

# Guidelines on Managing Safety and Health in Post-Primary Schools



## Part 1

The publication of the Guidelines on Managing Safety and Health in Post-Primary Schools is the outcome of a joint project undertaken by the Department of Education and Skills, the Health and Safety Authority, the State Claims Agency and the School Development Planning Initiative.

These Guidelines have been developed in response to a strong demand from the education sector for guidance and clarification in relation to the legal obligations and responsibilities that have been placed on schools. This demand combined with the recognition that workplace safety and health needs to be managed and can be integrated into existing planning processes at school level, was at the core of the collaboration between the partners involved.

The Guidelines are a management tool intended to offer guidance and practical advice to assist schools in planning, organising and managing a safe and healthy school environment for staff, pupils and visitors. They will also help schools to benchmark current policies and practices against current legislative requirements. They do not place any additional responsibility on schools that does not already exist in legislation.

Part 1 of the Guidelines is a step-by-step approach to putting in place a safety and health management system for post-primary schools. Part 2 contains all the tools and templates needed to put these systems in place. Central to the toolkit is a series of risk assessment templates which will greatly assist in carrying out the task of reducing risk in your school in a very real and practical way.

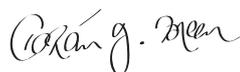
Managing safety and health effectively in schools brings with it huge benefits. When good systems are in place to prevent accidents, injury and ill-health to staff, pupils and visitors at a school, the whole school becomes a better place in which to work and learn.

We wish to express our gratitude to all who participated in the preparation of the Guidelines. We especially wish to thank the representatives of the education partners whose work greatly contributed to the success of the collaborative process involved in developing these Guidelines. We would also like to thank the group of schools which helped to pilot the Guidelines and offered invaluable feedback in developing them.



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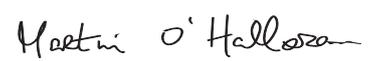
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Who should read these Guidelines?

Essential Terms

Why manage safety and health?

Who is responsible for safety and health in schools?

Employees/staff duties while at work

# introduction

The ***Guidelines on Managing Safety and Health in Post-Primary Schools*** (the Guidelines) is both a guidance document and a toolkit to assist schools in managing safety, health and welfare.

This resource is a step-by-step guide to help schools plan, organise and manage a safe and healthy school environment for staff, pupils and visitors.

The Guidelines may be used to improve rather than replace current systems in post-primary schools. Schools may choose to use existing committees and current safety policies and procedures and should use the Guidelines as an aid to upgrading their procedures and systems where necessary.

***These Guidelines do NOT place any additional responsibilities on schools that are not already in legislation.***

The Guidelines contain risk assessment templates. These templates will help you address the main hazards in your school; however, you should be aware there may be other hazards particular to your school that are not dealt with in this document.

The Guidelines have been prepared by a working group comprised of representatives of the Department of Education and Skills, the Health and Safety Authority, the State Claims Agency and the School Development Planning Initiative.

The Guidelines allow school planning for safety and health to be integrated into the Whole School Planning process, which is familiar to schools.

## **The Guidelines on Managing Safety and Health in Post-Primary Schools aim to:**

- assist schools to plan, organise and manage safety and health effectively;
- help schools to benchmark current policies and practices against current legislative requirements, common law duty of care and best practice;
- reduce the administrative burden on schools;
- enable schools to write or update their safety statements;
- enable schools to create or update their risk assessments;
- facilitate school management and staff in implementing and reviewing best practice in safety and health.

# Who should read these Guidelines?

These Guidelines should be read by Boards of Management/VECs, school managers, Principals, Deputy Principals, relevant post holders, teaching and non-teaching staff. Everybody in the school community should have access to the Guidelines.

## Essential Terms

A complete glossary is included on page 55 of the Guidelines. From the outset, all members of the school community should be familiar with the following essential terms:

### **Employees/staff:**

For ease of reading the term 'employee(s)' has been replaced with the word 'staff' in many instances. Where 'employee(s)' is mentioned the reader can interpret this to mean 'staff'. The definition of employee is outlined in Section 2(1) of the Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

### **Hazard:**

A hazard is anything that has the potential to cause harm to people, property or the environment. It can be a work material, a piece of equipment or a work method or practice.

### **Risk:**

Risk is the likelihood that someone will be harmed by the hazard together with the severity of harm suffered. Risk also depends on the number of people exposed to the hazard.

### **Controls/control measures:**

Controls/control measures are the precautions taken to ensure that the risk is eliminated or reduced.

### **Risk assessment:**

A risk assessment is concerned with identifying the hazard, then estimating the severity and likelihood of harm arising from such a hazard. The employer can then put in place control measures to minimise the risk or weigh up whether he or she has taken enough precautions to prevent harm.

### **Safety and health policy:**

Every safety statement begins with a declaration, signed at senior management level on the employer's behalf. This is known as the safety and health policy. The declaration gives a commitment to ensuring that a workplace is as safe and healthy as reasonably practicable and that all statutory requirements will be complied with. This declaration should spell out the policy in relation to overall safety and health performance, provide a framework for managing safety and health and list relevant objectives. A copy of the safety and health policy can be displayed in a public area of the school where it is visible to all.

### **Safety and health management system:**

This refers to that part of the overall management system of the school that includes the organisational structure, planning activities, responsibilities, practices, procedures and resources for developing, implementing, reviewing and maintaining the school's safety and health policy.

## Essential Terms cont'd.

### **Safety statement:**

A safety statement is a written programme of the school's commitment to safeguard the safety, health and welfare of staff (teaching and non-teaching) while they work and the safety and health of other people who might be affected by work activities in the school including visitors, parents/guardians and pupils. In essence, the safety statement details how the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils, visitors and contractors are managed by the school. The safety statement must include a comprehensive risk assessment which identifies hazards in the workplace, assesses the risks presented by these hazards and details what control measures should be put in place to eliminate/reduce the risk.

## Why manage safety and health?

There are moral, legal and ethical reasons for managing safety and health at work. Hazards and risks are present in schools, just as in any other workplace. However, schools are a unique environment as the workplace is shared with many more non-workers than workers, i.e. pupils.

Workplace accidents and incidents cause pain and suffering to the individual and his/her family. They affect people's ability to work and their enjoyment of life outside work. Many accidents and cases of occupational ill-health at work are due to a failure to manage safety properly.

The cost of occupational accidents can be high and can result in associated costs to employers such as:

- sick pay, temporary replacement labour, early retirement, recruiting new labour and retraining;
- repair of damage to plant, equipment, materials and products;
- management time spent dealing with accidents;
- increased insurance premiums and legal costs;
- compensation claims.

A proactive safety and health management system promotes a safer working environment and results in the avoidance of accidents and incidents. In addition to reducing costs, an effective safety and health management system ensures that:

- good safety and health arrangements are in place for staff, pupils and anyone affected by the work activities of the school;
- teachers and other staff are confident that well-planned safety and health systems are in place when carrying out their responsibilities;
- resources are not wasted - financial priorities can be related to careful risk assessments;
- staff absences due to injuries or occupational ill-health are reduced;
- the number of accidents and associated costs are reduced;
- morale is improved in the school for pupils, staff and parents/guardians;
- the number and cost of compensation claims are reduced.

# Who is responsible for safety and health in schools?

In Ireland, the Board of Management of a school and in the case of a VEC school, the Vocational Education Committee, being the employer, are responsible for ensuring as far as reasonably practicable, the safety and health at work of their employees and the safety and health of those who are in any way affected by the work activities of the school.

The Board of Management/VEC may delegate duties to employees to act on its behalf. Principals, Deputy Principals and others may assume general and specific roles for managing day-to-day safety, health and welfare in the school as the Board/VEC sees fit. However ultimate responsibility for safety, health and welfare lies with the Board of Management/VEC.

Everybody in the school has a role to play in ensuring good safety, health and welfare within the school; this includes pupils, visitors and contractors. Established safety and health legislation and common law duties of care set down specific requirements for employers and employees.

## Board of Management/VECs duties as employer under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 (the 2005 Act) sets out the main provisions for securing and improving the safety, health and welfare of people at work including:

- the requirements for control of safety and health at work;
- the management, organisation and systems of work necessary to achieve those goals;
- the responsibilities and roles of employers, the self-employed, employees and others;
- the procedures needed to ensure that legislative requirements are met.

# Employees/staff duties while at work

## Employee duties under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005

In accordance with the 2005 Act all employees (including full or part-time, permanent or temporary, regardless of any employment or contractual arrangements they may have) are required to co-operate fully with the employer so that appropriate safety and health policies are established, implemented and adhered to.

### Employee duties while at work include:

- to take reasonable care to protect his or her safety, health and welfare and the safety, health and welfare of any other person who may be affected by their acts and omissions at work;
- to co-operate with his or her employer or any other person so far as is necessary to enable his or her employer or the other person to comply with the relevant statutory provisions (namely the 2005 Act);
- to attend training and take instruction on the correct use of articles or equipment;
- to use personal protective equipment (PPE) or clothing provided for his or her safety;
- to report to his or her employer as soon as practicable:
  - any work being carried out which might endanger him/herself or others;
  - any defects in the place of work, the system of work, any article or substance which might endanger him/herself or others;
  - any contravention of the relevant statutory provisions of which he/she is aware;
- not to engage in any improper conduct or dangerous behaviour.

## Board of Management/VECs duty of care as an employer under the law

A basic common law principle has been developed by the courts over the years that all employers in the State, whether in the public or private sector, have a legal duty to provide a safe working environment for employees. The duty is to ensure in so far as is reasonably practicable the safety at work of all employees. It is not an absolute duty to prevent accidents and if it can be shown that all reasonable care has been taken, then the liability will be avoided. This is known as the employer's duty of care or employer's liability.

The employer's duty of care has, usually, been broken down into four components:

- to ensure a reasonably safe place of work;
- to ensure reasonably safe plant and equipment;
- to ensure reasonably safe systems of work;
- to ensure reasonably safety - conscious (competent) staff.

In addition to requiring employers to take reasonable care for employees, the courts developed a similar principle to protect persons other than employees, whether they are visiting members of the public, contractors, pupils and/or parents/guardians. This area of law is known as public liability.

# The tort of negligence

The tort (a civil wrong) of negligence is the most common tort that impacts on a school. The general definition of negligence is that it is either an omission to do something which a reasonable person would do, or an act which a prudent or reasonable person would not do. Negligence consists of four elements.

These are:

- a duty of care;
- the breach of this duty: where the actions/omissions fall below a certain 'standard of care';
- damage: the person suing must have suffered actual loss or injury;
- causation: there must be a connection between the breach of the duty (the way the person acted) and the damage suffered by the person suing.

## Vicarious liability

This is where the Board of Management/VEC is responsible for the acts or omissions of an employee (teaching or non-teaching) during the course of their employment, whether that employee is at their place of employment or elsewhere, e.g. on a school tour. The essential element is one of control, and, at the time of the act or omission, the employee must have been working within the scope of their duties. In effect, this means that in civil cases the Board of Management/VEC is the party liable for the actions/omissions of the teachers, caretakers etc when an injury or illness is caused by their actions or omissions while at work.

## Board of Management/VECs duties under the Occupiers' Liability Act 1995

The Occupiers' Liability Act 1995 sets out the responsibilities of the occupier of a premises. A lot of civil litigation cases involving third-party injuries are based on this legislation. An occupier is defined as a person/body who is in control of the premises and in the case of schools, the Board of Management/VEC is responsible for accidents or ill-health arising from the state or condition of the school premises. The Occupiers' Liability Act 1995 imposes duties on occupiers in relation to three categories of entrants: Visitors (which includes parents/guardians, pupils etc), Recreational Users and Trespassers. For further details see the FAQs, No.4.

In practical terms there is a convergence of statutory and common law. The thrust of the development is based on the philosophy that the duty of the employer is to take all reasonable care, having regard to all foreseeable risks for the safety and well-being of an employee or for other persons under their direction or control. If schools are compliant with the more easily accessible statute law (Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005) then, in the main, they will avoid claims for compensation under common law.

## Types of accidents and incidents in schools

Evidence suggests that the main causes of accidents in schools are slips, trips and falls, manual handling and contact with machinery and equipment. While the level of reported injury is low, it is worth noting that the effect of such accidents, as indicated by time absent from work, is significantly higher in the education sector than any other. See the FAQs Nos. 34-38.

