



Health & Safety Manual

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Company

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Learning outcomes

- Understand own responsibilities and the responsibilities of others for health and safety at work
- Understand the use of risk assessments for health and safety purposes
- Understand how to respond to accidents and sudden illnesses
- Know how to handle hazardous substances and materials
- Understand how to promote fire safety in a work setting

Complementary manuals

- Risk assessment
- Infection Control
- Fire Safety
- Assisting and Moving Individuals
- Safety of People and Premises
- Food Hygiene and Safety

Unit One

Legislation

Introduction

These days there is a great deal of talk about 'health and safety gone mad'; it is a commonly held misconception that employers are being tied up in red tape by unnecessary legislation; that accidents will always result in legal action and thousands of pounds in compensation; and that nobody is allowed to exercise common sense any more.

In reality, it is necessary to have a legal framework to ensure workplace safety and prevent the hundreds of accidents, and deaths, which still occur each year. If you are seriously injured at work it is unlikely that any amount of money will make up for your pain, suffering and the on-going inconvenience of any long term health issue. Finally, not everyone has 'common sense' or agrees what it means.

Some facts about 2011 / 2012:

- 173 people were killed at work in the UK
- 1.1 million people were suffering from work related ill health
- 24,000 major injuries
- Over 12,000 work related deaths
(HSE 2013)

As you can see from the statistics above, health and safety at work needs to be taken seriously. While improvements are being made in many areas work can still harm your health; for example there were still 141,000 new musculoskeletal disorders (limb and back problems) diagnosed in 2011 / 2012 but this was 17,000 fewer than the year before.

Care Quality Commission (Health and Social Care Act 2008)

Health and safety is important in any environment but it can have special significance for care providers who must also be aware of hazards affecting their clients. As shown on page 3, the regulations of the Health and Social Care Act 2008, as enforced by the Care Quality Commission, require that care is carried out in a safe environment with appropriately chosen and maintained equipment.

Issues to consider when protecting the health and safety of both clients and staff include:

- Hazardous substances
- Infection control
- Security
- Handling and storage of medications

- Stress
- Food hygiene
- Moving and handling
- Fire safety
- First aid

It is not possible to cover all of these issues in adequate depth in this one manual so it is important that you do further training; the list of complementary manuals on page 3 would be a good place to start.

The Health and Safety at Work (etc) Act (HSWA) 1974

The Health and Safety at Work Act was the first piece of legislation designed to cover **all** types of work and working environments. It is described as a framework, or skeleton, act because it gives general guidance on many issues, but further legislation was required to add detail and give specific responsibilities for controlling risks.

Under the Act your employer must:

- Provide you with written policies and procedures for safe working
- Ensure that the environment you work in and the equipment you use are safe and well maintained
- Handle substances safely
- Provide you with information, instruction, training and supervision
- Ensure that you have appropriate welfare facilities e.g. toilets and drinking water

It's not just up to your employer to keep you safe at work; the law gives you responsibilities too; somewhere in your workplace there will be a poster titled 'Health and Safety Law: What you need to know' find this and use it to complete the box below.

My responsibilities for Health and Safety are:

1.
2.
3.
4.

If I need advice I could talk to:

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Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

These regulations give specific responsibilities to employers, managers and supervisors for carrying out risk assessments and implementing appropriate control measures. The risk assessments must protect employees and ***anyone who might be affected by work practices***; this could mean your clients or visitors to your premises.

Control measures should include:

- Appropriate communication of risks to employees
- Emergency procedures
- The appointment of a competent person to assist with health and safety
- Monitoring of occupational health

The 'competent person' referred to above will be your workplace health and safety representative; their name should be shown on the 'Health and Safety Law' poster you were looking at earlier. This is someone you can go to if you have any concerns about health and safety; they should be able to give advice and may have responsibility for co-ordinating training and implementing safe systems of work.

Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations enable enforcement agencies to monitor workplace accidents and ill health. Among other things, they can then identify common types of accident; see which types of workplace experience which types of illness and injury; and track the spread of infections.

Employers and managers have a duty to report certain incidents either by telephone (fatalities and major incidents only) or online (www.hse.gov.uk/riddor); reportable events include:

- Accidental death
- Accident resulting in more than 7 days absence from work
- Certain diseases / illnesses (a full list is accessible from the RIDDOR website)
- Injuries to non-employees requiring immediate medical attention
- Near misses (incidents that could have caused serious injury but didn't e.g. a hoist sling tearing while in use)
- Events such as fires or collapse of buildings

Enforcement

If people are affected by workplace accidents or ill health there are two different ways in which the company or individuals responsible can be dealt with. They can either:

- a. Be sued for damages under civil law
- b. Be prosecuted for negligence or criminal action; punished by a fine or imprisonment

Civil law requires that the injured party can prove that they have suffered harm or loss as a result of their employer's actions or lack of actions. Judgements for compensation will take into account the severity of harm done; issues such as future loss of earning and the effect on dependants; and the degree to which the injured party can be held responsible.

Remember that you have a legal duty to **protect your own health and safety**. If you are injured at work and you might reasonably have been expected to take better care of yourself any compensation you might get could be significantly reduced. For example, if you hurt your back lifting a client, and you were aware that it was a dangerous thing to do, you will be held partially responsible. If the client was injured in the incident you could be sued or prosecuted as well as (or instead of) your employer.

If an accident happens in a workplace, or there are concerns about the health, safety and welfare standards, an investigation might be carried out by the Health and Safety Executive or Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) employed by the local authority. In a care environment you are most likely to come into contact with EHOs.

Historically the HSE and EHOs have tried to focus on prevention and advice; however, due to reduced budgets they spend an increasing amount of time on investigation, enforcement and prosecution.

If an inspector visits your premises, they must be allowed to carry out a thorough inspection without interference; they may want to take photographs, take away samples, ask questions or look at paperwork. You shouldn't have anything to worry about as long as you are following your employer's policies and procedures for safe working practice.

