

Relevant Legislation

Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015
Provision & Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER)
Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER)
Working at Height Regulations 2005
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

General

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations cover a wide range of basic health, safety and welfare issues. Unlike previous legislation, which was too narrow in its scope, these regulations apply to almost all workplaces with the notable exception of construction sites, which are covered by their own specific regulations (CDM 2015).

The regulations are such that obligations are placed on not only “employers” such as the County Council but also on “any person who has control of a workplace”.

The regulations aim to ensure that workplaces meet the health, safety and welfare needs of all members of the workforce, including people with disabilities.

What is a Workplace?

For the purposes of the regulations a workplace can be described as any non-domestic premises or part of premises (including outdoor places) made available to any person for the purposes of work. Significantly, this also includes any means of access to or egress from the premises, other than a public road.

What Do the Regulations Cover?

Broadly speaking employers are obliged to maintain appropriate standards in the following areas:

- Maintenance and servicing of the workplace and equipment.
- Ventilation, temperature and lighting.
- Cleanliness.
- Workspace allocation.
- Workstation design and arrangement.

- Traffic routes and floors.
- Falls and falling objects.
- Glazing.
- Doors and gates.
- Travelators and escalators.
- Sanitary and washing facilities.
- Drinking water supply.
- Accommodation for clothing.
- Facilities for changing, rest and meals.

Each of these issues is discussed briefly below:

Maintenance and Servicing of the Workplace and Equipment

Workplaces and equipment are to be cleaned and maintained in an efficient state, working order and good repair by competent personnel. If a fault in any equipment is liable to be detrimental to the health and/or safety of the user then a system of maintenance must be devised and implemented. For example, this would apply to emergency lighting and ventilation. The requirement for such a system will be determined through risk assessment. Further guidance is given in section E6 which covers Risk Assessment.

Ventilation, Temperature and Lighting

Ventilation of indoor workplaces must be achieved either naturally or by mechanical means. In many instances windows or other openings will provide sufficient levels of ventilation. Where mechanical means are employed they must be regularly and properly cleaned, tested and maintained to avoid contamination.

Unlike previous legislation, which specified temperatures, the Workplace Regulations allow a more subjective approach in that they require a “reasonable” temperature to be maintained. The Health and Safety Executive translate this into a recommended minimum temperature of 16 degrees Celsius for office type environments and 13 degrees in areas where severe physical work is undertaken. No maximum temperatures are given. However, managers should be mindful of the need to maintain suitable levels of comfort for employees.

These figures are merely guidance. Thermometers should be available in reasonable quantities so that local temperatures can be monitored.

Lighting should be sufficient to allow people to work and move about safely. If necessary, local lighting should be provided at individual workstations, and at places of particular risks, such as crossing points on traffic routes. Lighting and light fittings should not create a hazard.

Cleanliness and Waste Materials

Floor, wall and ceiling surfaces inside buildings should be of a type that can be kept sufficiently clean. A suitable system for maintaining the cleanliness of these surfaces and any furnishings and fixtures should be adopted. The standard of cleanliness required will depend on the use to which the workplace is put. For example, an area where workers take meals would be expected to be considerably cleaner than an area used for manual tasks.

Receptacle bins for the temporary storage of waste prior to final disposal should be supplied in suitable quantities. Where the tasks undertaken in a particular area are such that dirt and refuse accumulate on floors or work surfaces this should be cleaned up at least daily. Waste material of any description should not be allowed to accumulate to excessive levels in any workplace.

Workspace Allocation

Workrooms should have enough free space to allow people to move about with ease. The relevant Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) recommends that the volume of the room divided by the number of people working in it should allow at least 11 cubic metres per person. This figure refers to the total volume of the room when **empty** divided by the number of persons working in it. However, consideration must then be given to the layout, contents and nature of the work.

Workstation Design and Arrangement

Workstations should be suitable for the people using them and for the work. People must be able to leave workstations swiftly in an emergency. If work can or must be done when seated, seats that are suitable for the people using them and for the work done should be provided. Seating should give adequate support for the lower back, and footrests should be provided for workers who cannot place their feet flat on the floor. Further information is given in Section L2 which covers Display Screen Equipment.

Traffic Routes and Floors

“Traffic route” means a route used by pedestrians, vehicles, or both and includes areas such as stairs, doorways, gates and loading bays.

The segregation of pedestrians and vehicles in the workplace must be organised to ensure safety. There should be sufficient traffic routes, of appropriate width and headroom, to allow people and vehicles to circulate safely with ease.

Floors and traffic routes should be sound and strong enough for the loads placed upon them and the traffic expected to use them. The surfaces should not have holes, be uneven or slippery and should be kept free from obstructions.