# Managing safety and health in schools

The 5 steps of the safety and health management system

Step 1: Policy and commitment

Step 2: Planning

Step 3: Implementation

Step 4: Measuring performance

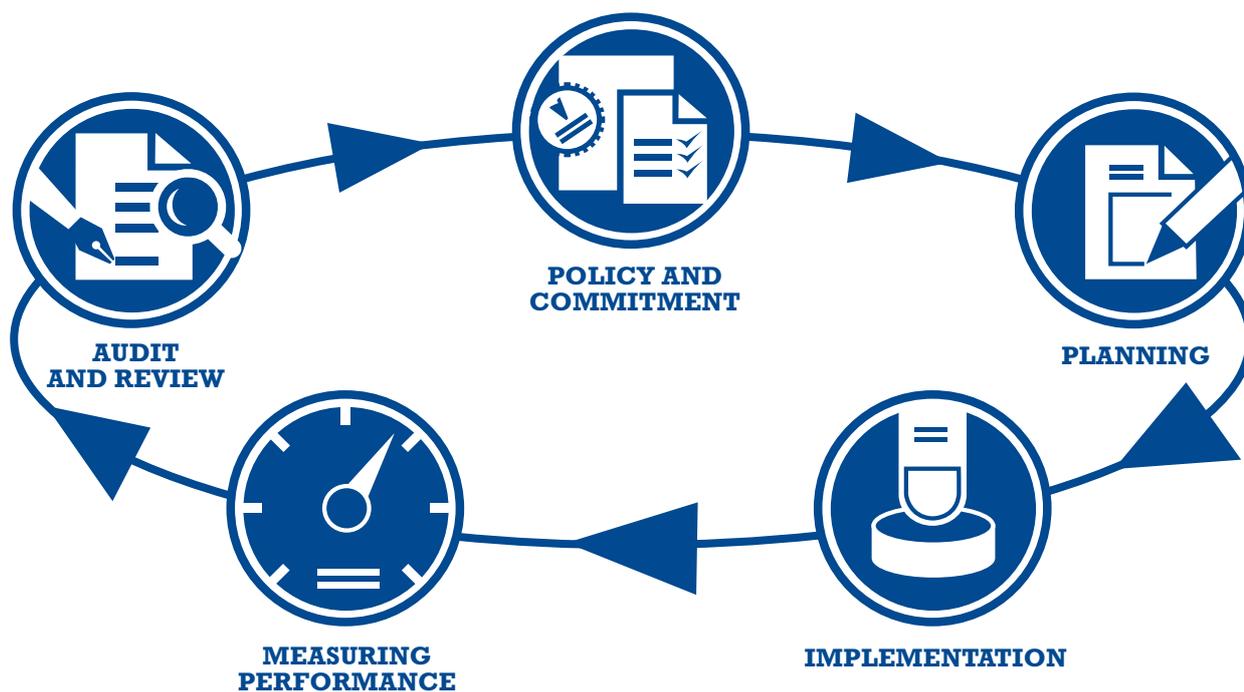
Step 5: Audit and review

# Managing safety and health in schools

## What is a safety and health management system?

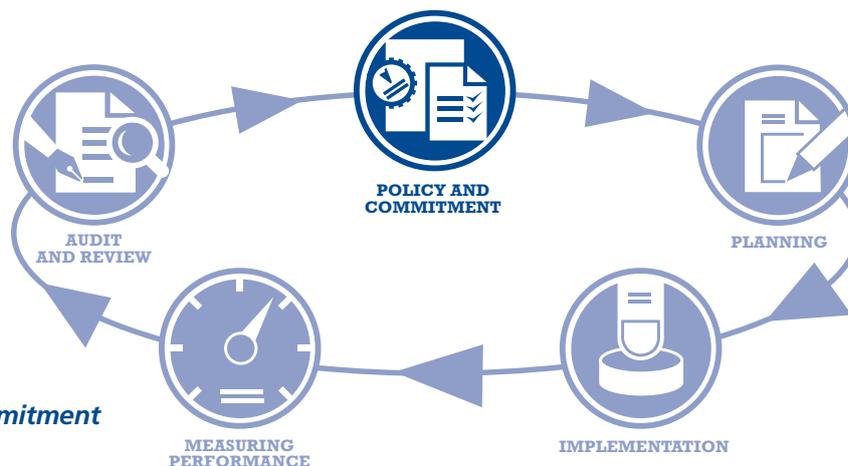
A Safety and Health Management System (SMS) in a school setting involves an on-going process which aims to promote continuous improvement in the way the school manages safety. It fits into the overall management of the school and includes the school structure, planning activities, practices, procedures, and resources for developing, implementing, reviewing and maintaining safety, health and welfare. The SMS sets out the issues to be addressed and is a tool to develop improvement programmes and self-audits or assessments.

There are five key steps to achieving a successful SMS. These Guidelines give the reader the five steps needed to implement a SMS. You can follow this guidance document step by step to implement a SMS or use it to improve the systems already in place.



*Fig.1 Key elements of a safety and health management system*

# Step 1: Policy and commitment



**Fig.2 Step 1:**  
**Policy and commitment**

The Board of Management/VEC (or a person working under its instruction) should prepare a safety and health policy as part of the preparation of the safety statement required by Section 20 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. This policy is a written document containing a declaration of the commitment of the Board of Management/VEC to ensuring safety, health and welfare in the school. An effective safety and health policy sets a clear direction for the school to follow.

The safety and health policy is the first section of the safety statement. It should outline a commitment on behalf of the Board of Management/VEC to ensure that the school is as safe and healthy as is reasonably practicable and that all relevant statutory requirements will be complied with. It should spell out the policy in relation to overall safety and health performance, provide a framework for managing safety and health, and list relevant school policies.

It may include commitments from the Board of Management/VEC to:

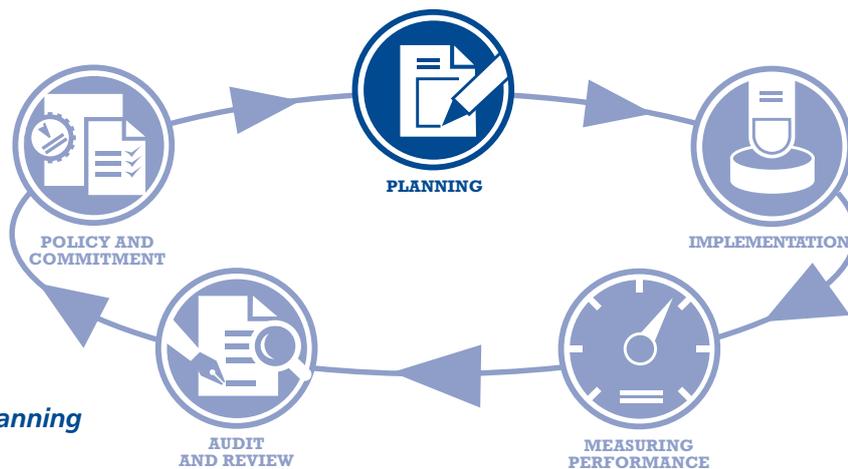
- manage and conduct school activities so as to ensure the safety, health and welfare of staff;
- prevent improper conduct or behaviour likely to put staff and others' safety and health at risk<sup>1</sup>;
- provide safe means of access and egress;
- provide safe plant and equipment;
- provide safe systems of work;
- prevent risk to safety and health from any article or substance;
- provide appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision;
- provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and clothing where hazards cannot be eliminated;
- prepare, review and revise emergency plans;
- designate staff for emergency duties;
- provide and maintain welfare facilities;
- appoint a competent person to advise and assist in securing the safety, health and welfare of staff.

While not a legal requirement, it is best practice to display the safety and health policy prominently in the school, perhaps in a public area where it is visible to all.

**See Part 2, Tool 2: Sample Safety and Health Policy**

<sup>1</sup> "Horseplay" and bullying at work would come within these categories.

## Step 2: Planning



**Fig.3 Step 2: Planning**

Planning is an important part of the school's safety and health management system. This system requires schools to act in a variety of ways in a complex and challenging environment. The actions required may:

- be routine and predictable, (e.g. annual risk assessments, safety committee meetings, planned walk-through inspections, training events);
- occur in response to particular significant events or risk assessments. Many of these can be agreed and implemented fairly quickly, (e.g. repairs to equipment, new safety regulations, a change in work practice following the outcome of an accident);
- be planned to be implemented over a longer period of time or in phases, and may have major resource implications (e.g. replacing sub-standard infrastructure, introducing new equipment, refurbishing key locations).

The varied needs set out in the safety statement may relate to established features of the school's existing safety and health management system or they may be part of a developmental programme that may cover a significant period of time into the future.

The school must plan, therefore, for short, medium and long term objectives in its efforts to maintain and improve safety and health across the whole school. It must identify how these objectives will be achieved, the resources required and what roles people will have to play. It must take account both of the physical infrastructure of the school and of how people operate and interact within it. This varied activity must be planned in a coherent way if it is to be manageable and effective.

Safety and health planning is best seen as an integral part of the Whole School Plan. It draws on many of the same resources and structures as other aspects of the school's planning process. The safety statement should be informed by and reflect wider school planning priorities and decisions.

The initial stage of the safety and health planning process can be broken into two steps:

- Establish an effective safety and health management structure (see 2.1)
- Review existing documentation and systems (see 2.2)

## 2.1 Establish an effective safety and health management structure

A Board of Management/VEC may nominate a person, perhaps the School Principal, Deputy Principal or another person to co-ordinate the planning, implementation and management of safety and health on its behalf. The safety committee should be formed, if appropriate, and the safety representative elected at this point also.

**Fig.4 Establishing an effective safety and health management structure**



## Safety committee:

*The definition of a safety committee is set out in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 (Section 26 and Schedule 4).*

The Board of Management/VEC, as employer, is required to consult its employees in order to make and maintain arrangements, to enable the employer and employees co-operate to promote and develop safety, health and welfare at the place of work and to monitor the effectiveness of those measures.

A safety committee facilitates the consultation process by assisting in drafting and/or reviewing the safety statement, risk assessments, policies and procedures within the SMS on behalf of the employer. The Board of Management/VEC must sign off on the safety statement prior to implementation within the school. They also consult on other safety matters, e.g. review of the accident and incident register and programming of work within the school which impacts on safety, health and welfare.

The safety committee will help plan, monitor and evaluate safety and health throughout the year. To do this it may:

- agree how scheduled meetings will be convened, minuted and reported upon during the school year;
- outline the planning programme for the coming year. This calendar may take the form of a narrative of all planned safety and health actions for the year (including risk assessments, safety audits, planned walk-through inspections, fire drills, training etc.);
- outline roles and responsibilities of all in line with legislation, e.g. the employer, employees, any person acting on behalf of the Board of Management/VEC, e.g. the Principal, safety officer or safety coordinator (if appointed), safety representative, contractors, pupils and visitors;
- prepare reports for the Board of Management/VEC and staff meetings, as well as other relevant meetings;
- ensure that current information regarding risk assessments, control measures, accident reports, audits and reviews of the SMS are evaluated and appropriate actions taken;
- seek to address significant and/or longer term developments. These may be implemented over a longer period of time or in phases and may have sizeable resource implications, (e.g. replacing substandard infrastructure, introducing new equipment, refurbishing key locations);
- examine whether resources are being used effectively to remedy high risks identified in the risk assessment;
- examine whether resources are being used effectively for maintaining and improving the SMS;
- provide ongoing evaluation of safety and health practice in the school and the safety committee's procedures and their effectiveness.

### *Members of the safety committee may include some of the following:*

- the employer (Board of Management/VEC) or the employer's representative;
- Principal;
- Deputy Principal;
- Safety officer or safety coordinator (if one is appointed);
- Safety representative(s) (if selected and appointed);
- staff, e.g. teacher(s) with post(s) of responsibility for/or special interest in safety and health, ancillary staff.

### *The school management at their discretion may also include:*

- pupil representative;
- parent/guardian representative.

## Safety representative:

*Section 25 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 entitles employees to select and appoint a safety representative(s) to represent them in consultations with the employer on matters of safety, health and welfare at the place of work.*

A safety representative may be selected and appointed if one is not already in place. The safety representative's role is outlined in the 2005 Act. The functions include:

- representing employees on safety and health issues;
- conducting safety and health inspections (after giving reasonable notice to management);
- investigating accidents and dangerous occurrences (without interfering with the scene of any accident);
- liaising with Health and Safety Authority Inspectors;
- participating on the safety committee;
- making verbal or written representations on employees' behalf.

## Safety officer:

There is no mandatory legal requirement for a Board of Management/VEC to appoint a safety officer. In some schools, the Principal acts as the safety officer. However, the functions of the safety officer may be delegated to another employee. Overall responsibility for safety and health cannot be delegated and remains with the Board of Management/VEC. The safety officer can help to support the implementation, review and maintenance of a SMS. See also "The importance of appointing competent persons" on page 25.