If the inspector does find anything wrong, they are most likely to issue an improvement notice; this will tell your employer what is wrong and give a time limit for putting it right. If there is an immediate risk to health, they may issue a prohibition notice or order stopping work until action has been taken. In the event that they believe an offence has been committed they can commence action to prosecute the organisation or individual at fault. Under the Health and Safety at Work (etc.) Act fines of up to £20,000 per offence can be imposed, or, in very serious cases individuals can be imprisoned.

Unit One Questions

1. Why is it important to take health and safety at work seriously?

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2. Give an example of a way in which your employer protects your health and safety.

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3. What act gives you responsibility for your own health and safety at work?

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4. If you fall and break your leg at work what must your employer do to meet the requirements of RIDDOR?

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5. Who enforces health and safety law?

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Unit Two

Accidents and occupational health

Imagine that you have been seriously injured at work or have developed a life limiting condition; use the space below to write down some of the ways in which you think you might be affected.

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Who else do you think might be affected if you were injured or ill?

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As we have seen in unit one accidents and ill health in the workplace affect a significant number of people every year with three people a week not making it home and many more dying prematurely as a result of work related ill health.

Increased awareness and enforcement of legislation is making a difference; you are safer at work now than ever before; but you still have to take care when you're doing your job.

An accident is an event which isn't meant to happen, so, when it does it is unplanned and uncontrolled. Occupational health is anything work related which can cause illness; this could be anything from dermatitis to fatal asbestosis. Occupational illness may happen suddenly, for example a sickness bug caught from a client, or it may develop over time, like a repetitive stress injury.

While no one intends to cause injuries or illness, risks can be identified and predicted so it is possible to prevent them from happening.

To prevent accidents and ill health employers, and employees, must risk assess work both formally and informally. Employers have to identify hazards and develop policies and procedures to control and monitor them; employees must plan tasks before they do them and then take action to maintain safety throughout. We will look at the process of risk assessment in unit three.

If employers and employees do not work together to maintain health and safety the consequences may be serious and far reaching. Pain and disabling conditions limit

people's quality of life; they can affect their relationships and prevent them from working. Work colleagues may become worried about their own safety and anxious to find work elsewhere; the loss of a competent member of staff can put pressure on other team members and affect continuity of client care. Employers may be investigated leading to further job insecurity among staff and concerns about the safety of clients. One person's accident could put a business at risk if concerns meant that potential clients were not confident of good care.

This is, of course, an extreme example, but accidents and ill health do cost businesses millions every year and there are also costs to society, which include NHS treatment and payment of benefits.

Risk factors

There are 3 main categories of risk affecting workplace accidents and ill health, they are:

1. Occupational – anything related to the type of work being done
2. Environmental – the place the work is carried out
3. Human – the people doing the work

So, in health and social care your main concerns might be as follows:

Occupational factors

- The unpredictable nature of people requiring care
- Infectious illnesses and handling of bodily fluids
- Repetitive work e.g. making beds, cleaning tasks
- People with mobility problems
- Stress
- Cleaning / laundry chemicals

Environmental factors

- Lack of space to carry out tasks safely, particularly on adapted premises
- Poorly maintained flooring or outside areas
- Heat
- Poor lighting

Human factors

- Lack of training / competence
- Impatience
- Rushing
- Lack of compassion
- Carelessness
- Poor concentration

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

These regulations mean that your employer has to protect your health and welfare by maintaining certain facilities and standards within your place of work; these include:

- Everywhere should be clean
- There should be adequate ventilation
- The temperature should be reasonable to work in
- There should be suitable and sufficient lighting
- You must have access to toilets, drinking water and washing facilities

These represent the basic minimum provisions that your employer should make to ensure that your workplace is a suitable and safe place to be.

Common safety issues

Although all workplaces have different types of risks and safety concerns, there are some issues which can affect all workers; these include:

- Smoking
- Alcohol / drugs
- Stress
- Violence

Smoking is perhaps less of a health issue since it was banned in workplaces in 2007; however, as your workplace is also home for a number of people it is possible that smoking will be allowed in some areas and, if there is a staff smoking area, risks still remain.

There are 2 main dangers associated with smoking:

1. Breathing in smoke can increase risk of respiratory illnesses, cancers, heart disease and stroke
2. Discarded cigarettes are a fire risk

To protect you from second hand smoke your employer should control where people smoke and when they do so; clients should be aware that they may have to refrain from smoking when an employee is in a smoking area, for example if they are cleaning it, or assisting someone to get out of their chair.

Fire risks are reduced by restricting smoking to set 'safe' areas away from flammable substances, and by providing appropriate equipment such as metal ashtrays and bins which should be emptied regularly.

Be aware that even if smoking is completely banned in your workplace, it may still be happening. Smokers who do not have access to suitable smoking areas are likely to use unsuitable ones which could increase fire risks.

Alcohol and drugs can affect people's ability to work safely and may cause them to act in unpredictable and foolhardy ways. Prescription drugs and hangovers can reduce people's ability to concentrate so they may not be able to carry out complicated tasks (such as medicine administration) safely. Alcohol and recreational drugs can remove inhibitions and alter mental states potentially leading to risk taking, aggression, poor co-ordination, overconfidence and slower reaction times.

Consider the following:

- Employers may make allowances for a carer who occasionally comes to work 'the worse for wear'; other team members will need to cover tasks involving machinery or where a mistake could cause harm
- If a carer or other employee regularly turns up for work hung-over then the employer should take action to protect clients and the rest of the workforce; the employee should be given a performance review and supported to make lifestyle changes so that their social life doesn't affect their work
- If an employee is dependent on alcohol or drugs their employer should give them support and opportunity to overcome their problem; if they will not, or cannot, the employer may be forced to take disciplinary action to protect others
- If clients become aggressive or uncooperative when under the influence of alcohol it may be necessary to restrict their alcohol intake to protect others from harm; this will need to be done within the appropriate legal framework and with the co-operation of the client and their family when possible

Stress accounts for around 40% of work related ill health (HSE 2011 / 12) and care work is one of the highest risk professions. Causes of stress include:

- Lack of support from management
- Bullying and fear of violence
- Job insecurity
- Lack of confidence in health and safety measures (resulting in fear of injury)
- Feelings of inadequacy, perhaps because of poor training or a lack of supervision
- Excessive demands at work e.g. being expected to cover for absent colleagues or focus on physical tasks at the expense of client well being

Employers have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act to minimise staff stress in order to protect their welfare. They should take stress seriously as it can cause long term physical ill health; stress also increases individuals' risk of injury as it reduces their ability to concentrate and causes tension which makes muscles more vulnerable to damage.

