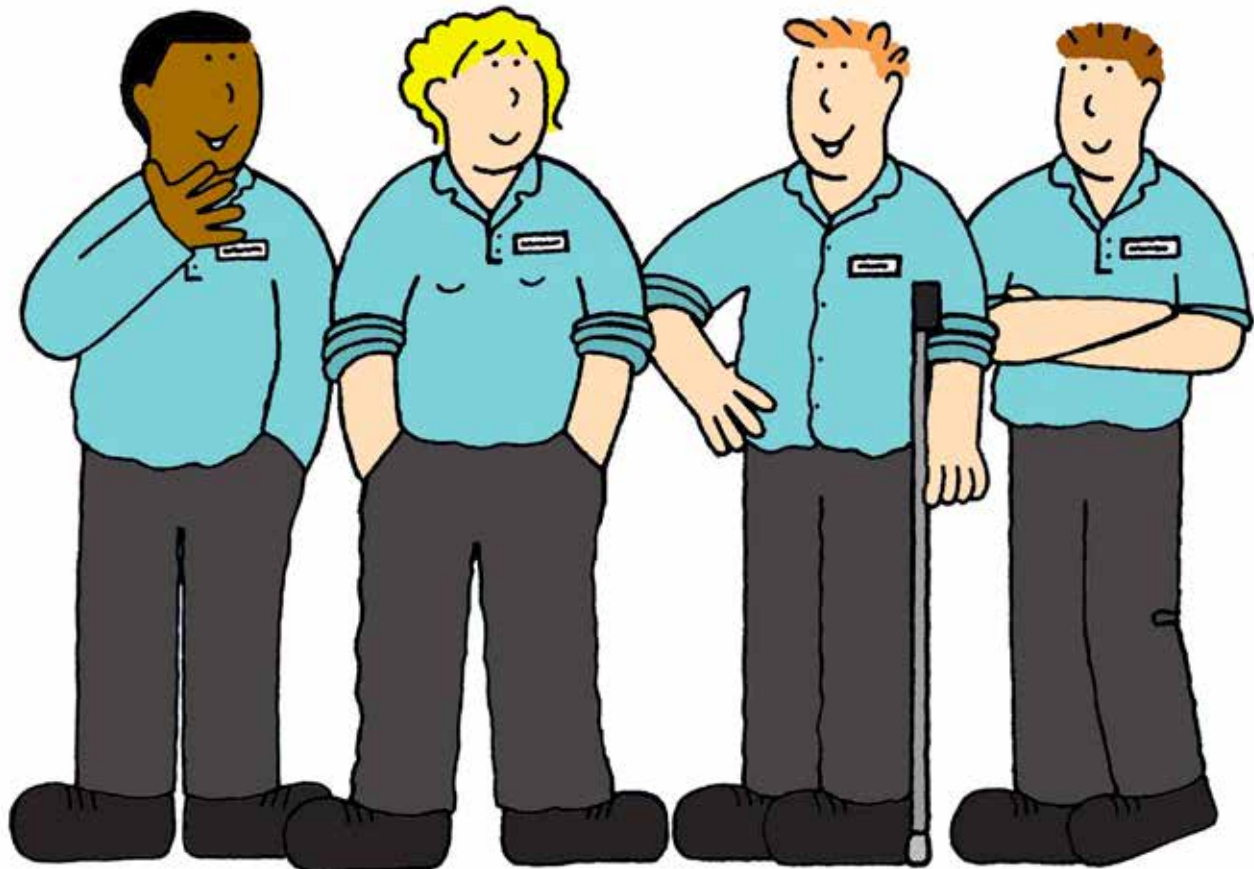
What this guidance is about

This guidance is about health and safety at work for disabled people and people who work with them.

It shows how **employers** and disabled workers can work together to make everyone safer.

Employer

An employer is the person or group you work for or who controls or directs your work. When we talk about employers here, we are including people who manage you.



Health and safety for disabled workers

The law says that employers and workers must make sure that people are safe at work.

Workers must:

- take care of their own health and safety;
- make sure their work does not hurt other workers;
- do what their employer says to keep people at work safe;
- tell their employer if they see or know something that might hurt people at work.

If you are disabled you might need to tell your employer. You should tell your employer if your disability affects the way you do your job.

Then you and your employer can make changes to help you do your job safely. Sometimes it can be hard to talk about a disability. Your employer should make it easier for you.

Your employer might ask to speak to your doctor. This can help them make the right changes. But your employer can only speak to your doctor if you say they can.



Disabled workers and risk assessments

Employers might need to make changes to keep disabled workers and other workers safe.

Example

A deaf person cannot hear the fire alarm. They can see flashing lights that go off when there is a fire.