## 2.2. Review existing documentation and systems

For the next part of the planning process it would be appropriate to review existing safety documentation and systems already in operation. This is called an initial review. An initial review of all aspects of safety and health management across the school as a whole is particularly useful as it helps to establish the school's current status. The school can determine from this review if current provisions for safety and health are compliant with legislation and best practice and can identify issues that need to be addressed. Existing information can be incorporated into the SMS thus eliminating unnecessary redrafting. The initial review thus enables the school to set development priorities in the area of safety and health. This review can be undertaken as part of an audit of the current SMS and a tool has been provided to assist with this in Part 2.

**See Part 2, Tool 1: Planning Documents - for other planning templates that are provided to help in the planning process throughout the year.**

**See Part 2, Tool 1 (B) School Safety and Health Management Audit Tool**

# Step 3: Implementation



**Fig.5 Step 3: Implementation**

For effective implementation of the SMS, the school should deploy the safety and health structures established in 2.1 - the safety committee, safety representative, and safety officer, where appointed - as support mechanisms to achieve the commitments contained in its safety and health policy and any objectives and targets. Following on from establishing the planning structures and using the information resulting from the initial review of the documentation and systems, the development/amendment of the safety statement can begin, which is critical in implementing an effective safety and health management system.

*Section 20 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 states that "Every employer shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, a written statement based on the identification of the hazards and the risk assessment carried out under Section 19, specifying the manner in which the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees shall be secured and managed."*

The safety statement is central to the management of safety, health and welfare in the workplace. Section 20 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 requires that an employer produce a written safety statement to safeguard:

- the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees;
- the safety and health of other people who might be at the workplace, including pupils, visitors, contractors and members of the public.

The safety statement represents a commitment to safety and health of all people using the school. It should state how the Board of Management/VEC will ensure their safety and health and state the resources necessary to maintain and review safety and health laws and standards. The safety statement should influence all work activities, including:

- the selection of competent people, equipment and materials;
- the way work is done;
- how goods and services are designed and provided.

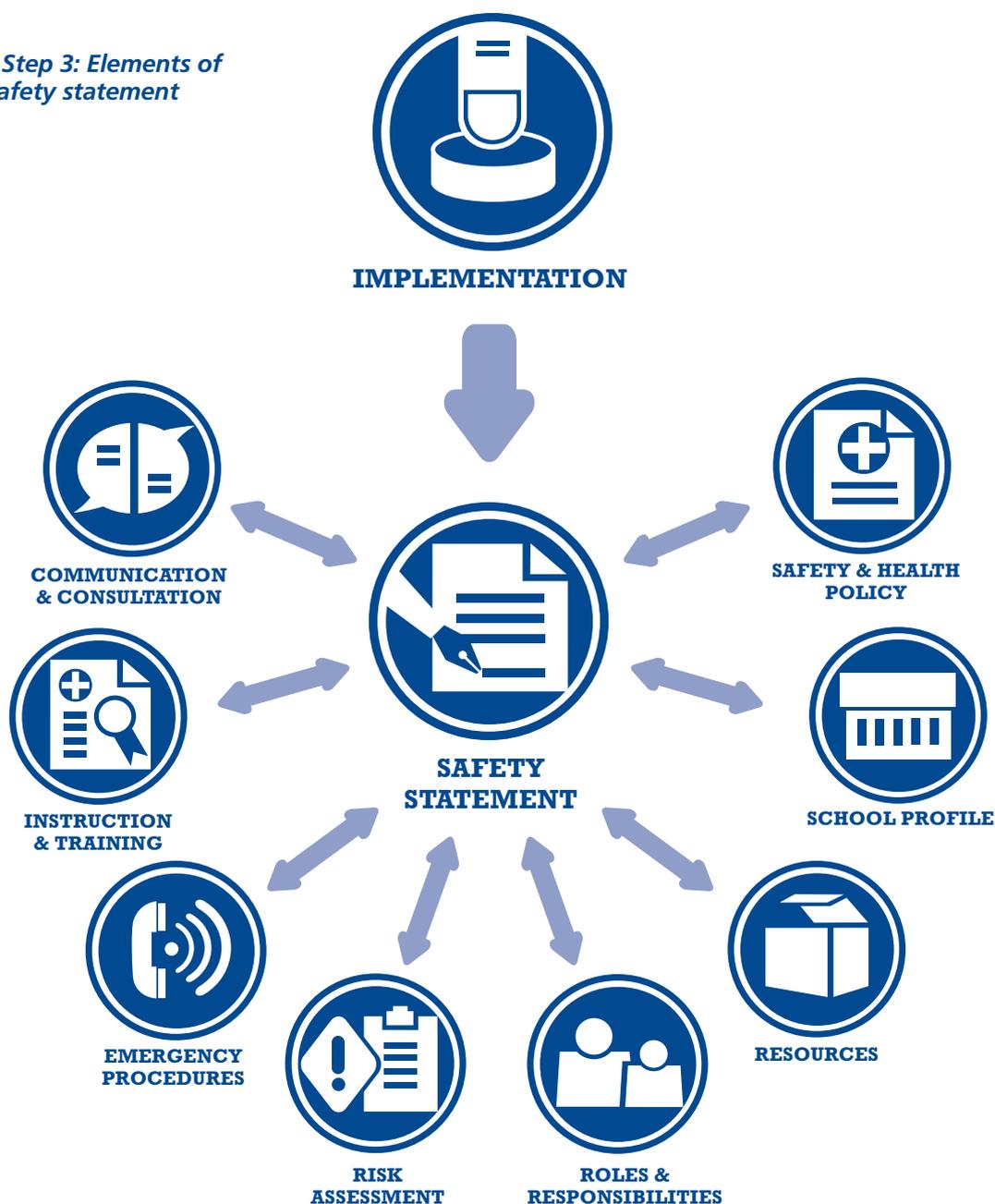
The safety statement must be made available to staff, and relevant persons, showing that hazards have been identified and the risks assessed and eliminated or controlled.

## Preparing the safety statement

The safety statement should include each of the following parts:

- 3.1 Safety and health policy (as discussed in Step 1)
- 3.2 School profile
- 3.3 Resources for safety and health in the school
- 3.4 Roles and responsibilities for safety and health
- 3.5 Risk assessment
- 3.6 Emergency procedures, fire safety, first-aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences
- 3.7 Instruction, training and supervision
- 3.8 Communication and consultation

*Fig.6 Step 3: Elements of the safety statement*



## 3.1 Safety and health policy

(see Step1 Policy and Commitment)

## 3.2 School profile

The safety statement should present a brief overview of the significant features of the school with particular reference to safety and health and include:

- school size;
- school buildings;
- organisational structures /chart;
- planning procedures;
- provision for persons with special needs.

## 3.3 Resources for safety and health in the school

This section of the safety statement outlines the current resources available to support safety and health in the school.

### Checklist:

- What resources are available for safety and health in the school?
- Are these resources addressing issues of prime concern? (breaches of statutory duties, high risk hazards, issues likely to give rise to claims etc.)
- Is the allocation of resources reviewed and amended as need arises?
- Is the use of resources consistent with the priorities of the school plan for maintaining and improving safety and health?

## 3.4 Roles and responsibilities for safety and health

*Section 20 of The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, states that a safety statement should specify "the names and, where applicable, the job title or position held of each person responsible for performing tasks assigned to him/her pursuant to the safety statement."*

An organisational chart should be prepared showing the safety and health management structure within the school. The chart shows the roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community in relation to safety and health. **See Part 2, Tool 3: Sample Management Organisation Chart**

The safety and health roles may include the following:

### Board of Management/VEC:

- complies with its legal obligations as employer under the 2005 Act;
- ensures that the school has written risk assessments and an up to date safety statement;
- reviews the implementation of the SMS and the safety statement;
- sets safety and health objectives;
- receives regular reports on safety and health matters and matters arising from same are discussed;
- reviews the safety statement at least annually and when changes that might affect workers' safety and health occur;
- reviews the school's safety and health performance;
- allocates adequate resources to deal with safety and health issues;
- appoints competent persons as necessary, to advise and assist the Board of Management/VEC on safety and health at the school.

### **Designated person for safety and health acting on behalf of the Board, e.g. the Principal:**

- complies with the requirements of the 2005 Act;
- reports to the Board of Management/VEC on safety and health performance;
- manages safety and health in the school on a day-to-day basis;
- communicates regularly with all members of the school community on safety and health matters;
- ensures all accidents and incidents are investigated and all relevant statutory reports completed;
- organises fire drills, training, etc;
- carries out safety audits.

### **Post-Holders (with particular functions in safety and health) if applicable:**

- a Deputy Principal or a special duties teacher with duties related to safety and health must fulfil the duties as assigned;
- although ultimate responsibility for safety and health rests with the employer, the post-holder must fulfil those duties to which he/she agreed.

### **Teaching/Non-teaching staff:**

- comply with all statutory obligations on employees as designated under the 2005 Act;
- co-operate with school management in the implementation of the safety statement;
- inform pupils of the safety procedures associated with individual subjects, e.g. Science, Technology subjects, Physical Education (PE);
- ensure that pupils follow safe procedures, e.g. use personal protective equipment (PPE) and adhere to laboratory rules;
- conduct risk assessments of their immediate work environment;
- formally check classroom/immediate work environment to ensure it is safe and free from fault or defect;
- check that equipment is safe before use;
- ensure that risk assessments are conducted for new hazards, e.g. new machine or chemical product;
- select and appoint a safety representative(s);
- co-operate with the school safety committee;
- report accidents, near misses, and dangerous occurrences to relevant persons as outlined in the safety statement.

### **Other School Users:**

Other school users, e.g. pupils and visitors should comply with school regulations and instructions relating to safety and health.

### **Contractors:**

Contractors must comply with statutory obligations as designated under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 and any other relevant legislation such as the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2006.

- Schools must make available the relevant parts of the safety statement and safety file (where one exists) to any contractors working in the school on behalf of the school.
- Schools must provide the school regulations and instructions relating to safety and health.
- Contractors must make available relevant parts of both their safety statement and risk assessments in relation to work being carried out.
- Where schools are sharing a workplace with a contractor they must co-operate and coordinate their activities in order to prevent risks to safety and health at work.

## **Short duration, low risk, single contractor works involving routine maintenance, cleaning, decorating or repair:**

From time to time the school will call on the services of the smaller contracting company to carry out a variety of such construction tasks e.g. plumber, electrician or carpenter etc. Where this work involves a single contractor, there are no particular risks present and task duration will not exceed 30 working days or 500 person days, to comply with safety and health requirements and to ensure this type of work is carried out safely with minimal disruptions, the following key points should be followed:

- The Board of Management/VEC must ensure that the contractor is competent. Quite simply this means that the contractor is suitably qualified and experienced. Are they registered with a recognised body? For example, an electrician should be registered with the Register of Electrical Contractors of Ireland (RECI) or the Electrical Contractors Safety and Standards Association (ECSSA). Have they carried out similar work previously? In many cases the school will have a list of maintenance personnel and this may only need to be reviewed if any changes occur.
- The contractor and the Principal meet before the project commences to ensure communication links are established before work starts and throughout the contract. The contractor should advise the Principal about the likely duration of the work and any possible hazards, and how these will be addressed. The contractor should also provide the Principal with a copy of their safety statement including any relevant risk assessments for the project to be undertaken. Likewise the Principal should advise the contractor about necessary precautions which need to be considered, particularly if work is being carried out during school time.

In the above example, the Principal has been outlined as the point of contact for the contractor. This is because the Principal is responsible for the day to day running of the school and is appropriately placed to deal with this work. However, the school may decide to appoint a safety officer and deem this person the appropriate contact for all work. Whatever system is in place that works best for the school it is important that proper consultation takes place and the Board of Management/VEC, Principal, safety officer, and all staff know about the work to be carried out and the impact this will have on work activities, including any necessary changes that need to be made.

## **Substantial building works, (e.g. extension to school building):**

Where substantial building work lasting more than 30 days or 500 person days is being considered, the Board of Management/VEC take on the responsibility of "client". The client must:

- appoint, in writing before design work starts, a Project Supervisor for the Design Process (PSDP) who has adequate training, knowledge, experience and resources;
- appoint, in writing before construction begins, a Project Supervisor for the Construction Stage (PSCS) who has adequate training, knowledge, experience and resources;
- co-operate with the project supervisors and supply any necessary information;
- notify the HSA of the appointment of the PSDP on Approved Form AF1 "*Particulars to be notified by the Client to the Health and Safety Authority before the design process begins*";
- retain and make available the safety file for the completed structure. The safety file contains information on the completed structure that will be required for future maintenance or renovation.

The PSCS further develops the safety and health plan for the construction stage of the project. This includes coordinating appropriate health and safety arrangements on site to prevent accidents occurring, e.g. keeping vehicles and pedestrians apart.

Prior to carrying out any construction work each Board of Management/VEC must familiarise themselves with their legal health and safety responsibilities as clients as detailed in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2006. These Regulations have wide-ranging application covering large projects such as capital builds, small projects such as renovations, erecting pre-fabs and routine maintenance such as replacing light fixtures etc.