Employers need to:

- Provide access to information and advice about stress
- Enable good communication – encourage staff to raise concerns and show that they are addressing them
- Promote a supportive, inclusive work culture
- Recognise when staff members are at risk and offer support and practical help e.g. change in job role or opportunity for time off

To look after yourself, identify your personal stress triggers and find ways of dealing with them. Do not be afraid to ask for help from your manager or colleagues; teamwork is important and all staff members should support each other when necessary.

The following tips may be helpful but everyone is different so what works for you may not work for someone else:

- Separate work and home – find a way of drawing a line between one and the other e.g. go for a walk after a shift or have a shower and change your clothes
- Live well – eat healthily and exercise, this protects your mental well being as well as your physical health
- Be nice to yourself – if you have done something you are not happy about don't dwell on it, reflect on what you could have done differently, then accept that you are human and move on
- Don't try to please everyone else at the expense of yourself – if you need a break don't agree to cover an extra shift

Violence is unacceptable in any work setting; just because people need care and support doesn't mean that they can verbally or physically attack you. Your employer must have in place protective measures and systems for the reporting and recording of violent incidents (For further information please read the manual 'Safety of People and Premises').

Reporting and recording

All accidents and incidences of work related ill health should be appropriately reported and recorded; you should make yourself familiar with your employer's policies for doing this.

As we have already seen certain events must be reported to the authorities under RIDDOR. In-house you should know what records to complete. If an accident occurs an accident report should be completed, you may have an accident book or report forms on paper or computer for this purpose.

Accident reports must:

- Be GDPR compliant – personal information must be stored so that it can only be seen by appropriate people; if you have an accident book individual pages will tear out for filing

- Be accurate, legible and complete – they may be needed for an investigation so write in black pen, fill in as soon as possible after the event and include all relevant detail (who, where, how and when)
- Be signed by the person completing and include their personal details

Anyone can write an accident report but your employer may prefer certain individuals (e.g. line managers) to do so.

Unit Two Questions

1. What is RIDDOR?

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2. What are the 3 main categories of risk factors affecting the likelihood of accidents and ill health?

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3. Give an example of a way in which an employee's alcohol consumption could cause harm at work.

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4. Suggest 2 ways in which you could protect yourself from the effects of stress.

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5. What information should be included in an accident report?

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Unit Three

Risk assessment and Risk management

Assessing risk

In order to reduce the likelihood of accidents and ill health in the workplace employers and employees must carry out appropriate risk assessments.

To meet the requirements of health and safety legislation managers and supervisors have to carry out formal risk assessments on all workplace hazards; the information from these should be used to create policies and procedures for safe working practices.

To protect yourself you need to be familiar with your employer's risk assessments and carry out your own 'on the spot' risk assessments while you work. The following scenarios show the difference that this process can make to your safety.

Ryan is working at Shady Lawns, he has been asked to get Mrs Brady out of bed so he heads off to her room humming a little song and thinking about his lunch plans. On entering Mrs Brady's room he shouts a cheerful good morning; Mrs Brady is unusually quiet and looks pale and tired, but Ryan overlooks this and carries on doing the same thing he has done every morning for a year. He assists Mrs Brady to the edge of the bed, helps her to stand and...her legs give way and she falls to the floor.

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Raj is asked to help Mrs Brady get up so he enters her room, says good morning and picks up her care plan. Nothing has happened since his previous visit but he is reminded that when she is unwell Mrs Brady can become unsteady on her feet. Raj approaches the bed notices Mrs Brady's pallor and tiredness and asks her how she feels. When she replies that she doesn't feel too good this morning Raj decides to call a colleague and use the hoist to move her to the bedside chair.

In the scenarios Ryan is working on auto pilot, he hasn't assessed the safety of the task he's carrying out and has missed the fact that Mrs Brady's condition is different and, therefore, he may need to carry out the task differently. Raj, on the other hand, has not made any assumptions; he has consulted the care plan where his employer has recorded safe working procedures for assisting Mrs Brady, and he has assessed Mrs Brady's condition and acted on the information.

As a result, Ryan has caused a potentially serious accident while Raj has maintained everyone's safety.

When employers do formal risk assessments there are five steps that they need to follow:

1. Identify the hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
4. Record your findings and implement them
5. Review your assessment and update as necessary (HSE 2013)

Whoever carries out the risk assessment, whether it's the employer or a nominated member of staff, must have adequate knowledge and experience of the workplace and health and safety issues to do the job properly.

1. Identify the hazards

The first thing to be done is to identify potentially harmful objects, practices, and places. To do this the assessor can tour the premises looking for dangers; look at accident records; talk to employees or look at industry guidance from sources such as the Health and Safety Executive or Care Quality Commission.

The assessor is looking for anything that might cause an accident **or** potential ill health; as we saw in unit 2 these hazards might be occupational, environmental or human. Possible problems in your workplace might include:

- Wheelchairs blocking fire exits
- Grease on kitchen floors
- Worn carpets
- Slide sheets being used for more than one client
- Lack of security
- Broken equipment
- Employees not using personal protective equipment
- Cleaning materials left lying around

Risk assessments should be realistic and appropriate; they only need to be carried out when there is a genuine and predictable risk of harm.

2. Decide who might be harmed and how

In your workplace there will be different groups of people who will be more or less vulnerable to identified hazards; risk assessors must decide who may be at risk and how much harm might be caused.