Employers can find out the best way to make changes by doing a **risk assessment**.

Risk assessment

A risk assessment is when employers look at how people could be hurt at work. Then they can decide how to make things safer.



How to do a risk assessment

When an employer does a risk assessment, they need to think about:

- What could hurt people.
- Who might be hurt and how they might be hurt.
- How to make work safer.

An employer should:

- Make changes to make work safer.
- Go back to the risk assessment later. There might be new machines or new ways of doing the work. The employer might need to make more changes.

If there are more than 5 people at work, the employers should write down the risk assessment. Then people know what they need to do.



What employers should do in a risk assessment

- Remember to consider the needs of disabled workers as part of the assessment. Speak to the disabled person about any changes that could be helpful.
- Speak to other workers if their work might change too.
- Think about what changes should be made so workers are safer.
- Make the changes as soon as they can.
- Speak to other people and groups who know about disability and work. This could be doctors, other healthcare workers or disability groups. We tell you about some groups at the end of this guide.



What employers must not do

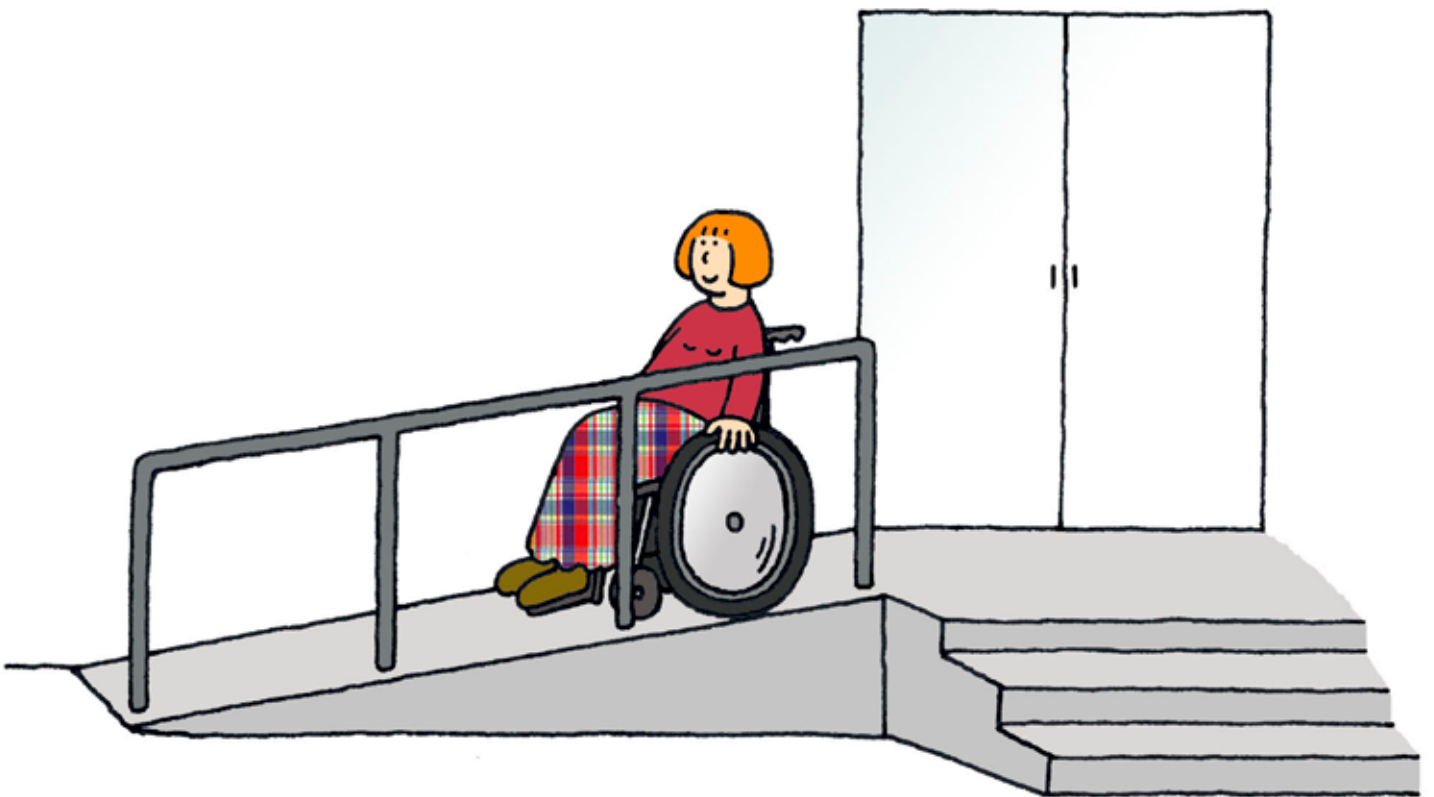
Employers cannot assume that disabled people must not do certain jobs. Employers have to look at each disabled person and see what they can or cannot do.

