



Department of
Finance

An Roinn Airgeadais

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Health and Safety at Work

Policy Statement - 2016

health
safety

Contents

| | | |
|------------|---|----|
| | Permanent Secretary's Foreword | 3 |
| 1: | General Policy statement | 4 |
| 2: | Implementation | 5 |
| 3: | Organisation and Arrangements | 5 |
| 4: | Fire Precautions and Emergency Procedures | 13 |
| 5: | Health and Safety Training | 14 |
| 6: | First Aid Arrangements | 15 |
| 7: | Smoke-free Environment | 16 |
| 8: | Driving for Work | 16 |
| 9: | The Occupational Health Service | 18 |
| 10: | Welfare Services | 18 |
| 11: | Discipline | 19 |
| 12: | Compliance | 19 |
| 13: | Enforcement | 19 |
| 14: | Consultation | 20 |
| 15: | Circulation | 20 |



Permanent Secretary's Foreword

Health and Safety is important for all of us.
It is an individual, as well as a collective, responsibility.

As Permanent Secretary of the Department of Finance, I have a clear responsibility to ensure that all DoF staff can perform their duties as safely as possible wherever they work and that all those who may be affected by our work are not exposed to risk.

Health and Safety Law in Northern Ireland has been subject to many changes. Most of these are about managing risk. To help with this we have revised our Health and Safety Policy Statement so that DoF staff can understand their legal obligations and work in a safe environment.

All staff should take time to familiarise themselves with the contents of this Health and Safety Policy, so that you understand your responsibilities in your work area. If you are a Manager you must ensure that staff and others, for whom they have a responsibility, comply with this Policy.

We will regularly monitor, audit and review our health and safety performance to ensure we comply with our legal responsibilities and provide a safe working environment.

There already are a number of Health and Safety Officers in place across DoF. If necessary we will appoint and train more to help ensure that the Department meets its statutory duties.

Promoting and complying with health and safety in the workplace is important for all of us, not just to ensure we meet our legal requirements but to reduce the risk of accidents. I look forward to your help in achieving this goal.

David Sterling
Permanent Secretary

The Department of Finance as the EMPLOYER has produced this revised General Policy Statement in consultation with Departmental Trade Union Side.

1. General Policy Statement

- 1.1** In complying with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000, and all other relevant legislation, the Department regards it as an integral part of its duties and objectives to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees at work and of all other persons who may be affected by the Department's undertakings.
- 1.2** The Department demonstrates top level commitment to health and safety by documenting within this policy the duties of each individual and their responsibilities.
- 1.3** The Department is committed to the systematic identification of hazards and the adequate assessment and control of risk to which employees and others may be exposed. The maintenance of a working environment and of systems of work which are safe and without risk to health and safety form an essential part of this policy.
- 1.4** The Department is also committed to the development of a positive health and safety culture throughout the organisation.
- 1.5** NB: Compliance with health and safety procedures is to be regarded as an integral part of the duties of staff at **all** levels. Failure to comply with Health and Safety duties, regulations, procedures etc will be regarded as a serious breach and may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

2. Implementation

The procedures for implementing the General Policy Statement are set out in the Organisation and Arrangements which follow. To ensure we comply with our Health and Safety policy and any other legal obligation, we have organised the arrangements to reflect and operate within our normal line management structures. The policy outlines who is responsible for what in terms of health and safety.

3. Organisation and Arrangements

It should be noted that, although not specifically mentioned below, professional and technical staff should assume the responsibilities of their equivalent level in the general service grades.

3.1 The Permanent Secretary is ultimately responsible for ensuring the Department's compliance with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000 and all other relevant legislation.

In discharging this responsibility, the Permanent Secretary has power to invoke disciplinary procedures, if deemed necessary, against any employee who fails to comply with safe working practices.

3.2 Directors are directly accountable to the Permanent Secretary for health, safety and welfare within their commands.

- They are required to monitor health and safety measures and ensure their effective implementation.
- Arrange for funds and appropriate facilities to be available to meet the requirements of the policy.
- Provide assurance that Risk Assessors are given sufficient time and co-operation to discharge their responsibilities.
- Set a personal example at all times with respect to health and safety.



- 3.3 The Chief Executive of Northern Ireland Statistic and Research Agency** is directly accountable to the Permanent Secretary for health, safety and welfare within their Agency.