Groups who may need special consideration include:

- Employees

- New (inexperienced) employees
- Pregnant women / new mothers
- Clients
- People who lack mobility
- People who lack capacity
- Children
- Visitors
- Contractors

A hazard may have the potential to cause serious harm to one group of people but not to others; either because they are more likely to be affected by it or because they are more vulnerable. For example, damaged equipment is more likely to put employees and clients at risk, while poorly stored chemicals would be hazardous to children and people who lack competence.

When deciding how people might be harmed assessors must consider the possibility of long term health problems as well as the likelihood of accidents.

Risk assessment doesn't need to be complicated; seemingly obvious measures can be the difference between life and death. For example, several care home residents have died in recent years as a result of drinking incorrectly stored or labelled cleaning products. These were easily identifiable hazards requiring straightforward control measures.

Note: assessors may also need to consider the potential for harm to the environment e.g. from cleaning chemicals or the disposal of clinical waste

3. Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

Having identified hazards and people who may be at risk assessors must then decide how serious the risk actually is; that is, what severity of injury or ill health may be caused, and what is the likelihood of this happening.

This information will help them to plan and prioritise control measures so that risks are dealt with in order of necessity.

The law requires employers to do everything 'reasonably practicable' and take 'suitable and sufficient' action to reduce risks to acceptable levels. Employers must balance the level of risk against the cost, effort and time involved in introducing particular control measures.

If a hazard can be removed altogether, this should be done. If it's not possible an effective and appropriate control measure should be used.

Control measures include:

- Substitution – find a safer alternative e.g. use less hazardous chemicals
- Isolation – prevent access with guards or locked doors

- Reduce exposure – rotate staff around different tasks
- Provide training
- Introduce personal protective equipment (PPE) – e.g. gloves
- Provide welfare facilities e.g. sinks for handwashing

The first three measures on the list are more effective than the last three which require people to change their behaviours. Training alone should not be relied on to remove risk but should be introduced in addition to other measures. For example the risks of moving and handling are reduced but not removed by the introduction of equipment; employees also need training on how to use the equipment safely.

Training and PPE will only work if competence and compliance are checked afterwards so appropriate supervision is necessary.

Welfare facilities are the bare minimum requirements for employers to protect the health and welfare of their employees.

The table below shows some hazards you may encounter; complete the table with your ideas about who might be harmed, how this might occur and what control measures might be appropriate.

<i>Hazard or hazardous task</i>	<i>Who may be harmed and how</i>	<i>Possible control measures</i>
Chip pan		
Soiled bedlinen		
Assisting clients to walk		

Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981

Whatever control measures you have in place in your workplace, it's also necessary to make provisions for treating injuries and medical emergencies in order to minimise harm.

Employers need to ensure that they have adequate first aid equipment, trained first aiders and procedures for reporting and recording. There are no set rules for what has to be provided but your employer (with the help of nominated first aiders) must decide on the type of incidents which may occur and the frequency with which they may happen. They should use this information to decide what to put in first aid kits and to plan staff training needs.

First aid kits:

- Should include gloves, plasters and dressings
- Will be positioned to be easily accessible if an emergency occurs
- Blankets and aprons should be stored with them
- Medicines and creams have no place in them
- Must be kept properly stocked and be checked regularly by a nominated individual

First aiders:

- Must be available on each shift
- Training must be up to date and appropriate

Reporting and recording:

- An accident / incident report must be completed if first aid is required
- Report under RIDDOR when necessary

4. Record your findings and implement them

To make sure that employees and others are made aware of risk assessments they need to be recorded, communicated and stored appropriately; this enables people to act on the control measures introduced to protect their safety.

If people know the reasoning behind a new work practice or the introduction of a piece of equipment, they are more likely to follow safe practices.

Imagine that you have started work one morning and been told you are to use a new piece of equipment that will increase the time it takes to carry out a task by 10 minutes. If this was all you knew, you wouldn't bother using the equipment, you would just work as normal. To get you to change your behaviour you would need to be informed about the benefits to you of using the new equipment; this might require a training session or you may be given a booklet explaining what the equipment does.

It is a legal requirement for your workplace to use appropriate signs to give instructions and information in the interests of health and safety. As your place of work also needs to be 'homely' signs should not be overused. It's likely you will find examples of each of the following around you:

Mandatory signs such as Fire Door Keep Shut – these are blue

Prohibitions such as No Smoking – these are red

Safe conditions such as Emergency Exit – these are green

Warnings such as Highly Flammable Substances – these are yellow

You may also have general information signs which are normally black writing on a white background

5. Review your risk assessment and update if necessary

Risk assessments are working documents which should adapt as the workplace changes. The success of control measures should be monitored and reviews carried out when necessary to maintain safety.

Reviews should happen:

- If an accident occurs or someone develops a work related illness
- If new equipment is introduced
- When new employees start or a new client is admitted
- If the layout or use of a room changes
- On a regular basis – at least annually

Risk management

Risk assessment can be quite a negative process; it focuses on potential for harm and then identifies ways of controlling dangers with the main aim of protecting workers. Care providers have to maintain awareness that their work environment is their clients' home and anything that is done to ensure safety has an impact. For example, emergency exits have to be signposted but it's not 'normal' to have signs all over your house and they can make the premises look institutional.

While workers have a right to be protected and a duty to maintain the safety of others, your clients have to be protected but, they also have the right to take risks if they choose to do so.

It's important that you do not limit clients' freedoms unnecessarily; you have a duty of care to protect them but this has to balance with their rights. You cannot use health and safety concerns or your own personal feelings to limit clients' lives. You must take a positive approach; listen to what the client wants and focus on how it can be achieved **not** the reasons why it might be difficult.

Good risk management maintains clients' safety without affecting their freedoms. Suitably trained care staff must risk assess clients' activities and make appropriate decisions about any potential dangers. These risk assessments should be done with the intention of enabling the activity to go ahead; they must not be attempts to find reasons why something shouldn't happen.

Risk assessment has to be carried out on an individual basis in order to support equality and fairness; assessments must not rely on stereotypical ideas of client's conditions. People with identical diagnoses (e.g. dementia, epilepsy) will be completely different in terms of abilities and disabilities so while one may be able to live independently another may require a significant amount of support.