These Regulations introduce such terms as client, project supervisor for the design process (PSDP) and project supervisor construction stage (PSCS), safety and health plan, safety file, contractor etc. details of which and duties can be found in the Guidance publications listed below.

[http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications\\_and\\_Forms/Publications/Construction/Summary\\_of\\_Key\\_Duties\\_under\\_the\\_Procurement,\\_Design\\_and\\_Site\\_Management\\_Requirements\\_of\\_the\\_Safety\\_Health\\_and\\_Welfare\\_at\\_Work\\_Construction\\_Regulations,\\_2006.html](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications/Construction/Summary_of_Key_Duties_under_the_Procurement,_Design_and_Site_Management_Requirements_of_the_Safety_Health_and_Welfare_at_Work_Construction_Regulations,_2006.html)

[http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications\\_and\\_Forms/Publications/Construction/Clients\\_in\\_Construction\\_-\\_Best\\_Practice\\_Guidance.html](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications/Construction/Clients_in_Construction_-_Best_Practice_Guidance.html)

These guidance documents also define the terms mentioned above. For example a client means “a person for whom a project is carried out, in the course or furtherance of a trade, business or undertaking, or who undertakes a project directly in the course or furtherance of such trade, business or undertaking.”

Clients are usually those with control over key aspects of a project such as who is appointed as contractor to carry out the work in question. For example, you are a client if you are a Principal or Board of Management/VEC responsible for hiring trades people to paint a block of classrooms or build new desks/shelving in a laboratory.

### **The importance of appointing competent persons**

Safety and health functions can be delegated to senior managers, e.g. the Principal. However, the legal responsibility for safety and health rests with the Board of Management/VEC. The school may wish to appoint a person to act on its behalf, e.g. a safety officer, but in doing so they must be satisfied that this person is competent.

**Competence is defined under the 2005 Act as follows:** *“a person is deemed to be a competent person where, having regard to the task he or she is required to perform and taking account of the size or hazards (or both of them) of the undertaking or establishment in which he or she undertakes work, the person possesses **sufficient training, experience and knowledge** appropriate to the nature of the work to be undertaken.”*

The school is a unique work environment but is not generally high risk. Those on the ground, carrying out the day to day work of managing and co-ordinating school activities know this environment best. The school should have access to sufficient safety and health knowledge, skills, or experience to identify and manage safety and health risks effectively, and to set appropriate objectives.

In many schools a safety officer may not be appointed and the Principal in addition to the management of the school takes responsibility for managing safety and health matters.

Furthermore, the Principal may decide to delegate certain functions to individual teachers, the caretaker, or other staff, deemed to be competent within their respective work areas. Such responsibilities could include the teacher completing a risk assessment for his/her classroom. This makes sense as a teacher knows his/her own classroom best. Taking the example of a woodwork teacher, he/she knows the equipment being used, class size, the layout of the room, the potential hazards, and the control measures required to prevent accidents and ill-health occurring. Equally, the P.E. teacher knows his/her work environment, the equipment being used, the storage and dismantling requirements, potential hazards, and so on. Those with experience, training and knowledge of particular classrooms and equipment are suitably competent to carry out risk assessments.

It is reasonable to say that a teacher operating outside his/her remit and not having the collective requirements of competence is not competent to carry out some risk assessments. An example of this would be a teacher of a non-specialist subject carrying out risk assessments for specialist classrooms (woodwork, science). However, for general classrooms, all teachers are competent to risk assess this environment.

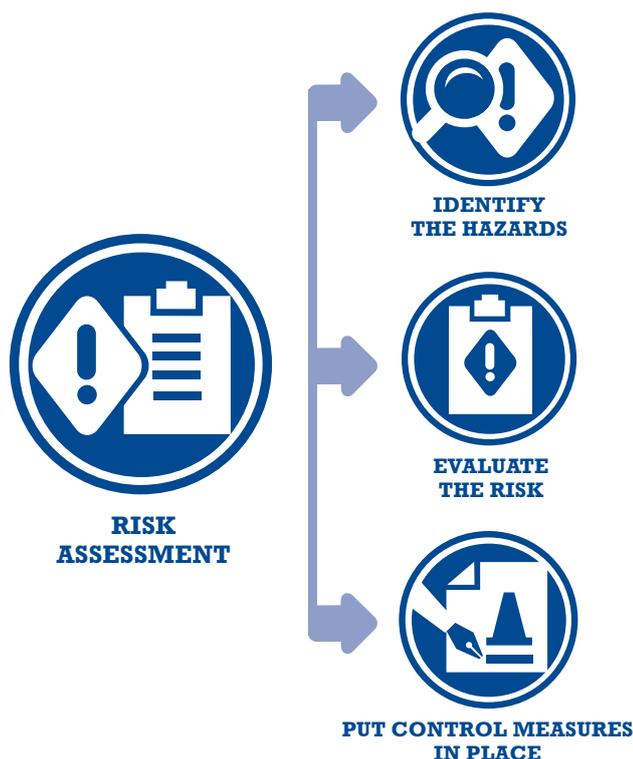
### 3.5 Risk assessment

*Section 19 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 specifies that, "Every employer shall identify the hazards in the place of work under his or her control, assess the risk presented by those hazards and be in possession of a written risk assessment of the risks."*

The whole aim of the SMS is to minimise risks. To evaluate risks, schools must draft written **"risk assessments"**. This helps to determine what the hazards are, the risk involved and the controls to be put in place to minimise the risk. It also enables schools to define priorities and set objectives for eliminating hazards and reducing risks within timescales.

Wherever possible, risks should be eliminated. Where risks cannot be eliminated the general principles of prevention must be used as part of the risk assessment process. See the FAQs, No. 32.

**Fig.7: Step 3: The three steps to risk assessment**



## How to carry out a risk assessment

Assessing risk means evaluating what could cause harm to your employees, other people's employees and other people (including pupils, visitors and members of the public) who are using the school or its facilities.

The key questions to ask when conducting a risk assessment are:

- What can cause injury or harm?
- Can the hazards be eliminated and, if not;
- What preventative or protective measures are or should be in place to control the risks?

The Board of Management/VEC must ensure that the risk assessment is carried out.

**Step 1:** Identify the hazards

**Step 2:** Evaluate the risk in proportion to the hazard

**Step 3:** Put in place appropriate control measures to eliminate or minimise the risk

The Board of Management/VEC are required to implement any control measures considered necessary by the risk assessment.

The Board of Management/VEC may delegate the task of completing the risk assessment to the appropriate person. For example, a science teacher is the most appropriate person to carry out a risk assessment in the science laboratory as the employer can consider the science teacher to be competent due to the fact that he/she has the knowledge, training and experience appropriate to teaching science and conducting experiments in the science laboratory. It is important to remember that, in identifying hazards and assessing risks, employers must take account of the place of work. There is no need to consider every minor hazard or risk that we accept as part of our lives.

Control measures must be put in place to ensure the risk of an incident or accident arising from an identified hazard is reduced. Putting in place control measures means the employer does all that is reasonably practicable to ensure that a hazard does not cause actual harm or is less likely to cause harm.

If new equipment presents a new hazard to the work environment or notably alters the current system of work, a revised risk assessment is required. Risk assessments should become a routine part of the overall management. The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 specify the technical regulations for the most common workplace hazards such as electricity, working at height and noise. They also specify the regulations relating to such controls as safety signs and personal protective equipment.

***The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 are available at: [www.hsa.ie/publications](http://www.hsa.ie/publications).***

***Part 2, Tool 4 of these Guidelines provide the necessary tools for schools to complete risk assessments.***

**Checklist:**

- Has it been agreed who will identify the hazards and carry out the risk assessments? *Note: Risk assessments should be completed by individuals who are competent to do so, e.g. the science teacher carries out the risk assessment in the science laboratories.*
- Have all hazards been identified formally?
- Have written risk assessments been carried out on all hazards?
- Have appropriate control measures been identified and implemented?
- Have significant unresolved problems been reported to the safety committee?
- Have matters requiring urgent attention been addressed?
- Have control measures been communicated to affected persons?
- Have staff been consulted?

### 3.6 Emergency procedures, fire safety, first-aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences

*Section 8 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 requires that every employer shall "prepare and revise as appropriate, adequate plans and procedures to be followed and measures to be taken in the case of an emergency or serious and imminent danger."*

#### Emergency procedures

Emergency procedures must be developed in advance, clearly communicated and understood, and practised on a planned basis.

**Checklist:**

- Has the school a formal procedure in place to deal with emergency situations, e.g. fire, flood, bomb scare, major incident (car crash, suicide)?
- Does the procedure set out clearly what is to be done, who is to do it, who will liaise with families, who will co-ordinate actions on the day (set out all persons roles), follow-up care (where necessary), emergency service details etc?
- Has the school a critical incident<sup>1</sup> management plan to assist in dealing with a major crisis or traumatic situation?

**See also, "Responding to Critical Incidents, Advice and Information Pack for Schools" and "Responding to Critical Incidents, Guidelines for Schools" (Dept of Education and Science/National Educational Psychological Service) available at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie).**

<sup>1</sup> "A critical incident can be defined as any incident or sequence of events, which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and disrupts the running of the school".

## Fire safety

Fire drills should be completed as often as required - this can only be determined by the school. Consideration must be given to school layout, ease of access and egress, and the general requirements of the pupils attending the school. It is good practice to test the fire alarm weekly on a set day at a particular time. Any defects in the alarm system must be prioritised by the Board of Management/VEC for repair or replacement.

Many questions arise around planning of fire drills. Whilst planning fire drills is important, it is not necessary to give advance notice to staff. Employees must be instructed on precautions for emergencies and evacuation procedures. The Board of Management/VEC or the Principal must designate employees to implement the procedures in case of an emergency and the Board/VEC must further ensure that the designated employees have adequate training and equipment available to them to deal with the emergency. Escape routes must be kept clear and emergency exits unlocked. The electrical system should be checked periodically by a competent person. The school must be equipped with appropriate fire-fighting and detection equipment. Further information and advice may be obtained from the Fire Services Section of the Local Authority or City Council.

The school may decide that advanced notice of a fire drill is appropriate so as to minimise the risk of an accident during the drill. In every case the efficacy of the fire drill should be reviewed and assessed.

### Checklist:

- Does the school have an emergency evacuation plan?
- Has it been communicated to all parties and is it on display?
- Does it provide for those with disabilities or other special needs?
- Are fire assembly points identified?
- Are fire assembly points clearly marked?
- Are directional fire signs displayed in the school?
- Does the school have emergency lighting systems in place?
- Are fire exits kept clear?
- Does the school hold a minimum of two fire drills per year?
- Are these drills timed?
- Are outcomes of fire drills recorded and actions taken where necessary?
- Is the emergency evacuation plan reviewed regularly?
- Is fire-fighting equipment (fire hose reels, emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, fire blankets etc.) available?
- Are all fire installations and equipment inspected and serviced as per legal requirements?

## First-aid

*Chapter 2 of Part 7 of the General Application Regulations 2007 sets out the first-aid requirements for workplaces. "Employers have a duty to provide first-aid equipment at all places of work where working conditions require it. Depending on the size or specific hazard (or both) of the place of work, trained occupational first-aiders must also be provided. Apart from some exceptions, first-aid rooms must be provided where appropriate. Information must also be provided to employees as regards the first-aid facilities and arrangements in place".*

### Checklist:

- Has the school trained an appropriate number of occupational first-aiders based on a risk assessment?
- Is everyone aware of whom the school first-aiders are?
- What equipment is available to the first-aiders?
- Are first-aid kits fully compliant with legislation and guidance. Who checks them?
- Where is the equipment located?
- Are there agreed procedures about when first-aid will be administered?

## Accidents and dangerous occurrences

The safety statement should clearly set out an accident investigation, reporting and recording policy and procedure. All Board of Management/VECs should record accidents and near misses/dangerous occurrences in the work place. The procedures outlined in the school's safety statement regarding accident notification should be followed where notification is required.

Every Board of Management/VEC is legally required to report specific accidents and incidents to the Health and Safety Authority. Community and comprehensive schools are also required to report all accidents to the State Claims Agency. To find out what the reporting obligations are, please see the FAQs, No.'s 34-38.

### Checklist:

- Is there a school accident policy addressing procedures to be followed in the event of an accident or dangerous occurrence (i.e. first-aid, doctor called, parents/guardians called, ambulance called)?
- Are internal reporting and recording procedures for all types of accidents in place?
- Ensure online reporting of accidents to the Health and Safety Authority. IR1 and IR3 forms available at [www.hsa.ie/publications](http://www.hsa.ie/publications)
- Are all incidents that occur in Community and Comprehensive schools, also reported to the State Claims Agency? (This is only a requirement for Community and Comprehensive schools)
- Are all accidents investigated?
- Is corrective action taken where required?
- Are reports of such actions available to the Board of Management/VEC and to the safety committee?
- Are records kept of all incidents and accidents?