In particular they are required to prepare a written statement in respect of health and safety, setting out the organisation and arrangements necessary to implement all preventive and protective measures required to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees working within the Agency and of other persons who may be affected by the Agency's undertakings.

The Director of Central Procurement Directorate, due to the complexity of activities within this Directorate, shall prepare a written statement in respect of health and safety, setting out the organisation and arrangements necessary to implement all preventive and protective measures required to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees working within their organisation and of other persons who may be affected by their undertakings.

They should ensure that adequate resources are available to support the implementation of the Departmental Health and Safety Policy and set a personal example at all times with respect to health and safety.

- 3.4 Heads of Division** are directly responsible to their Directors for health, safety and welfare within their area of responsibility.

- 3.5 Grade 6s and 7s** are responsible to their Heads of Division for ensuring the effective implementation of health, safety and welfare measures within their respective branches. In particular their responsibilities include the following:

(a) To make arrangements to carry out suitable and sufficient assessments of the risks to the health and safety of staff and other persons arising out of or in connection with the undertakings of their branch/division (eg the nomination of staff for Risk Assessor training). This would include General Risk Assessments, the assessment and analysis of Display Screen Equipment workstations in order to ensure that they satisfy minimum health and safety standards, the assessment of the risk of injury from the Manual Handling of loads, and an assessment before selecting Personal Protective Equipment to ensure it is suitable (where applicable).



(b) To take action as required on matters arising as a result of the risk assessments. Make and effect arrangements for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of preventive and protective measures, including providing staff with comprehensive and relevant information on any risks identified, and on preventive and protective measures and procedures to be followed to ensure their health and safety.

(c) In conjunction with their Deputy Principals to make arrangements for the identification of health and safety training needs and for ensuring the provision of such training, instruction and information to staff as is necessary.

(d) To make arrangements for the reporting and investigation if required, of all accidents/ dangerous occurrences, for the upkeep of the Accident Book, the completion of Accident Report forms and to ensure that these are forwarded to the Health and Safety Adviser.

The reporting procedure is to include those measures necessary to ensure, where appropriate, compliance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (NI) 1997.

(e) To assess the costs of maintaining and where necessary, improving health and safety standards and to take into consideration the financial implication when preparing annual budgets.

(f) To monitor the effectiveness of health and safety measures within their branches and reporting to the Heads of Division as required.

(g) To make arrangements to establish local Safety Committees on request.

(h) Set a personal example at all times with respect to health and safety.

Health
Safety
Adviser

- 3.6 Deputy Principals** are responsible to their Grade 7s for ensuring safe working within their areas of responsibility. In particular their responsibilities include the following:
- (a)** Ensuring the risk assessments of existing and new work activities are carried out. This would include the assessment and analysis of Display Screen Equipment workstations in order to ensure that they satisfy minimum health and safety standards, the assessment of the risk of injury from the Manual Handling of loads and an assessment before selecting Personal Protective Equipment to ensure it is suitable (where applicable). General Risk assessments should include photocopiers, shredders, guillotines, laminators, etc.
 - (b)** Informing their Grade 7 of any action required as a result of risk assessments, including information about hazards and methods of avoiding, preventing and dealing with these and what information should be provided to staff.
 - (c)** Identifying health and safety training needs and ensuring that these are met. This would include ensuring that there are an adequate number of trained Risk Assessors available.
 - (d)** Reporting and if required, assisting in the investigation of accidents/ dangerous occurrences within their areas of responsibility.
 - (e)** Set a personal example at all times with respect to health and safety.
- 3.7 Office Managers (eg Staff Officers/Executive Officers)** are responsible for the day-to-day management of health and safety within their area of responsibility. In particular their responsibilities include the following:
- (a)** Ensuring that staff have any relevant assessments for work activities within their area of responsibility carried out and that records of these are maintained. This would include risk assessment records for Display Screen Equipment workstations, Manual Handling Operations and Personal Protective Equipment (where applicable).
 - (b)** Informing their Deputy Principal of any changes in work activities that would require existing risk assessments to be reviewed or initial assessments to be carried out.



(c) In conjunction with their Deputy Principals, identifying training needs and the provision of in-service training and information on health and safety matters to staff as required.

(d) Set a personal example at all times with respect to health and safety.