Decision making must be without prejudice or assumption; whoever carries out risk assessments must be confident in their abilities and unafraid of legal penalties. Good record keeping is essential so that if an individual does come to harm the reasons for allowing them to take actions are properly documented.

Unit Three Questions

1. Why is it important for employees to carry out informal risk assessments while they work?

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2. Give 3 examples of hazards you may find in your workplace.

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3. Give an example of a time when you would need to review risk assessments.

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4. Why might it be dangerous to rely on training alone to control a risk?

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5. Where would you expect to find information about a client's mobility and the level of assistance they required?

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Unit Four

Fire Safety

The majority of fires are preventable; they either start as a result of deliberate actions (arson) or they are made more likely by carelessness and poor maintenance standards (discarded cigarettes, unattended fryers, damaged wiring etc.) Employers and employees should work together to reduce the likelihood of fires occurring and to put in place appropriate emergency procedures to limit damage if they do.

If a fire starts in a care home it can have catastrophic effects for employers, staff, clients and visitors. Lives may be lost, buildings destroyed, and businesses ruined if fire safety precautions are not taken seriously.

Prior to 2005 commercial buildings were inspected by local fire and rescue authorities who issued certificates of compliance; these authorities now have an enforcement role. The new legislation that changed the way that fire safety is managed was called the Fire Safety Regulations, Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005; this is also referred to as the Fire Safety Order. A document 'Fire Safety Risk Assessment: Residential Care Premises' which is produced by the government and gives advice on complying with the Order in a care setting can be accessed at www.firesafetyguides.communities.gov.uk.

Fire Safety Regulations, Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

In your workplace there must be a 'responsible person' who is in charge of fire precautions and making arrangements for emergencies. To comply with the Fire Safety Order they must:

- Carry out and record risk assessments with a focus on 'at risk' groups
- Appoint a competent person to assist with meeting the requirements of the Order (this should be someone with adequate knowledge and skills; in small businesses the 'responsible person' can nominate themselves)
- Give all employees clear and adequate information, instruction, training and supervision
- Consult employees about their responsibilities and any changes to provisions
- Provide information for clients, visitors etc.
- Appropriately manage dangerous (i.e. flammable) substances
- Determine the way in which emergency services are to be contacted
- Maintain premises and equipment

The key to good fire safety management is risk assessment; assessments should pay particular attention to the needs of those who will be at increased risk in the event of a fire occurring. 'At risk' groups include visitors who will be unfamiliar with the layout of the premises and the emergency arrangements; children who may lack the awareness or understanding necessary to take care of their own safety; and clients.

By carrying out regular and appropriate assessments employers can ensure that their fire safety procedures, prevention measures and fire precautions are in place, adequate and working.

Fire risk assessments have 3 main aims and 5 steps. The aims are:

1. Identify fire hazards
2. Reduce risks
3. Make appropriate fire safety arrangements.

The 5 steps are:

1. Identify fire hazards
2. Identify people at risk
3. Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk
4. Record, plan, inform, instruct and train
5. Review

(Adapted from Fire Safety Risk Assessment: Residential Care Premises)

Prevention

For a fire to start three elements are required; a source of fuel, a source of ignition and oxygen. Prevention is always better than cure, so control measures should be focussed on preventing fires starting but must also include equipment, procedures and arrangements to reduce damage and loss caused when they do.

To adequately control fire hazards and protect people on the premises managers must have identified the following:

- Any opportunities for arsonists - e.g., piles of rubbish outside the building
- Acts or omissions which would allow a fire to start – e.g. carelessly dropping cigarettes
- Accidents waiting to happen – e.g. candles being used in clients' rooms
- Blocked escape routes
- People / places which are most likely to be affected if a fire starts
- Factors which will increase the difficulty of evacuation
- Fire control measures which are already in use e.g. fire doors / fire retardant materials

Control measures should then be introduced which:

- a. Adequately reduce the risk of fires and the likelihood of damage and loss
- b. Are suitable for the premises and its purpose i.e. they do not make the environment any more 'institutional' than necessary

Emergency plans

Every workplace should have a written emergency plan based on risk assessments and including the following:

- How people will be made aware if there is a fire
- Staff action on discovering a fire
- Evacuation procedures
- Assembly points
- Escape routes
- Fire fighting equipment and use
- Details of people with special responsibilities

All staff should be aware of the emergency plan and it should be readily available to read.

In general, all new staff will be given a tour of the premises to identify escape routes; alarm call points etc. Emergency plans will be communicated to all staff and can be read at any time and there will be regular (ideally 6 monthly) fire awareness sessions. Staff members with special responsibilities or who may be working alone or in isolated parts of the building may need more specialist training on issues such as fire fighting and correct use of the alarm system.

Personal responsibilities

As an employee you have a legal duty to protect your own health and safety and that of your colleagues; few things can cause as much damage and devastation as a fire so it's essential that you take appropriate steps to prevent fires starting.

There are a number of different ways in which you can actively reduce the likelihood of fires and your employer should provide regular training sessions to maintain your awareness of hazards and control measures. While working you should become used to cleaning and tidying 'as you go' so that flammable materials are returned to their proper place, pieces of equipment do not obstruct fire exits and hot / electrical equipment is not left switched on for longer than is necessary.

When working with hot oil / irons etc don't be tempted to leave them unattended even for short periods of time; it's very easy to get distracted and for accidents to happen very quickly. In the event that something does go wrong, and a fire starts stay calm and try to act quickly but without rushing to reduce the likelihood of fire spreading; raise the alarm immediately to allow safe evacuation of the premises and if you can take action safely do.

It's important for you to be vigilant when at work, look out for hazards; correct them if you can, report them if you can't. If you are aware that colleagues or clients are creating fire hazards you must bring your concerns to the attention of your manager who should deal with the situation in a way that corrects the problem without causing bad feeling or reducing the likelihood of staff raising concerns in future.

As deliberately started fires are a major concern on work premises keep an eye out for people who have no business being in or around the building(s) and look out for potentially attractive fuel sources such as piles of cardboard, old pieces of furniture etc.

What happens when a fire starts?