Any local restrictions should be clearly indicated. Where sharp or blind bends are unavoidable or where vehicles are required to reverse, measures such as one-way systems and visibility mirrors should be considered. Speed limits should be set and displayed at strategic points.

Additional measures need to be taken where pedestrians have to cross or share vehicle routes. These may include marking of routes, provision of crossing points, barriers etc.

Falls and Falling Objects

The consequences of falling from height or into dangerous substances can be so serious that a high standard of protection is required. Secure fencing should be provided to prevent people from falling from edges, and objects falling onto people. Where fencing cannot be provided, other measures must be taken to prevent falls.

Where a person might fall two metres or more, or might fall less than two metres and risk serious injury (such as falling into a dangerous substance) fencing should be provided at a height of at least 1100mm, and an intermediate guardrail will also be required. Tanks, pits and other structures should be securely covered or fenced as above.

Specific precautions will be required where there is a danger of falling off or through a roof. These may include fall-arrest systems and crawling boards. Fragile roofs or surfaces must be clearly identified. This is particularly important with regard to the safety of contractors. As well as physical signs indicating the presence of fragile materials, the form HSC1 should be employed to communicate this issue to any contractor who will be required to access potentially fragile roofs during their work. Further information on the use of the Minor Works Form (HSC1) is given in Section J2 ‘Control of Contractors’.

Materials and objects need to be stored and stacked in such a way that they are not likely to fall and cause injury.

Storage racking and shelving systems should be of sufficient size and strength to cope with the loads imposed upon them. In circumstances where heavy loading takes place maximum load notices should be displayed at strategic points. Where there is a risk of damage to these systems, for example forklift collision, a formally recorded visual inspection should be undertaken periodically to confirm the continued integrity of the system. Employees should be encouraged to report any damage, however minor, so that its effect on safety may be assessed.

Glazing

Windows, transparent or translucent surfaces in walls, partitions, doors and gates should, where necessary for health and safety reasons, be made of safety material or protected against breakage. In areas where there is danger of people coming into contact with it, it should be marked in order to make its presence apparent. Both these issues can be determined by risk assessment. British Standard BS 6262: 2005 (Parts 1-7) gives detailed guidance on this subject.

Windows, skylights and ventilators should be such that they can be opened and closed safely. The following precautions should be observed:

- External windows must not open into a traffic route.
- Windows on upper floors must be fitted with restrictors to prevent them from opening so far as to produce a risk of falling from height.
- Viewing panels on doors in thoroughfares and offices etc should not be covered with blinds, curtains or displays etc.
- Appropriate opening devices, such as poles or pulls, must be provided and used on windows that open at height.
- Damaged windows must be replaced to a high standard.

Doors and Gates

Doors and gates must be suitably constructed and fitted with safety devices as appropriate. This means that sliding and powered doors, particularly, must be prevented from falling on or trapping people. Any door that can be pushed open from either side should have a transparent viewing panel. Similarly, conventionally hinged doors which open onto main traffic routes should have a viewing panel.

Escalators

Escalators should function safely, be equipped with any necessary safety device and be fitted with one or more emergency stop controls which should be easily identifiable and readily accessible.

Sanitary and Washing Facilities

Suitable and sufficient sanitary conveniences and washing facilities should be provided at readily accessible places. They and the rooms containing them should be kept clean, adequately ventilated and lit.

Washing facilities should have running hot and cold or warm water, soap, clean towels or other means of drying. Men and Women should have separate facilities unless each facility is in a separate room with a lockable door and is for sole use only. Recommended numbers of sanitary conveniences for establishments where significant numbers of employees work are given within the Workplace Regulations Approved Code of Practice (L24).

Drinking Water

An adequate supply of mains fed, wholesome drinking water should be provided, together with suitable cups. Alternatively a water supply with an upward drinking jet should be available. Water should only be provided in refillable enclosed containers where it cannot be obtained directly from a mains source. Suitable drinking water is provided at taps within the establishment. However, chilled water is also available. This is maintained via a maintenance agreement with the supplier to maintain standards of cleanliness.

Accommodation for Clothing and Facilities for Changing

Adequate, suitable and secure space should be provided to store employees' own clothing and special clothing. The facilities should also allow for the drying of clothing, where it is reasonable to do so. Changing facilities, which ensure privacy for the user, should be provided where employees are required to wear specialised clothing.

Facilities for Rest and to Eat Meals

Suitable and sufficient rest facilities should be provided at readily accessible places. Facilities to eat meals should also be provided if the workplace is such that food would otherwise become contaminated.

The Workplace Health and Safety Checklist for low risk environments can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

Arrangements within Each Directorate

Each Directorate will need to produce its own arrangements.