3.8 Risk Assessors - staff nominated and trained as Risk Assessors are to carry out assessments of work activities as instructed by Management. They must make and record arrangements for implementing the health and safety measures identified as necessary by the risk assessment and record the significant findings of the risk assessments, including information about any employees especially at risk.

3.9 Employees at all levels are required to have reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts and/or omissions at work. They are required to co-operate with the Department in the implementation of health and safety measures and **must not** intentionally or recklessly misuse or interfere with anything provided in the interests of health and safety. They must use equipment and other work items in accordance with instructions and training provided by the Department/Agency.

They are to report to their line manager (and assist if required in any subsequent investigation) all accidents or incidents which have, or may have, caused personal injury or damage, or any shortfall in the Department's preventive measures.

Set a personal example at all times with respect to health and safety.

3.10 Premises Officers - staff carrying out the duties of Premises Officers must, in conjunction with line management, ensure that the Department's Health and Safety Policy is upheld and, in particular, that the duties outlined in the Policy Statement and Premises Officer Guide are followed. They will ensure, in as far as is reasonably practicable, that the premises and all means of access to and egress from them are safe and without risk to health.



Their responsibilities include the following:

- (a)** In workplaces shared with other employers to co-operate with the other employers in health and safety matters and meet with Joint House or Health and Safety Committees where available. They will also co-ordinate protective and preventive measures and exchange health and safety information. Any information on risks identified and preventive measures must be passed on to the employees concerned.
- (b)** To establish and where necessary, give effect to procedures to be followed in the event of serious and imminent danger to persons in the premises. To ensure that all staff in the buildings for which they are personally responsible are aware of the means of raising the alarm and safe evacuation procedures. Paragraph 4 '*Fire Precautions and Emergency Procedures*' details further responsibilities.
- (c)** To ensure that there is an adequate number of Fire Wardens within their building and that an up-to-date list of trained staff is prominently displayed throughout the building.
- (d)** To ensure that any remedial action that is highlighted in the Fire Risk Assessment is actioned
- (e)** To closely supervise any contractual work to ensure that any health and safety or fire risk created by the contract is controlled in line with the approved Health and Safety Plan.
- (f)** To ensure that relevant health and safety information is provided to staff and/or persons using the premises.
- (g)** Provide information and assistance in relation to the installation and return of monitors for Radon as appropriate. Further information is provided in the Premises Officer Guide. It is essential that Premises Officers attend the training course "Health and Safety Training for Premises Officers".
- (h)** To have custody of the Accident Book (into which details of all accidents/injuries must be entered) and hold supplies of the Accident Report Form. Accident details must also be recorded on HRConnect.
- (i)** To ensure that there is an adequate number of qualified First-Aiders within their building and that an up-to-date list of qualified staff is prominently displayed throughout the building.



(j) To compile and maintain an inventory of all portable electrical equipment/appliances and arrange for a regular programme of inspection and maintenance.

(k) To ensure that the workplace complies with the day to day requirements set out in the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations (NI) 1993 concerning the working environment, safety, facilities and housekeeping (maintenance and cleanliness).

(l) To ensure that Risk Assessments are completed in common areas (corridors, stairs, entrance lobbies, kitchens, car park etc).

3.11 A Health and Safety Adviser has been appointed by the Department in accordance with Regulation 7 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000, to assist the Department in undertaking the measures necessary to comply with the requirements of the relevant statutory provisions.

The responsibilities include the following:

(a) To ensure that the procedures for implementing the policy, as set out in the Organisation and Arrangements, are adhered to across the Department/Agency.

(b) To advise management on all matters relating to the health and safety of staff and/or persons affected by the Department's undertakings.

(c) To carry out routine inspections of workplaces in the Department/Agencies, maintaining records of inspections and ensuring that action is taken when necessary.

(d) To monitor the requirements of new health and safety legislation and advise management on the measures necessary to ensure the Department's compliance with Health and Safety law.

(e) To advise management on health and safety training needs and assist in the development of suitable training programmes.

(f) To monitor Accident and Dangerous Occurrence reports and advise, as required, on the protective/preventive measures necessary to prevent a recurrence.



(g) To undertake accident investigation, preparing reports relating to potential claims and attending court to give evidence when necessary.

(h) To liaise with Departmental Trade Union Side.

The Safety Advisory Officers within Central Procurement Directorate will assist that Directorate in undertaking the measures necessary to comply with the requirements of the relevant statutory provisions.