Fires once they start can rapidly grow and spread producing heat, flames and toxic fumes which can cause physical harm and make evacuation more difficult. It is, therefore, essential that your workplace is equipped with suitable systems to alert people to the presence of fire and that everyone knows what to do when the fire alarm sounds.

Fire alarm systems

The fire detection and warning system in your workplace should include the following four elements:

- Smoke / heat detectors
- Manual call points
- Audible alarm
- Control and indicator panel

Smoke / heat detectors must be positioned where fires are most likely to start (laundry, kitchen, bedrooms etc.) and should be kept dust free and away from obstructions such as shelving units. Manual call points (break glass points) will be positioned at exits to allow people to raise the alarm if they discover a fire. Triggering the alarm may also activate other safety systems such as automatic door closers.

If you discover a fire your first action must be to raise the alarm.

When a fire is detected an audible alarm should be triggered that alerts everyone on the premises to the fact that they need to evacuate the building(s); employees, clients and regular visitors should have heard the alarm in practice so that they are in no doubt as to its meaning. The alarm should be sufficiently loud for everyone to hear it and it may be necessary to make special arrangements to ensure that it will wake people at night. Clients or staff with hearing problems will require an alternative warning method such as a flashing light or a vibrating device.

The control panel of the system should indicate the area affected by fire and staff should receive training as to their specific responsibilities when the alarm sounds i.e. are they going to be the one who checks the panel, will they be helping individual clients to evacuate.

The alarm system must never be switched off; all alarms including false ones must be recorded and investigated. If ever the system does fail or has to be disconnected for any reason temporary arrangements must be made, recorded and communicated to all staff.

Alerting the emergency services

Responsibility for alerting the emergency services must be allocated to a specific individual on each shift, identified either by role or by name. Whoever is responsible should dial 999 and ask for the fire service; they will then need to pass on certain relevant information including the home's name and address including postcode; the nature of the business e.g. residential elderly care; and the approximate number of people on the premises with brief description of any special needs.

Evacuation

To prevent panic in an emergency and to enable evacuation to be carried out as smoothly and quickly as possible regular and realistic fire drills should take place involving as many clients as possible.

The design of your workplace should minimise the speed with which fire could spread and make evacuation as simple as possible. Escape routes should be planned, signposted and kept clear of obstructions. As electrical systems may fail in the event of a fire occurring there must be an emergency lighting system that allows people to see what they are doing.

When people are evacuated from a building there must be a safe place for them to go to, this is generally referred to as an assembly point and it should be clearly signposted and positioned far enough from buildings to be safe if they collapse. Once everyone has gathered at this point a member of staff can check that everyone is safely out of the building. To do this they will need an up to date record of clients, a staff register and a visitors' book. For their own safety every visitor should sign in and out of the premises.

Fire doors

Fire doors must either be kept shut or fitted with devices that will automatically allow them to close if the fire alarm goes off.

Fire doors are designed to hold back flames and smoke for up to 30 minutes; they must not be altered in any way (e.g. painted) as this may affect their resistance.

Fire extinguishers

It is more important to evacuate people from a building than to stop and fight a fire.

However, there are occasions when simple techniques can eliminate a fire before it takes hold – for instance when dealing with burning fat in a pan. It is important that any fire extinguisher used is the correct type. Anyone using a fire extinguisher should be trained to do so and should ensure that they have a safe exit from the building.

Portable fire extinguishers should be fixed in appropriate and accessible places where they can be seen. They are normally put near doors and along exit routes and should be chosen to be suitable for the most likely fires to occur in the area they are placed. For example a water extinguisher might be placed in a room where the main sources of fuel were paper and fabrics, while an office with computers and photocopiers would require a carbon dioxide extinguisher.

Unit Four Questions

1. Give 2 examples of things that your employer must do to comply with the Fire Safety Regulations, Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

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2. What effects might a fire in your workplace have?

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3. Why is it important to practice evacuations?

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4. What must you **never** do to a fire alarm system?

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5. What is an assembly point?

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Unit Five

Moving and Handling

As a carer you may or may not be aware that you are working in one of the highest risk professions for accidents caused by poor manual handling (www.hse.gov.uk/statistics). While some risk comes from the repetitive nature of the domestic tasks which you have to carry out (bed making, moving equipment etc.); the greatest risk of all comes from the clients you work with.

Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (MHOR updated 2004).

MHOR apply to all hazardous manual handling operations; manoeuvres may be hazardous for various reasons including size, weight or nature of load to be moved; number of times that the operation must be carried out; environment within which the load is to be moved. (Almost all assisting and moving of clients will be hazardous).

To meet the requirements of the regulations employers have 3 main duties:

1. Avoid – if the task doesn't have to be done it shouldn't be; if it can be mechanised this should be done.
2. Assess – carry out a formal risk assessment of any hazardous task
3. Reduce - use the findings of risk assessments to plan safe systems of work and introduce control measures

In addition they must also communicate important safety information to staff and take into account the varying physical capabilities of different employees.

When you carry out handling tasks you should first of all follow the same 3 step process as your employer – avoid, assess, reduce – and then, if the task is necessary and within your capabilities, follow your employer's safe system of work. If they have recorded that the task requires two people and that equipment should be used you must make sure that this happens otherwise you become liable for any accident or injury.

When your 'load' is a client it is not enough to just follow manual handling legislation; you must also be aware of laws affecting the rights of individuals and guidelines and legislation for good practice in care. The following is a list of just some of the Acts and documents you will need to be familiar with:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Social Care Act 2008
- Essential Standards of Quality and Safety (CQC guidance to complying with the Health and Social Care Act)

What can go wrong?

Poor manual handling of any kind can result in accidents and occupational illnesses with acute, chronic or even terminal results. The effects of poor posture, bad practice and accidents can last days, months or even years and the costs to individuals, employers and society as a whole are high.

