



## **Health and Safety Advice, Information and Training**

### **Introduction**

#### **Provision of competent advice**

A key facet of a service areas managers and supervisors' role is knowing when and how to seek the provision of professional advice and consultancy. In order to manage effectively the various risks associated with the work activities, managers may need specialist help to identify and assess risks, and to find practical and effective means of eliminating or controlling these risks. This need for competent advice has now been recognised and become a legal requirement under regulation 7 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHWSR), which requires all employers to appoint one or more competent persons to assist in undertaking the measures needed to comply with requirements imposed by relevant statutory provisions.

The Health and Safety Team is there to provide this competent advice and can be contacted at the Shirehall on Shrewsbury (01743) 252819.

#### **Health and safety information**

Health and safety information stems from either internal or external sources. It tends to be generated in a decentralised manner and is largely technical in nature. Therefore, the main priority of the Health and Safety Team is to pull relevant information together from the numerous sources and interpret it for those who are required to act upon it.

#### **Internal information**

Internal health and safety information can take the form of accident and incident data, insurance claims data, employment records, equipment records, risk assessments, policies and manuals, rules and agreements, inspection and audit reports, minutes of meetings and memos.

Information generated internally by the Health and Safety Team has the main advantage of being relevant to the processes or risks experienced in Shropshire Council, readily accessible and, in many cases, quality controlled.

#### **External information**

External information is generated by government bodies and departments, enforcing authorities (such as the Health and Safety Executive HSE), manufacturers, trade associations, standards organisations (such as the British Standards Institution) and professional safety organisations.

## **Health and Safety Training**

### **Line management**

Line managers and supervisors are responsible for the actions of their employees. This responsibility is far-reaching and covers all aspects of working life including performance, efficiency, industrial relations and health and safety. The line manager must have sufficient information and training to ensure the following:

- adherence to legal requirements as well as Shropshire Council and service area policies
- adherence to agreed systems of work, policy arrangements and risk assessments
- effective two-way communication with employees, senior management and health and safety officer
- effective supervision of employees and working activities
- selection of suitable operatives for the various work activities
- identification of areas of weakness in health and safety arrangements
- maintenance of discipline, including ensuring that suitable action is taken against those who consistently fail to comply with health and safety arrangements
- awareness of how and when to obtain further advice and assistance
- awareness of his or her own limitations in experience and knowledge.

Line managers should be given sufficient training, information and resources to effectively discharge the above duties. How this will be achieved will depend upon the resources of service areas and may vary from short management briefings to an extensive and ongoing programme of development dictated by the level of risk and responsibility.

### **Employees**

Employee's training must enable them to fully understand the requirements and demands of their work and the arrangements for ensuring their health and safety. They will need to know how to implement these arrangements and how and to whom to report problems or requests for assistance.

Employees must also clearly understand their responsibilities under law to work safely and without risk to themselves and others. They need to understand that they are obliged under s.7 of Health and Safety at Work Act to take reasonable care of themselves and other persons, and in addition, are obliged under regulation 14 of Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to report shortcomings in the Shropshire Council safety arrangements to a responsible person.

All employees must receive information and training in the health and safety aspects of their work. Training may be given in a number of ways, but the content of a course should include the following:

Duties of the employee under health and safety law.

- Relevant in-house arrangements, including Shropshire Council and service area policy and emergency procedures.
- Safe working practices.
- Hazard identification and avoidance.
- How to report problems.

New staff are initially likely to be more vulnerable than existing employees (See also

Induction for new employees, Employing Young People and Disabled People Arrangements on the intranet). There is usually a great deal of information to absorb about the new workplace and all parties can sometimes overlook the basic safety arrangements. New recruits will have no knowledge of the existing safety culture and any unwritten rules that are taken for granted by those with longer service. Induction training is therefore necessary for all new recruits to familiarise them with the safety culture, to prevent accidents and to meet with legal requirements.

Training employees for competence should not be limited to a one-off course, but should be an on-going exercise. The health and safety needs of organisations and individuals constantly change due to developments in technology, new legal requirements and alterations to working methods. Development programmes should take these factors into consideration.

Often such training can best be incorporated into other courses. An example is skills training on machinery that may include details of safe working practices and the correct use of safety devices.

### **Summary of statutory duties**

Most modern health and safety regulations incorporate a requirement for appropriate training.

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act Sect. 2(2c) states that it is one of the general duties of employers to provide information, instruction, training and where necessary supervision

Regulation 13 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 makes specific reference to the need for employers to take account of their employees' capability as regards health and safety.

This means that the employer must consider their physical and mental capabilities as well as their training, knowledge and experience. The second part of the regulation requires the provision of adequate health and safety training on recruitment, when new or increased risks are encountered, transfer to a different job, change of responsibility, when a new system, equipment and new technology is introduced or changed.

Under training there are three other requirements:

- refresher training is called for when appropriate
- adoption of training is called for when there are new or changed risks
- training must take place during working hours

Further information can be found on the '[Health and safety training](#)' page

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