

Health & Safety Policy

Introduction

This document details the MyCommunitySpace policy for Health & Safety.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (also referred to as HSWA, the HSW Act, the 1974 Act or HASAWA) is the primary piece of legislation covering occupational health and safety in Great Britain. The Health and Safety Executive, with local authorities (and other enforcing authorities) is responsible for enforcing the Act and a number of other Acts and Statutory Instruments relevant to the working environment.

Please Note: This policy applies to MyCommunitySpace management office locations only and NOT to those of venues listed on the MyCommunitySpace website. Enquires related to those locations should be directed to the property owners/managers.

MyCommunitySpace

MyCommunitySpace is a charity which offers approximately a thousand meeting rooms, offices, halls and other venues for use by the voluntary sector or their local community. Designed especially for the community and voluntary sector, our website is the online guide for organisations looking to rent out or hire space.

As the organisation operates online and without its own premises, property related Health & Safety guidance may not apply.

However, the policy is still in place and is intended to set out the template for where the business is today and to be fit for purpose for a rapidly expanding business, ensuring our obligations are met.

Organisation & Arrangements

Any building issues (if applicable) should be reported to the designated responsible authority/person for resolution.

Managers and Supervisors

Managers and Supervisory staff have specific duties concerning the health and safety of staff they are expected to manage or supervise. These include ensuring staff are properly trained, are aware of the principal hazards and risk control systems at their place of work, know what to do in the event of an emergency and ensuring that accidents are reported.

Employees and Visitors

Employees of MyCommunitySpace and visitors are obliged to co-operate with MyCommunitySpace on health and safety matters, by observing safety regulations, reporting hazards and accidents, and by working in a manner that does not adversely affect their own health and safety, or the health and safety of others.

Office Environments

An office does not have an agreed definition in health and safety legislation, but it is normally regarded as a place of work where clerical and administrative work activities are carried out. Health and safety issues such as noise, thermal comfort, lighting and ergonomics apply to a variety of workplaces as well as offices; therefore the definition of an office should not be interpreted too narrowly.

New health and safety legislation does not make any distinction about specific workplaces. Many years ago, there was specific legislation that dealt with offices and shops but this has been repealed. However, it would be impractical not to identify offices as being different from laboratories and workshops. In most offices work is of a sedentary nature and involves levels of visual and mental concentration. Often much of the work is carried out on display screen equipment. These features may be seen as common characteristics of an office environment. As such there are a number of office health and safety issues over which some control will need to be exercised. The following list will have some bearing on the health, safety and wellbeing of office occupants.

Legislation & Enforcement

The principal legislation concerning offices is the Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992. This legislation covers all workplaces and deals with specifics such as lighting, adequate space, toilet facilities etc. Other legislations applicable to offices are the First Aid at Work Regulations, Manual Handling Operations Regulations, Display Screen Equipment Regulations and Fire Precautions Regulations.

All H&S legislation is part of statute law, and breaches of the laws and regulations are criminal offences under the umbrella of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Penalties for breaches of H&S legislation can now be very severe.

For offices, the principal enforcement authority is the Health and Safety Executive. HSE Inspectors have wide ranging enforcement powers, including the issue of improvement and prohibition notices. Inspectors can also bring formal criminal prosecutions to the Courts if the compliance violation is serious enough to warrant such action.

Fire Precautions

The specific arrangements for each of our buildings will be documented in a Fire Plan, detailing the arrangements for evacuation and testing, and a fire risk assessment.

It is extremely important to ensure that escape routes are clear of easily combustible materials in escape routes, and unnecessary storage of easily combustible materials eliminated.

Electrical equipment should be switched off at the end of the day unless there are valid technical or operational reasons for leaving an appliance switched on. Never overload circuits, three-way plug adaptors are prohibited, and the use of multi-way extension leads should be minimised.

Smoking

All MyCommunitySpace premises (if applicable) are non-smoking buildings in compliance with the law regarding smoking at work (<https://www.gov.uk/smoking-at-work-the-law>)

Businesses must:

- display 'no smoking' signs in all workplaces and vehicles – no smoking signs in Wales must in both Welsh and English
- make sure people don't smoke in enclosed work premises or shared vehicles

Staff smoking rooms aren't allowed - smokers must go outside.

Fines and penalties:

- Businesses can be fined up to £2,500 if they don't stop people smoking in the workplace or up to £1,000 if they don't display 'no smoking' signs.
- In Scotland, there is a fixed penalty fine of £200, which can go up to £2,500 if the fine isn't paid.

MyCommunitySpace in conjunction with any relevant property owners are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate 'no smoking' signage is displayed in MyCommunitySpace premises.

Electrical Safety

Evidence of the integrity and safety of the electrical installation from the mains supply into a building to the electrical socket outlet should be obtained and documented. The testing and certification of such electrical systems must be conducted by a suitably qualified electrical engineer.

The Electricity at Work Act 1989 requires that an employer ensures that their electrical equipment is maintained in order to prevent danger to staff. PAT (portable appliance testing) testing is an effective way of ensuring that all equipment (MyCommunitySpace and tenant owned/ leased) located within MyCommunitySpace premises is electrically safe, and that the certification/ records and labelling enable us all to be able to demonstrate this. Some insurers also require evidence of PAT testing in order for the policy to be valid.