Although we tend to focus on back injuries as the likely result of poor manual handling we can of course do harm to almost any part of our body if we don't take care. For example:

- Toes and fingers can be crushed
- Joints may be dislocated
- Bones get broken
- Skin bruises and tears
- Ligaments can be overstretched

Safe handling

Adequate and appropriate planning and preparation can significantly reduce the risks associated with manual handling. Employers do the groundwork by carrying out formal risk assessments, developing safe systems of work and introducing equipment and training. You and your colleagues follow this up by doing your own informal risk assessments before tasks and then taking necessary measures to get ready such as locating equipment and moving obstructions.

When you assess manual handling tasks use the word TILE(E) to help you to remember the factors you need to consider.

Task

- What has to be done?
- What do we want to achieve?
- What is likely to be involved?

Individual (you)

- Am I capable, competent and confident that I can do this?
- Do I have the training and experience to do it safely?
- How am I feeling today, am I fully fit?
- Am I dressed appropriately (comfortable clothing, not too loose or too tight; sensible shoes)

Load (inanimate)

- How big is it?
- Is it easy to hold?
- How heavy?
- Does it have sharp edges?
- Is it unstable?

Load (client)

- Check client's care plan
- What are their capabilities?
- Can they cooperate / understand directions etc?
- Are they weight bearing / mobile?
- What's their state of health generally?
- How are they feeling right now?
- Can they consent to what I am asking them to do?
- Do they have walking aids? Do they know how to use them?

If you believe the client's physical capabilities or mental capacity have changed ask your manager for advice before assisting them, or moving them. You may cause serious injury if they are less able to participate in the manoeuvre than 'normal'; if they were injured and you had not voiced your concerns you could be prosecuted. (for further information on supporting clients see the e-cert Healthcare Training manual 'Assisting and Moving Individuals')

Environment

- Is there space?
- What's the flooring like?
- Have I got to go through doors / up stairs? How difficult will this be?
- Are there bits of furniture in the way?
- Will there be people about?
- Is the lighting adequate?

The principles of efficient movement

To carry out handling tasks in the safest way possible you need to know how the human body works best. Unlike the old technique-based approach, the principles of efficient movement allow a far more human and flexible response to handling tasks.

To work efficiently your body needs to be relaxed and comfortable and you should move in a way that generates maximum power from minimum effort. If something doesn't feel right it probably isn't; if you find manoeuvres awkward think carefully about how you are moving and whether you are following the principles.

A dynamic, stable base

If you don't want to fall over a stable base is essential; to allow for movement it should also be 'dynamic'. Create stability by planting your feet about hip distance apart and point your lead foot in the direction of movement to allow your muscles to push the move.

Use your body weight to assist motion and reduce the actual amount of force you need to use.

Knees and hips

As stated above your body is safe when it is relaxed and comfortable; keep your knees and hips flexed to allow you to move naturally without putting stress or tension on your joints or muscles.

If you need to reach down to move something or lift something up soften your knees and hips to lower yourself without becoming unbalanced. If you have to carry out a manoeuvre that requires you to squat you will be at increased risk of injury; do not attempt to move heavy loads from this position or do anything that takes longer than a few seconds.

Your spine

Everybody's back is different; you know your own and should use it in a way that works for you. Maintain its natural curves (usually a kind of lazy 's' shape) and think about your posture.

It's likely that you have experienced aches and pains when doing things like ironing or washing up; tasks like this encourage us to stand with our back in a kind of 'c' shape which causes discomfort and significantly increases your risk of injury (up by 40% after 5 minutes).

Your spine is at its most vulnerable when it is twisted and bent at the same time; try and avoid this particularly when lifting and carrying.

Head and chin

These should be comfortably balanced so that you maintain a natural posture.

Arms

Keep your arms as close to your sides as possible to reduce strain; do not try to carry loads at arm's length for long periods of time. To appreciate the difference this makes find a large book (or similar object), hold the book close to your chest for 1 minute then hold it at arm's length for 1 minute and see how it feels.

Hands

Your hands should be as relaxed and open as possible; closing the fingers introduces tension which will also transfer to your arms. If you can move things or assist people without gripping you will reduce your chances of injury (it is obviously never good practice to grip clients anyway).

Get hold of a hoist, trolley or wheel chair and try pushing it with open palms; see how much control you can have without gripping.

Breathing

Good breathing techniques help to provide control, add strength and aid relaxation. A good oxygen supply is vital for our body to work properly; breathing is something we do subconsciously but we might find benefits to giving it some thought.

If you have good abdominal muscles a deep breath in before lifting a weight will help to protect your spine, even if you haven't focussing on your breathing when doing anything physical will help to maintain a good oxygen supply to your muscles.

Teamwork

If you are assisting or moving a client good teamwork is essential to promote safety and client wellbeing. The team will always include the client and any carers involved in the process; clear communication is vital to ensure that everybody works together in a controlled manner.

To reduce the likelihood of confusion one person should be leader and they will control what happens and when; the leader should then take the following steps:

1. Talk to the client about what they would like to do (e.g. go to the dining room); how this will be achieved (i.e. how much help will be needed, will equipment be involved) and what their role will be.
2. Get the client's consent if possible; if they lack the capacity to do this their behaviour should be observed to decide whether they want to move or not and, if a decision is made to do so, they must be monitored throughout for signs of distress, pain or resistance
3. Explain fully what is going to happen and the role of each person; the manoeuvre should then be broken down into stages and carried out a bit at a time to allow everyone to keep up
4. Commence the manoeuvre ensuring that everyone moves together by using an instruction similar to ready, steady, move. (1,2,3 causes problems as some people go on 3 and some after)
5. Make sure everyone is comfortable and prepared before carrying out the next part of the manoeuvre

Tape

- ***Think*** – consider the task in hand and what it involves; consult care plans and risk assessments
- ***Assess*** – what hazards / risks exist and how capable are you?
- ***Plan*** – what exactly are you going to do? Get everything and everyone you need together
- ***Execute*** – carry out the task

The key to safe and controlled manual handling is preparation; remember the proverb 'more haste, less speed'. Rush to do something and you are likely to end up spending extra time correcting mistakes and clearing up after accidents.

Unit Five Questions

1. What are the main regulations covering manual handling in the workplace?

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2. What do the letters TILE stand for in relation to manual handling risk assessment?