Health
Safety
Directorate

4. Fire Precautions and Emergency Procedures

Officers-in-Charge of buildings/premises are responsible for ensuring that satisfactory fire precautions and emergency procedures are in place, are given sufficient high priority and that staff are made aware of them.

The Officer-in-Charge will appoint a fire safety management team, including a Fire Precautions Officer (and Deputy) and Fire Wardens, and ensure that sufficient time and training is provided for them to undertake fire safety duties. The Officer-in-Charge will also ensure that an adequate number of trained staff and facilities are available to assist members of staff (and where applicable, the public and visitors) with a temporary or permanent disability to evacuate the building in an emergency.

Fire safety training for all staff will be provided on induction, annual refresher training thereafter with face to face training delivered every third year. Fire safety drills will be undertaken twice yearly and remedial action taken where shortcomings are identified.

Records of fire safety systems maintenance and training will be retained in the Fire Safety Manual along with a copy of the fire risk assessment and, where applicable, any other certificate or licence. Further guidance is available in the Fire Safety Manual.

Fire Safety

5. Health and Safety Training

A range of Health and Safety courses are provided by the Centre for Applied Learning (CAL), details of which can be accessed via the CAL link of the Intranet homepage.

Health and Safety Awareness training is mandatory for all new staff to DoF, in keeping with legislative requirements. The DoF Training Commissioner will work with Business Area Development Coordinators to ensure that CAL schedule enough courses to accommodate the Department's needs.

The responsibility for ensuring that staff attend Health and Safety Awareness training and other relevant Health and Safety training lies with line managers, with staff themselves being responsible for enrolling on these courses via HRConnect. Health and Safety training will be included in supervisory and management programmes, as appropriate. In addition, risk assessment courses for nominated risk managers and briefings for senior/top management will be available among the portfolio of Health and Safety courses offered by CAL.

Line managers should satisfy themselves that staff under their control have received adequate information, training and instruction to allow them to perform their duties in a safe manner. They must also ensure that relevant training takes place when job conditions change, resulting in either modified circumstances or exposure to new/increased risks.

The Department's Health and Safety Officer, Eleanor Steed, can advise staff and managers on any aspect of Health and Safety training. Eleanor can be contacted on extension 68141 (91 858141) or at eleanor.steed@finance-ni.gov.uk.



6. First Aid Arrangements

People can suffer injuries or be taken ill while at work. If this happens it is important to give them immediate attention and in serious cases call an ambulance. The Health and Safety (First aid) Regulations 1982 covers the arrangements that Heads of Branches should make to ensure this happens.

All DoF staff appointed to act either as a First Aid Officer or an Appointed Person should be familiar with the following:

- Their duties as a First Aid Officer/Appointed Person
- Procedure for calling an ambulance
- Reporting of an accident/incident
- Stocking of the first aid box

All accidents/incidents attended by a First Aid Officer or Appointed Person must be recorded in the accident book. The page must then be removed and stored in a secure location in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998, a copy must also be sent to the Departmental Health and Safety Adviser. A list of First Aiders must be displayed on notice boards.

7. Smoke-free Environment

It is against the law to smoke in most indoor places other than your own private home.

This includes places of work e.g. offices, stores and work vehicles used by more than one person (even if they do so at different times) e.g. cars, lorries and vans.

A person who smokes in a smoke-free place commits an offence.

A person guilty of the above offence under the legislation is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £1000.

Disciplinary action may be taken against an individual found to be smoking in a Government Building.

The use of E-cigarettes will be treated in the same way as conventional cigarettes.

8. Driving for Work

The Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2000, require the Department to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its staff and to ensure that others are not put at risk by work-related activities. This requirement extends to work-related driving. There will always be risks associated with driving. Although these cannot be completely controlled an employer has a responsibility to take all reasonable steps to manage these risks down to as low a level as reasonably practicable.

Therefore Line Managers must assess the risks involved in their staff's use of the road for work and put in place all 'reasonably practicable' measures to manage those risks.

In particular they must ensure that:

- (a) the journey is necessary and has been adequately planned;
- (b) suitable risk assessments are carried out and appropriate control measures are put in place;



(c) staff while using their private motor vehicle for work-related driving, comply with the provisions of the HR Handbook on Official Travel;

(d) unreasonable demands with regard to time and distance are not placed on staff who undertake work - related driving (the Highway Code recommends that drivers should take a 15 minute break every two hours);

(e) Consideration should be given to adverse weather conditions when planning journeys.