All testing will be conducted in accordance with IET's Code of Practice for In-Service Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment, achieved by both a visual inspection and the relevant electrical testing.

MyCommunitySpace will ensure that its equipment is PAT tested appropriately. MyCommunitySpace are to obtain evidence of testing from their tenants and beneficiaries, usually in the form of a valid certificate. In some of our offices it may be beneficial for us to arrange a local contractor to test the relevant equipment for the tenants, at their cost, whilst we are having our own equipment tested, this will be coordinated on a site by site basis.

Emergencies

The specific arrangements for emergencies vary. Details are contained in any site-specific emergency plan held on site and displayed on health and safety noticeboards, in accordance with our Business Continuity Planning.

Display Screen Equipment

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) is a device or equipment that has an alphanumeric or graphic display screen, regardless of the display process involved; it includes both conventional display screens and those used in emerging technologies such as laptops, touch-screens and other similar devices.

Surveys have found that a high proportion of DSE workers report aches, pains or eye discomfort. These aches and pains are sometimes called upper limb disorders (ULDs), which can include a range of medical conditions such as RSI. Most of these conditions do not indicate any serious ill health, but it makes sense to avoid them as far as possible.

Reporting Accidents and Incidents

RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences) is the legislation that requires employers, and other people in control of work premises, to report and keep records of:

- work-related accidents which cause death;
- work-related accidents which cause certain serious injuries (reportable injuries);
- diagnosed cases of certain industrial diseases; and
- certain 'dangerous occurrences' (incidents with the potential to cause harm).

Reporting certain incidents is a legal requirement. The report informs the enforcing authorities about deaths, injuries, occupational diseases and dangerous occurrences, so they can identify where and how risks arise, and whether they need to be investigated. This allows the enforcing authorities to target their work and provide advice about how to avoid work-related deaths, injuries, ill health and accidental loss.

For the purposes of RIDDOR, an accident is a separate, identifiable, unintended incident that causes physical injury.

For examples of incidents that do and do not have to be reported see:
(www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/do-i-need-to-report.htm)

MyCommunitySpace are responsible for ensuring that an accident book is maintained at each site (if applicable) and any accidents or incidents that are deemed RIDDOR reportable are highlighted to senior management to for reporting.

First Aid Arrangements

As a minimum, a low-risk workplace such as an office environment should have a first-aid box and a person appointed to take charge of first-aid arrangements, such as calling the emergency services if necessary. Employers must provide information about first-aid arrangements to their employees.

Manual Handling

Incorrect manual handling is one of the most common causes of injury at work. It causes work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) which account for over a third of all workplace injuries.

Manual handling injuries can happen anywhere people are at work – on farms and building sites, in factories, offices, warehouses, hospitals, banks, laboratories, and while making deliveries. Heavy manual labour, awkward postures, manual materials handling, and previous or existing injury are all risk factors in developing MSDs. There is more information and advice on MSDs on the HSE website, including advice on managing back pain at work.

MyCommunitySpace seeks to ensure that tenants are aware of the manual handling recommendations to avoid injury, reoccurring or otherwise. More information is available in the HSE Manual Handling Brief Guide. (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf>)

Inspections

Risk Assessments

In order to ensure that a safe working environment is maintained, various risk assessments will be conducted. These will include, but are not limited to:

- Fire risk assessment
- Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

MyCommunitySpace are responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are undertaken for the premises under their control and management. **Appendix B** provides an example template for the risk assessment, taken from the Health & Safety Executive website. These should be undertaken on an annual basis as a minimum.

Inspection guidance can be found here:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/inspections.htm>

MyCommunitySpace staff should always be vigilant for hazards, resolving any they find where possible, and escalating any that cannot be remedied. It is recommended that formal walk-arounds are conducted quarterly.

Where buildings have refurbishment work undertaken, it is important that areas are cordoned off as construction sites and remain under the control of the refurbishment contractor or nominated person. Staff should not enter the construction site without permission from the project manager and ensuring that the necessary health and safety precautions are adhered to.

Disability Regulations

Organisations employing 5 or more employees in any of our premises should have Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) in place.

Communication of Health & Safety Information

Noticeboards

A poster that covers health and safety in the workplace is available from the HSE and should be displayed on the health and safety notice board in each location.

Noticeboards are also a good place to reinforce our expectations of all tenant's sensible use of common space in regard to neatness, cleanliness and respect for the environment. A summary of this policy is also Health & Safety policy is provided in **Appendix A** for display on the health and safety noticeboard.

Induction

During an induction session, it is the responsibility of any on-duty MyCommunitySpace member of staff, to offer a short health and safety briefing to the in-coming beneficiary. A tenant handbook is available, some of which is site specific. This should be provided to the incoming tenant on induction or as elements are approved.

All staff inductions should include details of health and safety requirements.

Review

This document is subject to an annual review unless there are any major changes in the workplace requiring more urgent consideration/ action.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "AMG", is positioned above the signature line.

Chairman's Signature:

Date:

1 February 2017