**See Part 2, Tool 5: Accident or Incident Record Form - for internal recording of accidents and incidents**

## 3.7 Instruction, training and supervision

*Sections 8 and 10 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 require that every employer provide instruction, training and supervision to his/her employees in relation to safety, health and welfare at work.*

Training needs analysis is the identification of safety and health training needs for the school. Initially, on the implementation of the safety and health management plan, a training needs analysis should be completed in order to identify and address any deficiencies. Once training needs have been identified, they should be incorporated into the school's annual training plan and reviewed regularly to ensure all training needs are met.

**See Part 2, Tool 6** for details on typical safety and health training that should be considered when assessing training needs in accordance with the recommended time frames.

### Checklist:

- Has the school prepared an annual safety and health training plan? (completed risk assessments may be used to identify training needs)
- Does the training plan include the following:
  - a formal process to identify the safety and health training needs of each group within the school community?
  - the provision to all individuals of safety training necessary to enable them to carry out their duties as identified by the risk assessments and as set out in the safety statement?
- a record of all training, information and briefing sessions?
- a record of those in attendance at training sessions with signed attendance sheets?
- a schedule of dates when refresher training falls due?

**See Part 2, Tool 6 (A), (B), and (C)**

## 3.8 Communication and consultation

*In accordance with Section 20(3) of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 every employer must bring the safety statement, in a form, manner and, as appropriate, language that is reasonably likely be understood, to the attention of:*

- *his or her employees, at least annually and, at any other time, following its amendment;*
- *newly recruited employees upon commencement of employment;*
- *other persons at the place of work who may be exposed to any specific risk to which the safety statement applies, e.g. contractors carrying out work at the school.*

All pupils, parents/guardians and visitors to the school should also have access to the safety statement.

Communication is integral to the organisation and operation of the safety statement. All staff must be aware of the content of the safety statement, safety policies and procedures, risk assessments, minutes of safety committee meetings, results of audits and results of performance reviews.

The communications process must allow for and encourage employees to bring safety, health and welfare matters to the attention of management. A written communications policy should be developed and implemented. The policy must articulate the involvement of staff in the development of the SMS and methods of communicating with staff on safety, health and welfare matters.

Central to the communication framework within the school are the establishment of the safety committee and the selection and appointment of a safety representative on behalf of staff. It is important to involve caretakers, cleaners and non-teaching staff in the communication framework, as they are often involved in the highest risk work activity in schools.

It is good practice to ensure names and photographs of first-aiders, fire wardens and responsible persons are posted in various locations around the school on safety and health notice boards located in central positions. Information pertaining to nearest emergency first-aid kits, fire evacuation points and general emergency procedures can also be posted on safety and health notice boards.

The names of all persons with responsibilities for safety, such as, the safety officer, safety representative(s) and safety committee members should be communicated to employees. Emergency procedures and specific hazards and control measures should also be communicated to employees including substitute, temporary, and new employees and those returning from leave of absence.

All policies and procedures should be ratified by the Board of Management/VEC and communicated to the school community where relevant, e.g. anti-bullying policy, pregnant employee policy etc. Some schools incorporate each policy into the safety statement while others leave them as stand-alone policies.

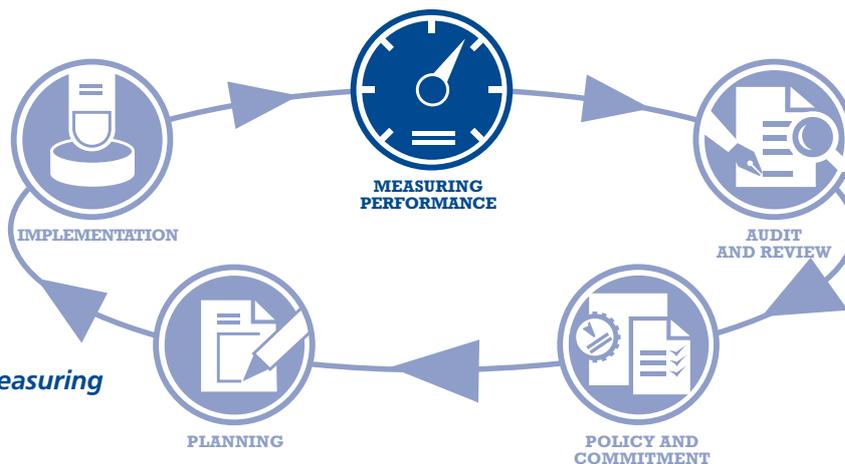
Many of the following school policies will be relevant in your school. While some schools may already have such policies in place, others may need to develop them.

- Communication policy
- School trips/outings
- Work experience
- Extra-curricular activities
- Visitors and contractors
- Third party use of school premises
- Safety Induction for staff
- Dignity in the workplace
- Anti-bullying\* and anti-harassment
- Pregnant, post-natal and breast feeding employees
- Working at height
- Manual handling
- Display screen equipment
- Lone working and night work
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Transportation policy (see the FAQs No.46)
- Promoting safety through the curriculum (see the FAQs No.47)
- Code of Behaviour
- Guidance Plan\*
- Substance Use\*
- Child protection\*
- Special needs
- Equality
- Employment policies
- Road safety protocol
- Internet Safety: Acceptable Use Policy\*
- Relationships and Sexuality Education\*

\* Policy Templates are available on DES website, [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie).

*See Part 2, Tool 7 for a checklist of the various methods of communication that can be used by the school to impart safety and health information.*

# Step 4: Measuring performance



**Fig.8 Step 4: Measuring performance**

The Board of Management/VEC should measure, monitor and evaluate its safety and health management system to make sure it is robust. This can be done in simple ways. For example, performance can be measured against agreed standards such as:

- legislative requirements;
- the school safety and health policy and the written risk assessments contained in the safety statement;
- safety and health objectives, as part of the school plan.

This will reveal when and where improvement is needed and how effectively the SMS is functioning.

School management, working with the safety committee, should establish monitoring structures and procedures to monitor the school's safety and health performance. This is to ensure that planned actions contained within the school's safety and health plan have actually taken place or where they have not that they are scheduled to be addressed.

Monitoring can be achieved in a number of ways, e.g. periodic review meetings (safety committee/Board of Management/VEC), to ensure the safety management system is in operation and the safety statement incorporating risk assessments are in place. The safety committee may conduct formal inspections and checks of all school areas at pre-defined timeframes to establish items arising. Monitoring can be completed by carrying out inspections and equipment checks on items such as fire detection installations and extraction systems etc. Periodic reviews of accidents, near misses, and dangerous occurrences are also required to establish corrective action to be taken.

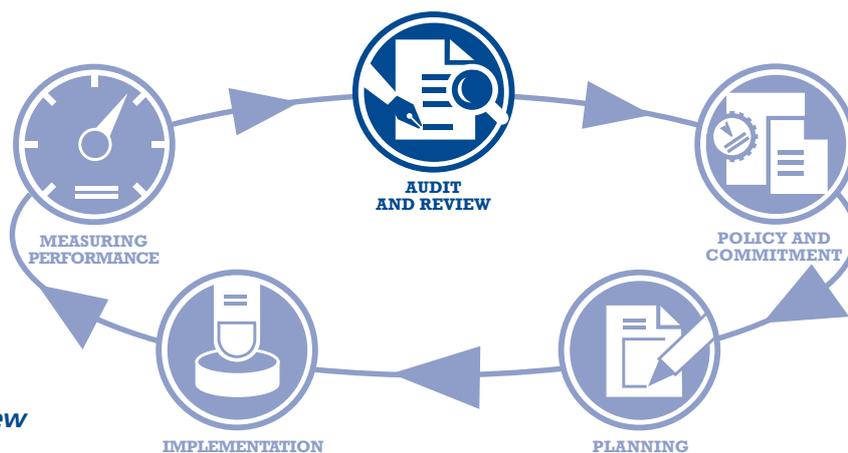
The safety committee will also check that the safety statement is being implemented and will note any issues arising. Active self-monitoring ensures that any changes in operating conditions, equipment or legislation are taken into account.

**See Part 2, Tool 8: Monitoring, which includes a Sample Template for Inspections (A) and a Sample Inspection Check sheet (B)**

**Checklist:**

- Is there an agreed schedule outlining areas/items for inspection?
- Are inspections of the equipment and furniture in the school or on the school grounds carried out before use, on a daily, weekly, monthly, term or annual basis as appropriate?
- Is there a list specifying who will carry out the inspections and what areas are to be inspected, e.g. classrooms, offices, workshops, laboratories, storage areas, welfare facilities, yard and sports hall?
- Does the risk assessment system in place formally track the status of all hazards reported, indicate the control measures required, the action taken to date, responsibility for action and finally, sign-off on completion of tasks?
- Do regular walk-through inspections take place to identify fire hazards or other safety and health hazards as may arise from time to time?
- Is there a preventative maintenance and service programme in place for fixed service installations, machinery, equipment, grounds and buildings?
- Are records regarding the preventative maintenance programme kept?
- Does the "Principal's Report" to the Board of Management/VEC include information pertaining to the status of the SMS in the school and other relevant information pertaining to safety and health?

## Step 5: Audit and review



**Fig.9 Step 5:  
Audit and Review**

Auditing and reviewing the SMS by the Board of Management/VEC are the final steps in the management cycle. This step enables the school to maintain and develop its ability to reduce risks and ensure the effectiveness of the system.

The school should evaluate the impact of the safety and health plan at a pre-determined time, (e.g. per term, annually), taking into account feedback from the school community, significant incidents and/or accidents, dangerous occurrences, new regulatory and legislative requirements and other relevant developments.

Information produced from on-going monitoring can be used to review current policies and procedures and so help improve performance.

An annual safety and health audit should be carried out. This is a comprehensive review and report on all aspects of safety and health management in the school. A sample audit tool is provided in Part 2.

Results from audits can be combined with information from measuring performance to improve the school's overall approach to safety and health management.

The safety statement should be revised as necessary, in light of the review and evaluation process. All members of the school community should be informed of the full contents of the revised safety statement.

### **Checklist:**

- What procedures are in place to carry out the annual safety and health audit?
- Is the safety statement reviewed and where necessary amended to reflect changes in the school?
- Is the safety audit part of the regular whole school development planning process?

**See Part 2, Tool 1 (B): School Safety and Health Management Audit Tool**



# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Legislation

Safety and health management system

Planning

Roles and responsibilities

Safety statement and risk assessment

Accident investigation and reporting

Further information and support

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## LEGISLATION

### Q1. What is the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005?

**A.** The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 details how safety and health should be managed and it clarifies the responsibilities of employers, the self-employed, employees and various other parties in relation to safety and health at work. The Act also details the role and functions of the Health and Safety Authority, provides for a range of enforcement measures and specifies penalties that may be applied for breach of occupational safety and health. As the Act is an enabling Act, new regulations can be added from time to time.

The 2005 Act is available at <http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Legislation/Acts>.

### Q2. What are the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007?

**A.** These regulations replace, simplify and update many older regulations that apply to all places of work. The term “general application” means the various parts and sections apply to all employments including schools. The regulations set out requirements concerning manual handling of loads, electricity, noise, vibration, first-aid, etc.

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 apply to the following:

Workplace	Electricity	Night work and shift work
Use of work equipment	Work at height	Safety signs at places of work
Personal protective equipment (PPE)	Protection of children and young persons	Protection of pregnant, post-natal and breastfeeding employees
Manual handling	Control of noise at work	First-aid
Display screen equipment	Control of vibration at work	Explosive atmosphere at places of work

Note: Only Part X and the Twelfth Schedule to the General Application Regulations 1993, relating to the notification of accidents and dangerous occurrences, remain in place after 1st November 2007.

The full set of regulations and Guidelines are available at [www.hsa.ie/publications](http://www.hsa.ie/publications).

### Q3. What are the Fire Services Acts, 1981 and 2003?

**A.** The Fire Services Act 1981 makes provision for the establishment of fire authorities and the organisation of fire services and for fire safety, fire fighting, the protection and rescue of persons and property and related matters.

The fire authorities have various powers of inspection and enforcement for fire prevention/safety measures in existing buildings including schools. The “duty of care” in respect to fire safety in buildings rests with the owner/occupier under the Fire Services Act 1981.

The Fire Services Act 2003 provides for the licensing of indoor events and amends the Fire Services Act 1981.

### Q4. Does the Occupiers’ Liability Act 1995 apply to our school?

**A.** Yes. The Occupiers’ Liability Act 1995\* is the legislation upon which much litigation involving third party injuries is based.