Employers cannot make workers tell them they are disabled. Workers only have to say they are disabled if their disability affects their job. Telling their employer they are disabled means an employer can make changes to make work safer.

Employers should go back to the risk assessment if the person's disability changes or if the work changes. They should not do a risk assessment just because a person is disabled.

Examples of changes employers can make

- Changing access to a building to make it easier for wheelchair users
- Looking at who does what tasks
- Moving a disabled person into a different job
- Changing the working hours of a disabled person
- Giving a disabled person time off for appointments with doctors and other healthcare workers
- Training for a disabled person and people who work with them



More examples

Here are some more examples of changes to make work safer for disabled people. We have changed the people's names but they are true stories.

Jane, a factory worker with epilepsy

Jane works on a machine. She sometimes has fits. Jane's employer was worried that she might have a fit at work. This could mean Jane or someone she works with got hurt.

Jane's employer spoke to Jane and her doctor. Jane and the doctor said Jane had more fits if she could not sleep properly. Jane's employer changed Jane's working hours so she did not have to work at night.

Sam, a computer worker with mental health problems

Sam was off work with mental health problems. She wanted to come back. Sam's employer helped her by making changes:

- the employer spoke to Sam to ask her what changes she needed;
- Sam was allowed to work 3 days a week until she felt better;
- people who work with Sam had training so they could understand mental health problems.

Mark, a firefighter with diabetes

Mark was off work because he had an illness called diabetes. He wanted to come back. Mark showed the doctor that he could stay healthy by taking his medicine. He did some tests to show he could do his job. Mark was able to come back to work with some changes.

The changes were:

- Mark cannot drive all the fire engines;
- he has to keep having checks with the doctor;
- Mark's employer will buy a fridge where Mark can keep his medicine.



Contact us

If you want to tell us about something at work that might hurt a disabled worker or other workers you can.

Website: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns.htm>

Fill in our online form: <https://services.hse.gov.uk/concernform/>

Telephone: **0300 0031647**

The telephone line is open from 8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday (on Wednesdays we are open from 10am to 5pm).

People who do not speak English can look for help on our website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/languages/index.htm>

Information

These pages have lists of websites. The websites tell you about health and safety and disabled people. Some of them tell employers about how to get money to make changes at work.

Disabled people at work

Access to Work

<https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

Money for businesses to make changes so they can give a disabled person a job or help a disabled person keep their job.

Looking for work if you are disabled

<https://www.gov.uk/looking-for-work-if-disabled>

Help for disabled people who are looking for work or about to start a job.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Equality and Human Rights Commission wants to stop **discrimination** against disabled people, so that people are treated fairly.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission tell people about the law. The Equality Act 2010 is a law that says disabled people must be treated fairly.

This **Equality Act 2010** easy read guide that tells you what has been done to make sure people are treated fairly.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/easy-read-the-equality-act-making-equality-real>

This gives advice about disabled people and making changes at work.

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/multipage-guide/employment-workplace-adjustments>

Equality Advisory and Support Service

They give advice on behalf of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. They have a helpline you can call.

Phone: **0808 800 0082**

Textphone: **0808 800 0084**

Website: [//www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/](http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/)

Post: FREEPOST EASS HELPLINE FPN6521

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9am to 7pm and Saturday 10am to 2pm

Disability Rights UK

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org>

This website is run by and for disabled people. It gives information about disability and employment.

Health and safety at work

Website pages for workers: www.hse.gov.uk/workers/index.htm

Healthy Working Lives Scotland

<https://www.healthyworkinglives.scot>

Help employers to create a healthier workplace.

IOSH Occupational Health Toolkit

<http://www.ohtoolkit.co.uk/>

This gives you information on dealing with health problems at work.

Acas

<https://acas.org.uk>

Acas give advice on how employers and workers can sort out problems and work together better.

Fire safety

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-means-of-escape-for-disabled-people>

This explains how disabled people can leave buildings safely if there is a fire. It explains how some people might need their own plan for how to get out.

Words list

These are some of the words we use in this guidance.

Employer

An employer is the person or organisation you work for or who controls or directs your work. When we talk about employers here, we are including people who manage you.

Risk assessment

A risk assessment is when employers look at how people could be hurt or made ill at work. Then they decide how to make things safer and healthier.

Discrimination

This means treating someone worse than other people for some reason.

This guide can be found at
www.hse.gov.uk/disability/easyread.pdf

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