

Guidance for Employers – safe behaviour is sound business

Use this leaflet to check whether you've considered all the key elements of getting your learner supervision right. Discuss any concerns with the provider or college. They'll be able to help you with any problem areas.

March 2006

Of interest to employers

What's best for your learner will be best for you too

'For every £1 you pay in insurance, an accident costs anything from £8 to £36 in unrecoverable cost'

Health and Safety Executive Research, 1996

Your learners can be a real asset to your company

With effective training they may go on to become valuable employees – the lifeblood and future of your business. All learners are at risk due to their incomplete knowledge and skill – and young people are particularly at risk due to their immaturity, inexperience and lack of awareness.

You need to protect them

Your supervisors need to keep learners safe and healthy while they're being trained to understand your business and their job. The right approach will not only reduce the likelihood of an unwanted accident, it can lead to a very real reduction in damage to buildings, plant, machinery, stock and finished goods. You'll get a better organised workplace and less wastage.

There's no need for a lot of bureaucracy

Just treat health and safety as part of your quality control. Small and medium-sized companies can integrate health and safety into their management system without taking on large company procedures. Because of their 'hands-on' approach, it is possible for the smaller company to have a less formal, but equally effective way of doing things.

Strike a happy balance

Learners need firm but fair supervision, but they also need to know the supervisor is a friendly mentor to whom they can turn when in doubt. Take the time to get to know your learners, their strengths and their weaknesses. Give explanations rather than orders.

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Effective Supervision

Mutual respect between supervisor and learner is essential for effective supervision.

- Do your supervisors understand their legal responsibilities for the health and safety of learners?
- Do they have mentoring skills and health and safety knowledge? If not, do you train them?
- Do you make sure they have the time to carry out these duties?
- Please follow the continuous cycle as illustrated

'We got together with the provider and hammered out what we were looking for and why. It makes the whole process more meaningful and has enabled us to move away from using 'gut feeling'.'

1. The right learner...

- Do you work out what skills, aptitude and personal characteristics you need in a post and discuss these with the provider?
- Do you look for these attributes when recruiting?
- Do you involve staff in the selection process, to get their views on whether a learner will fit in with your company's values and culture?
- Do you identify medical conditions or any learning difficulties?
- Are you an Equal Opportunities employer?

'We run a tight ship here and have leant that giving learners a run down of their roles and responsibilities when they start not only increases their motivation and confidence, it impacts on their performance and their inclination to show initiative. The result is we get along better and they develop faster.'

2. The right job

- How do supervisors make sure learners and all team members are aware of each others' roles and responsibilities, abilities and skills?
- Do you learners always know from whom they should and shouldn't take instructions?
- Do they know they must never undertake any task until they have been trained to do it safely?
- Do supervisors understand that learners can lack confidence in asking questions?
- How do supervisors check learners understanding of instruction and training?

'When learners join the company, they are encouraged to take charge of their learning plan. These are discussed with their immediate supervisor to find what skills and experience they need. Line managers of different departments are asked if the learner can work for short periods of time under their supervision. This allows the learner to feel in control and helps them to gain the experience and skills needed.'

3. Individual Learning Plans

- Do you make sure learning plans are regularly reviewed by the learners, supervisors and providers to find ways of filling skills gaps?
- How do you make sure learners are being given tasks that develop their skills and keep them motivated?
- As learners increase their knowledge and skill, they may work in different areas and require less immediate supervision. How do you make sure they're still safe?

8. Accident Control

'We all know who the first aider is, where the accident book is and the accident room. Luckily it's the least used room in the whole factory, but we all know what to do when accidents do happen. We don't just rely on the supervisor. Everyone takes responsibility for doing things properly.'

- Do you train staff in reporting and investigating accidents and ill health?
- Do you make sure action is taken to prevent similar accidents happening again?
- Are you sure your investigating and reporting systems meet your legal and contractual obligations?
- Are you meeting your legal obligations for first aid?
- Do supervisors encourage a 'fair blame' culture where people will report accidents and near misses?

7. Working environment

'We always use protective equipment and clothing for jobs. Our supervisor told us about someone who didn't. They were injured and so was their friend – that's not going to happen to me.'

Your risk assessments should have led to appropriate machinery guards, fume and dust control, chemical safety and equipment, which is fit for its purpose. Where it hasn't been possible to control risks at source, personal protective equipment should be supplied and learners must be clear about how it is tested, used and stored. Learners will copy other workers, so you need to check whether everyone follows safe practices.

