

## The Health & Safety Policy

Section 2 of the HSWA '74 requires all employers of **five or more** people to prepare a written statement of policy. It provides the framework of general health and safety responsibilities for staff and of general operational arrangements. There is no one specified approach or format to the development and content of the policy, rather it needs to be a reflection of the particular circumstances of the individual organisation.

## Aims, Objectives and Key Elements

### **General terms:**

- Identify the roles and responsibilities of managers, specialist health and safety personnel and other employees.
- Coordinate activities to identify, analyse and implement solutions to potential safety problems.
- Define arrangements for promoting, planning and controlling all aspects of health and safety in the workplace.

Essentially, the policy to achieve this will consist of three parts:

- **General statement of intent** - will set targets, will outline in broad terms the overall health and safety culture of the organisation and will re-state legislation principles in respect of that organisations undertaking.
- **Organisation - roles and responsibilities of individuals** - deals with people and their operational duties in respect of health and safety. Outline the chain of command for health and safety management and will identify individual roles and responsibilities and the scheme of delegation.
- **Arrangements, systems and procedures** - this deals with the practical arrangements - for example: safety training, safe systems of work, environmental control, guarding, housekeeping, safe plant and equipment, noise and dust control, fire safety, maintenance or records, emergency procedures, etc.

## Setting Targets

The first part of the policy will be concerned with its general objectives.

## General Statement of Intent

This spells out the organisations overall approach to health and safety and its aims. It should commit the organisation to the minimum specifications in legislation. The general statement of intent will identify the main Directors or Chief Officer who has prime responsibility for health and safety at the highest level. The statement will be signed and dated to embody that commitment.

## General Objectives

The main objectives of the policy should be clearly set out in the general statement of intent.

- The recognition that management is responsible for the effective and efficient management of health, safety and welfare.
- The recognition that the company will comply with health and safety law.
- The duty of management to ensure that so far as is reasonably practicable, everything is done to prevent injury. Including, production, design, construction, operation of all plant, machinery and equipment, and to a safe place of work.
- The duties imposed on employees
- The commitment to monitor and review objectives in light of significant changes.

## Targets

- Accident and incident rates - objective is to reduce these continuously. This process is known as "benchmarking".
- Monitoring
- Regularity of review - the policy should specify how often.

## Organising for Health and Safety

This is concerned with the distribution of responsibilities throughout the organisation, from Managing Director or Chief Executive Officer right down to the shop floor personnel. These roles need to be coordinated and controlled by lines of accountability.

The organisations section of the policy should demonstrate, in written form and diagrammatic form, how all this is done.

### **Everybody has a part to play:**

- Management at **ALL** levels.
- **ALL** employees.
- Specialist health and safety practitioners - full time/part time or brought in for that purpose.

The general roles and responsibilities which need to be allocated relate to:

- Key personnel (identified by name and/or job title) who are accountable to senior management
- The roles of both line and functional management in respect of compliance with such arrangements.

- The provision of support for managers and key personnel throughout the company by functional experts.
- The need to measure, monitor and review.

## **MANAGEMENT SHOULD NOT BE A ONE-WAY PROCESS.**

### **Roles of Managers**

Three main tiers of management or levels:

- **Senior Management** - concerned with strategy as a whole, setting policies and broad objectives, allocating resources and approving plans.
- **Middle or departmental/section management** - concerned with the detailed plans to achieve the broad objectives and the organisation and direction of resources.

This includes:

- Ensuring safe systems of work via programmes and procedures.
- Communicating with supervisors and employees to provide clear information of what is required. Feedback.
- Maintaining records.
- **First-line management or supervisors** - concerned with the technical operation of work activities. Work closely with operatives to ensure programmes and procedures are carried out properly. Involves, instruction monitoring, inspecting and information and providing equipment to ensure compliance.

### **Health and Safety Arrangements**

These are the systems, procedures and other measures which are required in order to put the policy into effect. Clear explanation of implementation, maintenance, monitoring and review of preventative and protective measures.

### **Planning and Organising**

The basis of planning health and safety measures in risk assessment. The policy statement will identify the need for, and responsibility for, risk assessment. i.e., who does this. Other aspects to planning and organising which the policy needs to cover are:

- Systems for monitoring compliance, including supervisory responsibilities and inspection.
- Systems of routine maintenance of safety plant and equipment.

- Systems for reporting accidents and other incidents, and their detail.
- Systems for recording and documenting actions taken.
- Systems for distributing information, including training programmes.

### **Controlling Hazards**

This section will detail the arrangements. These will include technical, procedural or behavioural controls such as:

- Safe systems of work or permit to work systems.
- Fire safety and prevention.
- Control of contractors and visitors.
- Use of DSE, including eye tests and provision of glasses.
- Cleanliness and waste disposal.
- Use and maintenance of machinery.
- PPE
- Handling of hazardous substances.

The detail will be separate within manuals, instructions and guides.

### **Consultation**

There is a legal requirement to consult with employees. Two approaches to this:

- Trade union safety representatives and the appointed safety committee.
- ALL other employees not within the union.

Everyone in the organisation should be encouraged to participate in health and safety to help:

- Set safety standards.
- Devise safe systems of work.
- Participate in risk assessment and inspection.

### **Communication**

The means of communicating health and safety information to staff must be spelt out.

- Use of written procedures.
- Provision of instructions.
- Provision of appropriate training.

## **Monitoring, Compliance and Assessing Effectiveness**

All arrangements need to be monitored to ensure they are operating and being operated and are achieving objectives.

- **Proactive Systems** - identifying failure to meet own standards, risk assessment, inspection records, audit reports, number of completed assessments, assessment training days.
- **Reactive Systems** - statistics, numbers of employee complaints, amount of enforcement action taken etc.