

# Health and Safety Policy

## Why you need a health and safety policy

The law requires any employer of five or more people to have a written statement of health and safety policy. For the purpose of health and safety law employees can include youth trainees and labour-only contractors. Theoretically, if you employ less than five people you do not need a written policy; although you still need to consider the health, safety and welfare of your employees; in reality companies and clients that you work for will inevitably require you to prove that you have a policy in place.

## What a health and safety policy is

A written commitment by the management of a company to the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees; the policy will also outline the safety management organisation of the company and will set out the arrangements for managing the specific activities. The document may be as simple as a single page to a comprehensive book for larger organisations involved in a multitude of tasks. There is no set format for a safety policy. However, a majority tend to follow a similar layout. A typical format is set out as follows:

## Health & safety policy statement

- Express a company commitment to health and safety and your employees
- State whom has overall responsibility for implementing and reviewing the policy
- Commit to provide training and information for safe operation of equipment and processes
- Monitor the operation of the policy and amend or improve as necessary
- Provide information on the policy to the workforce and ensure there is a forum for comment and/or discussion
- Review the policy regularly

## Organisation

- Identify the management and staff levels in your organisation
- Detail their responsibilities to the other levels of management and the responsibilities they have within their roles (this section can be job specific)
- An organisation chart can also be included

## Arrangements

Set out the arrangements for managing health and safety through all the company's activities. This section may be brief for small organisations and can refer to existing industry guidance (ensure that this is also up to date). Typical sections may include:

- General health and safety management
- Managing risks
- Accident procedures
- Plant and equipment safety
- Specific legislation applicable to your industry
- Manual handling
- Company car drivers, etc

The above is only a sample and is not a comprehensive list as this will vary depending on your particular speciality.

## References

How to write a health and safety policy for your business - (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/write.htm>)

More specific guidance may be obtained through the National Specialist Contractors' Council (NSCC) health and safety helpline available to FIS members and from the FIS health and safety handbook.

*Acknowledgement: This information has been reviewed and updated by David Cant (Chartered Health and Safety Advisor) [www.veritas-consulting.co.uk](http://www.veritas-consulting.co.uk)*