- Is 'getting health and safety right' integral to the efficient running of your business and does your company's management system reflect this?
- Do your systems check that health and safety procedures and equipment remain operative and up to date?
- How do you encourage staff to report faults to equipment, premises, and so on.

6. Training and teamwork

'We have team meetings every week and everyone is asked for their opinions and ideas. I've suggested a couple of things and my supervisor has increased my level of responsibility so we can incorporate them. I really feel part of the team and an extra sense of pride in what I'm doing. Sharing ideas at meetings is a great way to learn.'

- Do your supervisors make the training process informative, interactive and enjoyable?
- Do you encourage them to be firm but friendly mentors?
- How do you promote teamwork in your company?

5. Risk assessment

'We wrote our risk assessments and procedures about workplace safety, handling, work site rules and so on. It is clear these were our procedures, fit for our purposes. The staff see the procedures as something they can relate to. They are about them and the way they work – so they want to use them.'

Assessment of risk is vital to effective health and safety management. It must take account of the person as well as the physical hazard. A supervisor must consider a learner's skills, physical ability and maturity when judging the level of supervision needed at any stage in the learning process.

- How is risk recognition, assessment and control encouraged throughout your organisation?
- When a non-routine task arises is it always risk assessed and managed?
- Do supervisors understand that they must consider the person as well as the task when assessing risk?

4. Induction and behaviour

'The site tour and introduction to the team and management really helped me understand my role within the company. It really motivated me knowing what all the other departments did and how they all slotted together. It made my role seem all the more important. I was quite nervous when I started and didn't know what to expect. The whole induction really helped to put me at ease and settle in.'

- Have you made a list of all the things a new learner needs to know when coming into your company (see key elements) and do you keep records to show they've all been covered?
- How do you ensure that induction takes place before a learner starts work?
- Do supervisors make clear to learners the work area rules and are they told that horseplay will not be tolerated?
- Do managers, supervisors and team members act as role models?

Health and Safety Induction – Key Elements

It is important for a learner to receive in-company health and safety induction. Vital matters should be covered immediately – before the learner is at risk. Learning Skills Council (LSC) statistics show that most accidents to learners happen in the first two weeks of their training programme. Other issues should be tackled within the first few weeks. Some items will need to be dealt with again when a learner moves to a new location.

In any working environment induction should include the following:

- a tour of the premises and introduction to key staff
- the company's legal responsibilities and duty of care
- the learner's legal responsibilities to themselves and others
- the company's health and safety policy, organisation and arrangements
- supervision arrangements
- significant risks and the control measures
- prohibitions and health and safety rules
- emergency and fire arrangements
- first aid arrangements
- accident, ill health and other incident reporting and investigating.

You should also cover any of the following which are applicable to your operation:

- provision and use of personal protective equipment and clothing
- safe use of equipment and machinery
- protection from noise, dust, fumes and hazardous substances
- manual handling hazards and protective measures.

'The boss is approachable. He's always there for us and always makes time if we need him. He goes through our work with us and gets us to ask questions to make sure we completely understand what we're doing and why. I'm looking forward to being a full-time employee when I finish my apprenticeship.'

Further Reading

This leaflet is based on research carried out on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in 2000.

Additional information is available from:

www.safelearner.info

www.hse.gov.uk

www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/PolicyandDevelopment/HealthandSafety/default.htm

Other useful publications are:

HSG65 'Successful health and safety management'

HSG165 'Young people at work: a guide for employers'

HSG199 'Managing health and safety on work experience'

These are available from HSE Books

www.hsebooks.co.uk/homepage.html

For help with any aspect of learner supervision contact your college or provider:

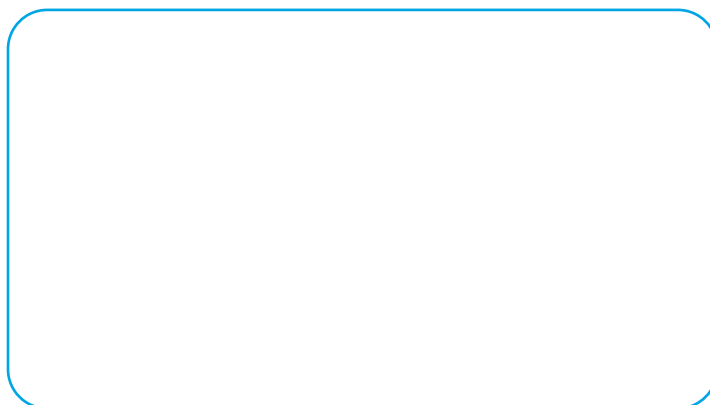


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Health and Safety

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