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3. How do you stand to create a 'dynamic, stable base'?

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4. Give a reason why you should not grip clients when assisting them to move.

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5. Give 2 examples of environmental hazards that would increase the risk of manual handling tasks.

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Unit Six

Hazardous Substances and Work Equipment

Even in a relatively domestic environment you will be working with dangerous substances and equipment. We are so used to being around some of these things that we can easily forget how dangerous they are; for example it's unlikely that you give it much thought when you switch on a light or plug something in, but electricity can kill; you may use dishwasher detergent on a daily basis without knowing that it has been responsible for several serious and fatal incidents involving people in residential care.

At home, we may only become aware of the dangers around us when we have to childproof the environment; then we notice that there are sharp edges, hot liquids, poisons, and various other serious hazards in each and every room. When you are at work you cannot afford to be blind to the dangers around you; remember that you have legal responsibilities to protect yourself and others and you have a duty of care to your clients.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 2002

Employers must take a risk assessment based approach to protect their employees and others from hazardous substances they may come into contact with at work. They should:

- Reassess risks when necessary

Employees must follow employer's safe policies and procedures for handling and controlling hazardous substances and must report any problems or concerns.

Hazardous substances in a care setting might include:

- Cleaning chemicals
- Hot water
- Spilt liquids
- Bodily fluids
- Medications

Substances may cause burns, respiratory damage, poisoning, skin damage, infection and various other types of harm. To maintain safety hazardous substances must be:

- Used correctly - always follow manufacturer's instructions about dilution, ventilation, contact with skin etc.

- Stored correctly – medications (apart from self-administered) must be locked away; flammable substances should be in appropriate storage areas away from heat sources; contaminated waste must be put in the right bin
- Kept in their original containers - chemicals must not be put in unlabelled bottles or left where they might be mistaken for foodstuffs

Employers' control measures for using hazardous substances may include first aid provisions; personal protective equipment and training.

Employees must read COSHH information sheets; wear protective clothing and return substances to storage after use. If they start to suffer ill effects e.g. breathing problems or dermatitis they must inform their manager immediately.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Regulations 2002

PPE is a way of reducing risk when a hazard cannot be adequately controlled by other means. If a risk assessment identifies a need for PPE the employer must:

- Provide appropriate PPE free of charge for each employee affected by the hazard
- Make sure the equipment is available when and where it is needed, and is in good working order
- Make sure PPE complies with appropriate British and European standards (it should be CE marked)

Employees must wear PPE when indicated by risk assessments and use it according to the information or training they have received.

Personal protective equipment you may use includes:

- Gloves – disposable or rubber to prevent cross contamination when handling foods, bodily fluids etc.
- Aprons – for kitchen wear or personal care; they should be colour coded according to use

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998

These regulations cover all types of equipment used for work purposes.

Employers must:

- Ensure that the equipment they get is suitable for the purpose it will be used for
- Provide employees with adequate training, information, instruction and supervision to use equipment safely
- Maintain equipment in safe working order
- Ensure that equipment meets appropriate British and European standards (often indicated by CE mark)

The equipment you use at work may be complicated like a dishwasher or simple like a stapler; it could be manual, battery operated or electric; and it may be safe enough for anyone to use, or dangerous enough to require training and the implementation of control measures.

Don't use equipment unless you know how to use it safely; visually check things before you use them and report any signs of damage. If there is a risk of harm from the damaged equipment remove it from use immediately. Follow your employer's safe systems of work and if you need to wear personal protective equipment do so.

If equipment fails while in use (e.g. a hoist collapses) the incident may require reporting under RIDDOR.

Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998

These regulations cover all equipment used for lifting purposes including hoists and minibuss tailgates but excluding profiling beds.

Employers must:

- Choose equipment that is strong and stable enough for its intended purpose
- Ensure equipment is marked with its safe working load
- Check equipment daily and keep it properly maintained
- Have it checked by a competent individual every 6 months
- Put in place safe working procedures for employees to follow

Never use lifting equipment such as hoists until you have received proper training; it is best practice for two carers to be involved to maintain client safety when moving them. Generally speaking, when fatalities have occurred to people being hoisted the person using the hoist has been untrained and unsupervised.

Electricity

Electrical faults cause a significant number of fires each year, you can help reduce the likelihood of problems with faulty electrics by using your senses of touch, smell and sight. When using any electrical equipment look for signs of wear and tear or charring; if plugs or sockets feel warm don't use them until they have been checked and repaired by a competent person (you should also prevent anyone else from using them); finally if you smell hot plastic or burning look for possible causes.

Safe Installation / Maintenance

The safety of electrical equipment used in your workplace will rely to a great degree on the way in which it has been installed and the regularity with which maintenance is carried out. There are no acceptable shortcuts when it comes to electrical safety;

your employer must use competent and appropriately qualified individuals to carry out all electrical work and care must be taken to ensure the following:

- Electrical systems must include all appropriate safety measures, i.e. be properly wired, fused
- Any electrical equipment to be used in wet areas (e.g. bathrooms) must be suitable for purpose
- All electrical equipment (including items belonging to clients) must be tested by a competent individual on a regular basis
- Employers must provide information and training for using electrical equipment
- You and your colleagues must check equipment before using it and use it properly. If you spot a fault you must immediately remove the equipment from use and report the problem

Conclusion

All employers and employees have personal responsibilities for safety at work. Your employer must risk assess all aspects of the work environment, equipment and working practices and put in place appropriate control measures which should be communicated to all staff.

You and your colleagues must familiarise yourselves with your employer's policies and procedures and follow them when you work. You should keep your eyes open when you are working and report any problems you encounter. Be prepared to alter the way you do things if there are changes in circumstances; and keep up to date with best practice.

Unit Six

Questions

1. What types of work equipment are covered by LOLER?

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2. Give an example of your employer's duties under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations.

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3. Give 3 examples of hazardous substances which you may come into contact with at work.

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4. How would you prepare before using a hoist?

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5. Give an example of a way in which the risks associated with electricity can be reduced.

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