



Health and Safety Made Simple – The basics for your business

1. Appoint a competent person

As an employer, you must appoint a competent person or people to help you meet your health and safety legal duties.

What a competent person does

They should have the skills, knowledge and experience to be able to recognise hazards in your business and help you put sensible controls in place to protect workers and others from harm.

Qualifications and training

It's not usually essential for them to have formal qualifications and they're not required by law to have formal training, although it can help.

Who you can appoint

You could appoint (one or a combination of):

- yourself
- one or more of your workers
- someone from outside your business

2. Prepare a health and safety policy

The law says that every business must have a policy for managing health and safety. A health and safety policy sets out your general approach to health and safety. It explains how you, as an employer, will manage health and safety in your business. It should clearly say who does what, when and how.

If you have five or more employees, you must write your policy down. If you have fewer than five employees you do not have to write anything down, but it is useful to do so.

You must share the policy, and any changes to it, with your employees.

3. Risk Assessment

As an employer, you're required by law to protect your employees, and others, from harm.

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the minimum you must do is:

identify what could cause injury or illness in your business (hazards)

decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously (the risk)

take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this isn't possible, control the risk

Assessing risk is just one part of the overall process used to control risks in your workplace.

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