An occupier is defined as a person/body who is in control of the premises and in the case of schools, the Board of Management/VEC is responsible for accidents or ill-health arising from the state or condition of the school premises.

The Occupiers’ Liability Act 1995 imposes duties on occupiers in relation to three categories of entrants:

- **Visitor** – an entrant, other than a recreational user, who is present on the premises at the invitation or with the permission of the occupier. In the case of schools: a pupil present on school premises during normal school hours, a teacher or other employee or a paid contractor or a parent/guardian would fall within the category of visitor.
- **Recreational user** – an entrant with or without the occupier’s permission, present on the premises for the purpose of engaging in recreational activity, who has paid no charge other than in respect of car parking facilities.
- **Trespasser** – an entrant other than a recreational user or visitor.

#### Visitor

The duty, in relation to visitors, is to take such care as is reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure a visitor and their property does not suffer injury or damage by reason of any danger existing on the school premises. However a visitor must have regard for his or her own safety and supervise and control any persons under their care. Any agreements or notices that are displayed by the occupier must be reasonable in all the circumstances and be brought to the attention of the visitor.

#### Recreational user and trespasser

The duty owed to both recreational users and trespassers is not to injure the person or damage the property of the person intentionally and not to act with reckless disregard for the person or the property of the person.

\*<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1995/en/act/pub/0010/index.html>

## SAFETY AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

### Q5. What is a “safety and health management system”?

**A.** A safety and health management system details how safety and health is managed and includes the policies and procedures in relation to organisational structure, the planning activities, responsibilities, practices, procedures and resources for developing, implementing, achieving, reviewing and maintaining the safety and health policy within the school and for all activities associated with the school. Practical Guidelines entitled “Workplace Safety and Health Management” can also be found on [www.hsa.ie/publications](http://www.hsa.ie/publications).

### Q6. Do these Guidelines on Managing Safety and Health in Post-Primary Schools have a legal standing?

**A.** This is not a legal document but these Guidelines do provide schools with assistance to meet their legal obligations under the 2005 Act. The aim of these Guidelines is to provide practical assistance to Boards of Management/VECs including advice and recommendations on how to implement and operate a safety and health management system in their school. The Guidelines also assist Boards of Management/VECs in their understanding and interpretation of the 2005 Act and international best practice as well as helping employees to meet their legal obligations under the Act.

### Q7. Are the Guidelines relevant to all employees within the school?

**A.** Yes. Safety is relevant to everyone. Employers, employees, and persons in control of places of work, designers, manufacturers, importers and suppliers of articles and substances all have duties under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. The Board of Management/VEC has overall responsibility for the safety statement. Employees are required by law to co-operate with the Board of Management/VEC in the safety and health management process. Teachers are in control of their work activity within the classroom, laboratory, workshop etc. in which they teach and are therefore obliged to play an active part in the management of safety and health in these areas.

## PLANNING

### Q8. What is safety and health planning?

**A.** Every school should formulate a plan to fulfil its safety and health policy as set out in the safety statement. This plan outlines how an effective management structure will deliver its safety and health policy. The plan sets out what will be done, who will do it and the review mechanism that will verify that each task has been carried out.

### Q9. Must a school engage in safety and health planning?

**A.** The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 states that employers must manage safety and health in the workplace in order to prevent accidents and ill-health. One of the key elements of a successful safety and health management system is planning. A school should formulate a plan to fulfil its safety and health policy as set out in the safety statement. An effective management structure should be put in place for delivering the plan.

### Q10. Is safety and health planning part of Whole School Development Planning?

**A.** Planning for the efficient management of safety and health is an integral part of whole school development planning in schools. A whole school approach to change management in schools has brought many benefits. Planning for safety and health as outlined in these Guidelines conforms to the model of school development planning used in most post-primary schools today.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Q11. What are the responsibilities of directors and senior managers for workplace safety and health?

**A.** Employers now have greater responsibilities under section 80 of the 2005 Act on “Liability of Directors and Officers of Undertakings” which requires them to be in a position to prove they have proactively managed the safety and health of their workers.

The liabilities of directors and officers of undertakings under the 2005 Act are dependent on the role that both the board and senior management team play in the undertaking. Boards of Management/VECs, Principals and in some cases, teachers or other staff may be considered to be directors or officers of undertakings<sup>1</sup>. The regular day to day management, control and direction the school takes is usually set by the Principal and management team (where one exists). The Principal and management team must follow the broad strategic directions on safety and health management set by the Board of Management/VEC. They must also determine how the management of workplace safety and health should happen at the school and are responsible for ensuring that good practices are followed.

More information can be found in “Guidance for Directors and Senior Managers on their Responsibilities for Workplace Safety and Health”, available at [www.hsa.ie/publications](http://www.hsa.ie/publications).

### Q12. Is it good practice for a school to have a safety officer/coordinator/administrator appointed?

**A.** The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 specifically places duties on the employer to ensure the management of safety and health in the workplace. There is no mandatory requirement under safety and health legislation whereby schools must appoint a safety officer.

However, where the school decides to appoint a safety officer to manage safety on behalf of the Board/VEC, it must be satisfied that this person is competent for the role. In many schools the Principal acts as the safety officer. See also “The importance of appointing competent persons” on page 25.

Normal functions of the safety officer may be delegated or performed by another member of staff where necessary. However, overall responsibility for safety and health cannot be delegated. For example a teacher with a particular responsibility may carry out some functions of the safety officer but the responsibility remains with the officer and overall responsibility for safety and health at the school rests with the Board of management/VEC.

*The safety officer is not the same as safety representative (see glossary).*

### Q13. Can the duties of the safety officer be delegated to a number of teachers/other staff members?

**A.** The functions of the safety officer may be delegated to one or more staff members but the responsibility remains with the officer appointed by the Board of Management/VEC.

<sup>1</sup> The definition of “undertaking” in the 2005 Act is all embracing and covers all types of work and corporate structures that may exist.

### Q14. Is a safety committee mandatory?

**A.** No. These Guidelines advise that it may be appropriate for the school to establish a safety committee to oversee the planning, operation and management of the school's safety statement. This is not a legal requirement however.

### Q15. What role does the safety representative play?

**A.** The role of the safety representative is to represent colleagues (including non-teaching staff) in consultation with the employer on matters relating to safety and health. The safety representative may consult with and make representations to the Principal or the Board of Management/VEC on safety, health and welfare matters relating to employees in the school. This consultation may take the form of involvement with the safety committee.

There are no duties associated with the safety representative but there are several functions. The functions of the safety representative are listed in the 2005 Act.

Essentially, the safety representative's function is to consult with and make representation to the Board of Management/VEC on safety, health and welfare matters relating to all staff in the school. The safety representative, having given reasonable notice to management, has the right to inspect all or part of the school. He/she has the right to inspect immediately where an accident or dangerous occurrence has taken place or where there is an imminent risk.

These Guidelines promote the practice of full participation of the safety representative in the school's safety committee.

More information can be found in "Guidelines on Safety Representatives and Safety Consultation", available at [www.hsa.ie/publications](http://www.hsa.ie/publications).

### Q16. Who chooses the safety representative?

**A.** All the staff of the school (i.e. teaching and non-teaching, permanent and temporary) are entitled to select and appoint a safety representative to represent them in consultations with the employer on matters of safety, health and welfare in their workplace.

### Q17. Can the safety representative be held legally accountable for putting any safety proposals into effect?

**A.** No. A safety representative does not have any duties (as opposed to functions) under the 2005 Act other than those that apply to teachers and staff generally. Therefore, a safety representative who accepts a management proposal for dealing with a safety or health issue can not be held legally accountable for putting the proposal into effect.

### Q18. Does a safety representative carry out workplace inspections?

**A.** The school safety representative, having given reasonable notice to the Board/VEC/Principal, may inspect the whole or part of the school at a frequency or to a schedule agreed with management in advance, and may also inspect immediately, in the event of an accident, dangerous occurrence or imminent danger or risk to the safety, health and welfare of any person. He/she may also investigate accidents or dangerous occurrences provided that he or she does not interfere with or obstruct the performance of any statutory obligation required to be performed by any person under any of the relevant statutory provisions.

## SAFETY STATEMENT AND RISK ASSESSMENT

### Q19. What is a safety statement?

**A.** A safety statement is a written programme of the school's commitment to safeguard the safety and health of staff (teaching and non-teaching) while they work and the safety and health of other people who might be affected by work activities in the school including visitors, parents and pupils. In essence, the safety statement details how the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils, visitors and contractors are managed by the school.

### Q20. What should be covered by a safety statement?

**A.** The areas that should be covered by the safety statement are specific and are set out in Section 20 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and can be reviewed in more detail in Part 1 (Step 3) of these Guidelines. The safety statement should be based on the identification of the hazards and the risk assessments carried out under Section 19 of the Act. It must:

- specify how the safety and health of all employees will be secured and managed;
- specify the hazards identified and risks assessed;
- give details of how the Board of Management/VEC is going to manage his or her safety and health responsibilities, including:
  - (a) a commitment to comply with legal obligations,
  - (b) the protective and preventive measures taken,
  - (c) the resources provided for safety and health at the workplace,
  - (d) the arrangements used to fulfil these responsibilities;
- include plans and procedures to be used in the event of an emergency or serious danger;
- specify the duties of staff including the cooperation required from them on safety and health matters;
- include the names and job titles of people being appointed to be responsible for safety and health or for performing the tasks set out in the statements;
- contain arrangements made for appointing safety representatives and for consulting with staff on safety and health matters including the names of the safety representatives and the members of the safety committee, if appointed;
- be in a written form, manner and language that will be understood by all;
- have regard to the relevant safety and health legislation.

The safety statement should begin with a declaration, signed on behalf of the Board of Management/VEC. The declaration should give a commitment to ensuring that a workplace is as safe and healthy as is reasonably practicable and that all statutory requirements will be fulfilled. This is known as the safety and health policy.

More information can be found in "Guidelines on Risk Assessments and Safety Statements" available at [www.hsa.ie/publications](http://www.hsa.ie/publications).

## Q21 Whose responsibility is it to prepare the safety statement?

**A.** It is the responsibility of the Board of Management/VEC to ensure that an accurate safety statement is prepared for the school. The Board of Management/VEC, as the employer, must have a written statement which specifies how it is going to manage and secure the safety, health and welfare of all staff and users of the school.

*See Part 2, Tool 2: Safety and Health Policy and Tool 3: Sample Management Organisation Chart*

## Q22. How often should a school write or revise its safety statement?

**A.** A safety statement must always be relevant to the current circumstances of your school. It should be revised at least annually or whenever significant changes take place, such as the introduction of new equipment or systems.

## Q23. How often should the safety statement be brought to the attention of staff?

**A.** The relevant contents of the safety statement should be available to staff at all times. They should also be notified of any revisions to the safety statement. Relevant extracts of the safety statement should also be brought to the attention of others who may be affected by work activities at the school. A system should be in place to ensure easy and regular access to the statement by all parties. Changes to the statement should be readily and widely communicated. New staff should read the statement upon commencement of employment.

Substitute and temporary staff should have all relevant sections of the safety statement brought to their attention. Key sections of the statement, relevant to their workplace, should be brought to their attention.

## Q24. Should the safety statement cover off-site school activities, e.g. school tours, fields trips, trips abroad?

**A.** Yes. Risk assessments should be carried out for all school activities that occur both in the school and off-campus. These include sports events, field trips and school tours.

Schools should draw up a written risk assessment in relation to "school trips". This should be contained in the safety statement. It is considered good practice to have a school tours policy based on the risk assessment which should take account of details of the practices and procedures in the planning and execution of school trips. This can be attached to the safety statement.

When conducting the risk assessment, particular care should also be given to the nature and variety of school trips. Furthermore, the safety statement should take into account the competence of teachers and/or other staff in the planning and execution of school trips. It is recommended practice for the teacher in charge of school trips to review the risk assessment and update where necessary. Schools should ensure that an adequate process is in place to competently assess new or emerging risks as they arise during the course of activities.

## Q25. Some groups use our premises at night or on weekends - must our safety statement include their activities?

**A.** All activities carried out on school property or on behalf of the school must be carried out safely and any hazards must be identified and dealt with in the safety statement. The Board of Management/VEC must have procedures and controls in place to ensure that each activity is conducted in a safe manner and complies with appropriate safety statutory provisions.

## Q26. Do I need a safety statement from each contractor coming into the school?

**A.** It is a legal requirement set out in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 that an employer who contracts another employer to provide services to him/her shall require that employer has an up-to-date safety statement.

Therefore, in a school, the employer BOM/VEC who contracts another employer or self employed person to provide services must ensure that employer/self employed person has an up-to-date safety statement.