All staff required to drive on official business shall ensure that:

(a) they are in possession of a valid driving licence and that their insurance policy covers the use of the vehicle for official business;

(b) they comply with the provisions of all road traffic laws;

(c) they do not use any vehicle in connection with their business when unduly tired or otherwise may be deemed unfit to drive;

(d) they comply with the Department's policy which prohibits the use of mobile phones or a similar device such as a BlackBerry, whether hand-held or hands-free, whilst driving on official business;

(e) they notify their line manager if they are involved in a collision while driving for work, or are to be charged or have been convicted of a driving offence, or have had their licence suspended;

(f) inform their line manager of personal factors that may impair their driving abilities prior to undertaking work-related driving.

Health and Safety Law does not apply to commuting, to and from work, unless the employee is travelling from their home to a location that is not their usual place of work.



9. The Occupational Health Service

The NICS Occupational Health Service (OHS) is a multidisciplinary service which advises Northern Ireland Departments on all medical questions affecting the health, environment and conditions of work of staff. OHS medical and nursing staff are occupational health professionals who provide over twenty health surveillance programmes e.g. audiometry, respiratory surveillance and hand arm vibration.

OHS takes the lead in the implementation of the NICS Health and Wellbeing Programme - NICS WELL. This is a multi-level health promotion approach with a central wellbeing website, support team, health and wellbeing roadshows and a network of volunteer WELL Champions. The aim is to create a community of health and wellbeing in the NICS.

OHS also offers health promotion advice, including the Lifestyle and Physical Activity Assessment Programme across the NICS. The OHS liaises with Departmental Health and Safety Advisers and others within the NICS to promote safe and healthy working conditions for all staff.

Find out more at the OHS internet website: www.nicsohs.gov.uk

10. Welfare Services

Employee Welfare is an essential part of the work of the Civil Service, augmenting and supplementing other aspects of Human Resources and line management.

All Welfare Officers across the NICS are centralised under Corporate HR in the Department of Finance (DoF). The centralised service is called the Welfare Support Service. The contact number for the Welfare Support Service for staff is 47427 (028 90547427).

Welfare Support Service can also be contacted via a secure and confidential mailbox by emailing welfare@nigov.net



11. Discipline

Disciplinary action may be taken against any employee who fails to comply with the procedure outlined in this policy document. Compliance with health, safety and welfare procedures is to be regarded as an integral part of the duties of staff at **all** levels.

12. Compliance

The Health and Safety Adviser will conduct or arrange Health and Safety Audits to be conducted across the Department, reporting to business areas on strengths and weaknesses and making recommendations for corrective measures. On an annual basis, the Departmental Board will be provided with an Assurance Statement on health and safety performance in key areas. This issue will be included in the Departmental Risk Register as appropriate.

13. Enforcement

The enforcing authority for the Department is the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland. Matters arising from visits to the Department's undertakings by Health and Safety Inspectors are to be given the highest priority.

Health and Safety

14. Consultation

The Department/Agency will, in accordance with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 and other relevant legislation, make arrangements for joint consultation with Trade Union Side for the health, safety and welfare of its employees using consultative machinery agreed at Departmental Whitley.

The Department/Agency will co-operate with safety representatives and participate in safety committees where these are appointed and established, in accordance with the requirements of the Order and other relevant legislation. The Department fully accepts the need for close co-operation with Trade Union Side Representatives at all levels on health and safety matters. At Departmental level the Establishment Officer will be responsible for consultation with and for receiving representations from, Departmental Trade Union Side. At Agency/Branch level, Chief Executives of Agencies/Heads of Branches respectively will be responsible for consultation with, and for receiving representations from, local Trade Union Side.

15. Circulation

In compliance with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Order (NI) 1978 and other relevant legislation, this revised Policy Statement and associated Organisation and Arrangements are to be brought to the notice of all staff.

Departmental HR (DHR), who will be the first point of contact, will ensure that this revised version is issued to all staff in the Department and posted on the DoF Intranet.

DHR is situated at Rathgael House, Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down, BT19 7NA and can be contacted on 028 918 58141.

The terms of this Policy Statement, Organisation and Arrangements have been agreed with Trade Union Side who will be further consulted in the event of any future amendments being considered necessary.





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