

Statistics Commission

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

1. The Statistics Commission is committed to maintaining a safe working environment for both staff and commissioners. In addition to a general statement of the Commission's health and safety policy, there are specific sections covering first aid and disabled access, eye tests, fire and bomb evacuation procedures.
2. The *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974* requires employers to 'ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees'. Although the Commission is neither an 'employer' nor has 'employees' in the contractual sense, since all its staff are on secondment from other organisations, it will adhere both to the above requirement and that of the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992* to undertake assessments of health and safety risks, and record any significant findings.
3. A brief guide to the employer's duties are set out in the *Health and Safety Law* poster displayed on the wall in the corridor to the kitchen, which all staff should read. This also gives the contact details for the local branch of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Employment Medical and Advisory Service (EMAS).
4. The Commission will also seek to ensure that the health and safety of visitors, contractors and the general public are not adversely affected as a result of its activities.
5. The Commission's staff have a statutory responsibility to take reasonable care to ensure their own safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work. They must also cooperate with management in achieving its commitment to provide a safe and healthy environment.

6. Failure to take reasonable steps to safeguard the health and safety of themselves or others will be regarded as a serious shortcoming and possibly against the law.

7. In seeking to meet its responsibilities, the Commission is committed to:

- provide a safe working environment for everyone, without risk to health;
- provide all staff with appropriate and sufficient information, instruction, and training to enable them to avoid hazards, identify risks, understand how these are controlled and contribute positively to their own health and safety at work;
- make suitable assessments of the risks to health and safety, to keep clear and accurate records of all risk assessments and to ensure these are reviewed regularly and in the light of change;
- ensure safe means of entry and exit to the workplace; ensuring that a healthy working environment exists, with adequate welfare facilities.

8. The reporting of work-related accidents, industrial diseases and dangerous occurrences is governed by the *Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)*. The key requirements are set out below. More details on these and other aspects of health and safety at work can be obtained from the health and safety officer (currently the chief executive's PA).

9. Employers are required to keep a record of all accidents and near misses, however minor. An accident book is provided for this purpose. It is kept on the cupboard next to the fax machine. The health and safety officer should ensure that an appropriate entry is made in respect of every accident or near miss, including cases where the victim of the incident is unable or unwilling to have it recorded. The health and safety officer will check the accident book on a monthly basis and take any appropriate actions.

10. Accidents leading to absence from work, or inability to carry out normal duties, for a period of more than 3 consecutive days, including non-working days, must be reported by the office manager to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), at the

address given on the health and safety poster referred to in paragraph 3 above, within 10 days of the accident occurring.

First aid

11. Small offices with less than 50 workers require a minimum of one 'appointed person' who is required to take charge in the event of illness or accident. At the time of issuing this guidance, the health and safety officer is an accredited first aider (for which a greater degree of training is required than for an 'appointed person').

12. A first aid box is kept in the kitchen, in order to be accessible to everyone at all times. The box should always be fully and appropriately stocked; any contents used should be replaced by a first aider as soon as possible.

13. First aid training is provided by St John Ambulance. Accredited first aiders should ensure that their accreditation certificates remain valid, and to take refresher training in good time before accreditation expires. A first aider no longer wishing to continue to fulfil this function should inform the office manager at least three months beforehand to enable alternative arrangements to be made.

Disabled access

14. Subject to the constraints imposed by the building's structure, the Commission will make reasonable adjustments to the working environment to meet the needs of staff members or commissioners disabled within the definition of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA).

15. Staff who are, or become, disabled under the terms of the DDA are responsible for notifying the office manager who will discuss any implications for the individual or others as appropriate and arrange for reasonable adjustments to be made.

Eye tests

16. The office will meet the cost of eyesight tests for regular users of display screen equipment and, where applicable, the cost of any spectacles prescribed solely for display screen use, subject in both cases to the sponsor department's upper cost limits in force from time to time.

Fire and bomb precautions

17. Fire and bomb procedures/evacuation are displayed on four office notice boards. Staff should familiarise themselves with these, including the location of the assembly point.

18. There are two designated fire exits, one via the main second floor office door; the other through a fire door in the Board Room and through the neighbouring office. Both exit to stairs leading to Artillery Row. Lifts must not be used in the event of a fire evacuation. When bomb threats are external, staff will remain in the building until directed to leave by the Police.

19. The Office Manager is nominated as fire warden, and the health and safety officer as deputy fire warden. In an evacuation, the fire warden will inform the building manager or fire authorities that all staff members and others in the office at the time of evacuation are accounted for. In the absence of the fire warden or deputy, the most senior member of staff present should ensure that another fulfils this function.

20. In the event of a suspected bomb in the building the fire alarm will be sounded in the usual manner. In the event of a suspect package outside the building, this will be communicated to building management by next-door neighbours and/or police. The alarm will not be sounded. Dependent on circumstances and location of the incident and the advice given, building management or police will advise each floor appropriately, e.g. remain inside but go to the appropriate side of the building or internal stairwell. Alternatively, staff may be asked to leave by an appropriate entrance and to congregate at a specific location.

21. Staff should report any suspicious packages or persons to building management or direct to the police.

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