Note: a construction contractor with 3 or less employees can opt to use the HSA Code of Practice (COP) for Construction Contractors with 3 or less employees, using this COP allows them to meet their legal requirements to have a safety statement; currently there is only a Construction COP in existence, all other contractors must have a safety statement as per normal guidance requirements.

More guidance can be found for contractors of all types of work such as construction, electrical, roofing etc. at <http://www.hsa.ie/publications>.

## Q27. Should the Board of Management/VEC consult staff on the content and implementation of the safety statement?

**A.** School management must consult in advance and in good time on anything carried out in the workplace which can have a substantial effect on safety and health. Consultation must cover:

- the preparation of or the impact on the school's safety statement;
- any risk protections and prevention measures;
- the appointment and duties of staff with safety and health responsibilities;
- the outcome of risk assessments;
- notifiable accidents or dangerous occurrences;
- safety and health planning, organisation and training;
- the introduction of new technologies or equipment.

Note: Where a safety committee is formed in the school (as recommended in these Guidelines), it can be used for such consultation.

## Q28. Should the Board of Management/VEC consult with parents/guardians and pupils before drafting the safety statement?

**A.** Safety in schools is a matter for all users of the school and a collective and consultative approach is preferred. A school may decide to consult parent representatives and pupils on the content and implementation of the safety statement. This may take the form of the safety committee meeting with the representatives of parents/guardians council and the pupil council. However, this is not a mandatory requirement under safety and health legislation.

## Q29. As an employer, what is the extent of my duty to make the workplace safe?

**A.** In relation to the duties of an employer, “reasonably practicable”, as defined in the 2005 Act describes the extent of the duty and means that an employer has exercised all due care in the discharge of their duties by putting in place the necessary protective and preventive measures, having identified foreseeable hazards and assessed the associated risks.

Reasonably practicable may be understood to mean that which a reasonable person would do given the particular circumstances.

*See Section 2 (6), Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.*

## Q30. What happens if I identify a hazard and do not act on it?

**A.** It is a duty of an employee under the 2005 Act to report to his/her employer any defect in the place of work, the systems of work, any article or substance which might endanger the safety, health or welfare at work of the employee or that of any other person.

Boards of Management/VECs must do all that is “reasonably practicable” to control risk in the workplace. If they are aware of a risk and do nothing, they may be in breach of the 2005 Act.

## Q31. Are there different types of hazards?

**A.** Yes. Hazards may be categorised as:

- physical hazards, e.g. manual handling, slips, trips, and falls, electricity, fire;
- health hazards, e.g. noise, harmful dusts, unsuitable lighting levels, vibration;
- chemical hazards, e.g. glues, solvents, dyes, cleaning agents;
- biological hazards, e.g. viruses, bacteria;
- human-factor hazards, e.g. stress, bullying, violence.

### Q32. What are the general principles of prevention and how may these be applied in the school?

**A.** The General Principles of Prevention (outlined in Schedule 3 to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005) provide a methodology for approaching accident prevention. The Board of Management/VEC must take account of these principles when implementing necessary safety, health and welfare measures in the school.

The Nine Principles include:

1. The avoidance of risks
2. The evaluation of unavoidable risks
3. The combating of risks at source
4. The adaptation of work to the individual
5. The adaptation of the place of work to technical progress
6. The replacement of dangerous articles, substances or systems of work by safe or less dangerous articles, substances or systems of work
7. The giving of priority to collective protective measures over individual protective measures
8. The development of an adequate prevention policy in relation to safety, health and welfare at work, which takes account of technology, organisation of work, working conditions, social factors and the influence of factors related to the working environment
9. The giving of appropriate training and instructions to employees.

### Q33. Who needs to be considered in the risk assessments?

**A.** All users of the school facilities must be considered when carrying out your risk assessment. This includes the following:

- teaching staff - permanent and temporary, substitute and trainee staff;
- non-teaching staff - administration, caretaking, cleaning and catering staff;
- contract workers such as window cleaners;
- pupils including visiting pupils, e.g. as part of a team;
- parents/guardians;
- visiting speakers;
- visiting sales people, delivery people and maintenance workers;
- members of the public.

## ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION AND REPORTING

### Q34. Who is responsible for reporting accidents to the Health and Safety Authority?

*The regulation around reporting of accidents, incidents and dangerous occurrences is currently being reviewed. The most up to date information regarding this topic is available from the Health and Safety Authority at [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)*

**A.** The following are responsible for reporting accidents to the Health and Safety Authority:

- employers (in the case of the death or injury of employees at work);
- persons providing training (in the case of the death or injury of a person receiving training for employment);
- self-employed persons (in relation to accidents to themselves);
- persons in control of places of work in relation to:
  - the work-related death or injury of a person not at work;
  - the death of a self-employed person;
- the next of kin (in the event of the death of a self-employed person at a place of work under that person's control).

### Q35. What types of accidents must be reported to the Health and Safety Authority?

*The regulation around reporting of accidents, incidents and dangerous occurrences is currently being reviewed. The most up to date information regarding this topic is available from the Health and Safety Authority at [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)*

**A.** The following types of accidents must be reported to the Health and Safety Authority:

- (a) the death of any employed or self-employed person, which was caused by an accident during the course of their work.
- (b) an injury sustained in the course of their employment, which prevents any employed or self-employed person from performing the normal duties of their work for more than three calendar days, not including the date of the accident. Calendar days include Saturdays and Sundays (e.g. if an employee, who is injured on Wednesday, and does not normally work on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays, returns to work the following Monday, the accident is reportable).
- (c) a death or an injury that requires treatment by a registered medical practitioner, which does not occur while a person is at work, (e.g. a pupil during class) but is related to either a work activity or their place of work. A road traffic accident that meets the criteria (a) and (b) above, excluding an accident that occurs while a person is commuting either to or from work.
- (d) a road traffic accident that meets the criterion (c) above as a result of construction work on or adjacent to a public road.

The IR1 form is the only form used to report accidents to the Health and Safety Authority. Forms are available from the Workplace Contact Unit of the Authority or it can be reported directly on-line at [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie).

The school must keep records of all accidents which occur for a period of 10 years.

Dangerous occurrences must also be reported to the Health and Safety Authority as per requirements of the IR3 form. The IR3 form is available from the Health and Safety Authority at [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie).

### Q36. Which accidents involving pupils are reportable to the Health and Safety Authority?

*The regulation around reporting of accidents, incidents and dangerous occurrences is currently being reviewed. The most up to date information regarding this topic is available from the Health and Safety Authority at [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)*

**A.** If the pupil is injured as a result of a work-related activity and requires medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner this is reportable to the Health and Safety Authority. For example, if a pupil injures him/herself whilst working with a mallet and chisel during wood working class and requires treatment by a registered medical practitioner, this is reportable.

However, if a pupil trips in the school yard and is injured, this is not reportable. If a pupil trips during PE class and requires treatment by a registered medical practitioner, this is reportable to the Authority. School trips/tours are considered to be a work activity of the school.

### Q37. Which incidents should be reported to the State Claims Agency?

**A.** Under the National Treasury Management Agency (Amendment) Act 2000, community and comprehensive schools are obliged to report adverse incidents promptly to the State Claims Agency and to facilitate any subsequent investigation.

The State Claims Agency should be notified immediately by phone in the event of a fatality or a serious injury, which include amputations, injury to an eye, serious burns or other injuries leading to resuscitation. Otherwise, the following are Guidelines as to the types of incidents that should be reported:

- injuries requiring medical attention by a doctor or attendance at a hospital, involving staff, pupils, contractors, members of the public, etc.;
- where a school staff member is absent from work for any period of time (including incidents where less than 3 days were lost) and the absence is directly attributable to a work-related activity/environment (this includes circumstances where the absence occurs some time after the incident);
- where a pupil is absent from school for any period of time and the absence is directly attributable to a school-related activity/environment (this includes circumstances where the absence occurs some time after the incident);
- where a school staff member or prior staff member has requested health screening arising from alleged exposure to work environments, e.g. asbestos, noise, dust, fumes, biological or chemical agents;
- where a school becomes aware of an incident (involving personal injury) on its premises involving a visitor, recreational user or trespasser;
- where a vehicle that is privately owned, hired or belonging to a school, is involved in a road traffic accident while in the course of school business;
- where the property of a third party has been damaged as a result of the activities of the school.

Please contact the State Claims Agency's Risk Management Unit (01-6640900) if there is a doubt as to whether a particular incident should be reported.

### Q38. If I am investigating an accident what should I record?

**A.** It is important and good practice to record all accidents that occur in the school or during any school-related activity. The school must ensure that the information gained in the accident report is reviewed and control measures put in place to ensure a similar accident is avoided in the future.

In addition, the school's accident reporting system must recognise the requirement to report certain accidents to their insurer, the Health and Safety Authority and in the case of community and comprehensive schools, the State Claims Agency.

In addition, if there are civil proceedings, it is important to have recorded all the factual information in order to assist with the validity or otherwise of the case. The following list can be used as a guide to ensure that the required information is being collected.

The Board of Management/VEC should appoint a person (often the safety officer will be the appointed person) to conduct an investigation into all incidents and accidents. The safety representative may also conduct an investigation. Information in relation to accidents and near-misses should be recorded on an accident report form or in an accident report book. This information should be reviewed and used to update risk assessments where necessary.

The information gathered should include:

- date of incident;
- time of incident;
- person injured or involved and relevant contact details recorded;
- witnesses and relevant contact details recorded;
- detail of the activity being undertaken at the time of the incident;
- exact location of the incident and photographic evidence or plans of area if appropriate;
- circumstances of the incident - detailed description and cause of the accident;
- injuries sustained;
- medical treatment administered, e.g. first-aid;
- emergency services involved or called to scene of accident;
- details of equipment and service records for same if equipment was involved in the accident;
- details of notifier of accident, time, date.

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

### Q39. What considerations should the school make for employees with disabilities?

**A.** The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 states that employers must “ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all employees”.

Regulation 25 of the General Application Regulations - Employees with disabilities - states that “An employer shall ensure that places of work, where necessary, are organised to take account of persons at work with disabilities, in particular as regards doors, passageways, staircases, showers, washbasins, lavatories and workstations used or occupied directly by those persons”. Accessibility for persons with disabilities is covered by Part M of the Building Regulations entitled “Access for People with Disabilities”.

More information can be found in “Employees with Disabilities - An employer’s guide to implementing inclusive safety and health practices for employees with disabilities”, available from [www.hsa.ie/publications](http://www.hsa.ie/publications). Further information on disability issues is available from The National Disability Authority [www.nda.ie](http://www.nda.ie)

### Q40. The safety signs in our school contain text. Is this correct?

**A.** The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 - Chapter 1 of Part 7 - Safety Signs at Places of Work set out the requirements in relation to safety signs at places of work. Safety Signs should not contain text. However, it should be noted that recent guidelines to these Regulations stipulate it is not a requirement to replace, or physically separate the text and pictogram of any existing signs.

### Q41. What happens if a Health and Safety Authority Inspector finds something wrong in my school?

**A.** Depending on the seriousness of the breach of legislation, an inspector from the Health and Safety Authority may take a number of different actions, at his or her discretion. These include verbal or written actions. For example, if an inspector considers that any activity is likely to involve a risk to safety, health and welfare of persons at work he or she may require the Board of Management/VEC to submit an improvement plan specifying the remedial action to be taken. The inspector will also give a copy of the improvement direction to the safety representative, where one is elected.

Within one month of receipt of the improvement plan, the inspector will confirm in writing to the Board of Management/VEC whether the plan is adequate or direct that it be revised.

### Q42. What training/induction should a school provide for new teachers, including substitute teachers, who may be contracted in for a few days?

**A.** Substitute and temporary teachers and other temporary staff, should be given information regarding safety and health procedures in the school. This includes evacuation and reporting procedures and specific safety matters relating to the teacher’s subject area and place of work, e.g. risk assessments relevant to their work area/classroom.

### Q43. Where can I get further information and advice?

**A.** The Health and Safety Authority's website [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie) or [www.hsa.ie/education](http://www.hsa.ie/education), contains a vast amount of information, including downloadable publications and advice. The Health and Safety Authority's Workplace Contact Unit (WCU) is a helpdesk resource for employers, employees and the public. Contact the WCU at:

Locall: 1890 – 289 389

Fax: 01-614 7125

E-mail: [wcu@hsa.ie](mailto:wcu@hsa.ie)

The Education Unit of the Authority has developed a series of e-learning courseware for schools. The following short courses are available, free of charge at [www.alison.ie/hsa](http://www.alison.ie/hsa).

- An Introduction to Managing Safety in Schools
- Safety in the Technology Classroom for teachers
- Safety in the Science Laboratory for teachers
- "Get Safe, Work Safe" for transition year/senior cycle pupils

Community and comprehensive schools can also contact the State Claims Agency's Risk Management Unit for safety and health risk management advice and guidance on 01-664 0900. Relevant information may also be found on the following website: [www.stateclaims.ie](http://www.stateclaims.ie). The Department of Education and Skills' website: [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) is a further source of information.

### Q44. What is the Health and Safety Authority and what does it do?

**A.** The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) is the national body in Ireland with responsibility for securing safety and health at work. It is an independent body, operating under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and it reports to the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Innovation.

The Authority has overall responsibility for the administration and enforcement of occupational safety and health and dangerous chemicals legislation in Irish workplaces. The Authority monitors compliance with the relevant legislation and can take enforcement action (up to and including prosecutions) where appropriate. The principle functions of the Authority are to promote workplace safety, health and welfare, to provide information and expert advice to employers, employees and the self-employed, to propose new regulations, Guidelines and policies and to monitor and enforce compliance with occupational safety and health and chemical legislation.

### Q45. What is the State Claims Agency and what does it do?

**A.** Under the National Treasury Management Agency (Amendment) Act 2000, the management of personal injury and property damage claims against the State and of the underlying risks was delegated to the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA). When performing these functions, the NTMA is known as the State Claims Agency (SCA).

The Act sets out two objectives for the State Claims Agency:

- to manage claims so as to ensure that the State's liability and associated legal and other expenses are contained at the lowest achievable level; and
- to provide risk advisory services to State authorities with the aim of reducing over time the frequency and severity of claims. In the context of these Guidelines the State Claims Agency's remit extends to community and comprehensive schools. [www.stateclaims.ie](http://www.stateclaims.ie).

## Q46. Does our school need a transportation policy?

**A.** The school may develop a specific policy relating to road and transport safety. A traffic management plan may be developed to ensure greater safety for pupils, staff and other users of the school.

A road safety protocol can be put in place for the school addressing the following issues (where applicable):

- exposure of all pupils to a road safety programme as part of the curriculum;
- provision of safe pick-up and set-down points for cars and buses bringing pupils to and from school;
- provision of a secure and safe place for bicycles;
- encouraging parents/guardians' initiatives on the promotion of pupils walking/cycling to school;
- encouraging the wearing of safety belts;
- promotion of good behaviour on school buses;
- encouraging the wearing of reflective gear and helmets when cycling.

## Q47. Is there a relationship between the taught curriculum and the safety statement?

**A.** You may attach information relating to the school's current subject provision where there is clear relevance to safety and health matters. This may be in the course syllabus, how practical (work) and projects are performed, how materials are stored or how the subject is taught. Subjects may include:

- Social, Personal and Health Education;
- Technology;
- Materials Technology (Wood);
- Metalwork;
- Engineering;
- Construction Studies;
- Science;
- Physical Education;
- Art, Craft and Design;
- Home Economics;
- Field trips and educational visits in Geography, History, Civic, Social and Political Education;
- Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Applied, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme modules;
- Post Leaving Certificate Courses;
- Agricultural Science;
- Design and Communication Graphics;
- Agriculture/Horticulture;
- Craft and Design;
- Active Leisure Studies;
- Engineering;
- Hotel Catering and Tourism.

Note: The Health and Safety Authority has developed several resources for teaching and learning the key principles of safety, health and welfare. These are available at [www.hsa.ie/education](http://www.hsa.ie/education).

# Glossary

**The following glossary provides brief explanations of some of the terms used in these Guidelines.**

## **Accident**

An accident arising out of or in the course of employment which, in the case of a person carrying out work, results in personal injury.

## **Accident Prevention**

The application of measures designed to reduce accidents or accident potential within a system, organisation or activity. An accident prevention program is one which aims to avoid injury to personnel and/or damage to property.

## **Accident report (Incident Report Form (IR1))**

A form approved under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations, and is the only form that may be used to report accidents to the Health and Safety Authority. The Health and Safety Authority encourage all employers to report accidents on-line at [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie).

## **Audit**

In the context of safety and health management, an audit is a structured process of collecting independent information on the efficiency, effectiveness and reliability of the overall safety and health management system as well as the drawing up of plans for collective action.

## **Biological Hazard**

A hazard that pertains to life organisms, including such things as viruses and toxic materials that living things produce, e.g. animals and bacteria in drinking water.

## **Bullying**

Workplace bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work. An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity at work but as a once-off incident is not considered to be bullying.

## **Chemical Hazard**

A non-living hazard that results from substances, including solids, liquids or vapours that could potentially interact. Some chemicals can damage the human body if inhaled, ingested or absorbed, e.g. chemicals with lead, alcohol and hydrocarbons.

## **Compliance/Controls/Control Measures**

The precautions taken to minimise or eliminate risks as a result of the risk assessment.

## **Competent person**

Section 2(2) of the 2005 Act specifies that *"a person is deemed to be a competent person where, having regard to the task he or she is required to perform and taking account of the size or hazards of the undertaking or establishment in which he or she undertakes work, the person possesses sufficient training, experience and knowledge appropriate to the nature of the work to be undertaken."*

## **Continuous Improvement**

This refers to the process of enhancing the safety and health management system in the school in order to achieve improvements as identified in the risk assessments.

## **Dangerous Occurrence**

A dangerous occurrence is an unplanned event or sequence of events that do not have actual consequences but that could, under slightly different circumstances, have unwanted and unintended effects on people's safety and health, on property, on the environment or on legal or regulatory compliance. Dangerous occurrences must be reported to the Health and Safety Authority on the IR3 form.

Examples of dangerous occurrences are:

- (a) the collapse, overturning, failure, explosion, bursting, electrical short circuit discharge or overload, or malfunction of work equipment,
- (b) the collapse or partial collapse of any building or structure under construction or in use as a place of work,
- (c) the uncontrolled or accidental release, the escape or the ignition of any substance,
- (d) a fire involving any substance, or
- (e) any unintentional ignition or explosion of explosives.

## **Dangerous Substance (see Hazardous Substance)**

## **Emergency Planning**

The act of putting together an overall plan and developing it for response to emergency situations involving workers and equipment, e.g. logical sequence of events.

## **Employees/Staff**

For ease of reading the word 'employee' has been replaced with the word 'staff' in many instances. Where the word 'employee' is mentioned the reader can interpret this to mean 'staff'.

## **Engineering Controls**

Engineering controls are the use of physical measures to minimise workplace hazards, e.g. extraction at source by local exhaust ventilation, guarding of moving parts of machinery.

## **Ergonomics**

"Ergonomics applies information about human behaviour, abilities and limitations and other characteristics to the design of tools, machines, tasks, jobs and environments for productive, safe, comfortable and effective human use." (McCormick and Saunders 1993).

The objective is to achieve the best possible match between the job and the worker. Ergonomics is the science of fitting the job to the worker.

## **Hazard**

A hazard is anything that has the potential to cause harm to people, property or the environment. It can be a work material, piece of equipment or a work method or practice.

## **Hazard Identification**

This is the process of identifying situations or events that could give rise to the potential of injury, or of harm to the health, of a person.

## **Hazardous Substance**

A hazardous substance is something that has the potential to cause harm. Such substances include those:

- brought directly into the workplace and handled, stored and used for processing, e.g. solvents, cleaning agents, glues, resins, paints;
- generated by a process or work activity, e.g. fumes from welding/soldering, dust from machining of wood, flour dust, solvents;
- generated as waste or residue.

Agents can be considered hazardous not only because of what they contain (i.e. in the shape of a constituent or chemical ingredient) but because of the form or way in which they are used at the workplace, e.g. hot water used as steam can cause severe burns and adequate control should be available to prevent such exposure.

## **Health and Safety Authority (HSA)**

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) is the national body in Ireland with responsibility for securing health and safety at work. It is a state-sponsored body, established under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act and it reports to the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Innovation. The Authority's responsibilities cover every type of workplace and every kind of work in the public and private sectors.

## **Incident**

An unplanned event or sequence of events, with the potential to lead to an accident.

## **Incident Report Form (IR1)**

A form approved under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations. This is the only form that may be used to report accidents to the Health and Safety Authority.

## **Initial Review**

An initial review is the process of identifying areas of compliance and non-compliance with the existing arrangements for safety, health and welfare.

## **Lock Out**

A positive method for disconnecting power or making something inoperative by using a physical lock to eliminate movement or operation.

## **Manual Handling**

Manual handling of loads means any transporting or supporting of a load by one or more employees, and includes lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving a load, which by reason of its characteristics or unfavourable ergonomic conditions, involves risk, particularly of back injury, to employees.

## **Musculoskeletal Disorders**

This is the technical term for any pain or injury that affects muscles, ligaments, joints or nerves. The injury may be caused by an accident or by long-term exposure to low-intensity repetitive tasks.

## **Occupational Safety and Health**

Safety and health practices relating to workers and workplaces or those affected by work activities.

### **Occupational Exposure Limit Values (OELV)**

An OELV is the maximum concentration of an airborne contamination a person may be exposed to in a given period.

### **Organisational Chart**

The structure/plan of an organisation relating to the responsibilities of management and staff.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

All equipment designed to be worn or held by an employee for protection against one or more hazards likely to endanger the employee's safety and health at work, and includes any additions and accessories to the equipment, if so designed, but does not include:

- ordinary working clothes and uniforms not specifically designed to protect the safety and health of an employee;
- personal protective equipment for the purposes of road transport;
- sports equipment;
- self-defence equipment or deterrent equipment; or,
- portable devices for detecting and signalling risks and nuisances.

### **Physical Hazard**

A physical hazard covers hazards arising from various sources such as cold, heat, ergonomics (musculoskeletal disorders, hand activity level and lifting), ionising radiation, UV and visible radiation.

### **Prevention**

In the context of safety and health, prevention is about taking action now that will stop something negative happening in the future, thereby ensuring that what might happen does not happen.

### **Psycho-Social Hazards**

Numerous factors at work can lead to potential stress and diminish our emotional and physical well-being if they go unsupported or unchecked.

These aspects of the workplace can be labelled psycho-social hazards in some safety and health models, because they threaten mental health in the same way as physical hazards threaten the physical safety and health of employees.

### **REACH**

A regulation designed to manage and control the potential hazards and risks to human health and the environment from the manufacture, import and use of chemicals within the EU and at the same time enhance the competitiveness of European industry by fostering innovation. REACH is an acronym for the Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals. A fourth stage of REACH is restriction.

### **Reasonably Practicable**

Legislation defines "reasonably practicable" to mean that "an employer has exercised all due care by putting in place the necessary protective and preventative measures, having identified the hazards and assessed the risks to safety and health likely to result in accidents or injury to health at the place of work concerned and where putting in place of any further measures are grossly disproportionate." "Reasonably practicable" may be understood to mean that which a reasonable person would do given the particular circumstances.

### **Reasonable Accommodation**

Any workplace which meets the requirements of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007.

### **Record Keeping**

Maintaining information relating to the workplace.

### **Risk**

In relation to any injury or harm, risk means the likelihood of that injury or harm occurring and the resulting potential severity of the consequences arising from the risk. Risk is also dependent on the number of people exposed to the hazard.

### **Risk Assessment**

Risk assessment is the process of determining whether there is a risk associated with an identified hazard. The significance of the risk is determined by the frequency of the potential occurrence and the severity of its consequences.

### **Safety Committee**

A committee comprising management and employee representatives involved in the safety consultation arrangements at the workplace.

### **Safety Data Sheet (SDS)**

A document containing detailed information as regards the protection of human health, safety and the environment. The SDS provides a mechanism for transmitting appropriate information on classified substances and preparations down the supply chain to the immediate downstream users. They are issued by the manufacturer detailing technical information and hazards relating to their handling, storage and use, as well as protective measures for workers and emergency procedures.

### **Safety and Health Management System (SMS)**

This refers to that part of the overall management system of the school that includes the organisational structure, planning activities, responsibilities, practices, procedures and resources for developing, implementing, achieving, reviewing and maintaining the school's safety and health policy.

### **Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005**

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, which revoked and replaced the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989 was brought in to make further provision for the safety, health and welfare of persons at work. This Act clarifies and enhances the responsibilities of employers, the self-employed, employees and various other parties in relation to safety and health at work. The Act also details the role and functions of the Health and Safety Authority, provides for a range of enforcement measures that may be applied and specifies penalties that may be applied for breaches of occupational safety and health.

### **Safety Officer**

A competent person selected and appointed by or on behalf of the employer. A safety officer can help to support the implementation, review and maintenance of a safety and health management system. There is no legal requirement to make such an appointment.

### **Safety and Health Policy**

The safety statement must start with the safety and health policy. This policy is the undertaking's commitment to protecting employees' safety and health.

### **Safety Representative**

A person selected and appointed under Section 25 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005  
OR

A person selected and appointed by employees to represent them in consultations with the employer on matters of safety, health and welfare at the place of work.

### **Safety Statement**

Section 20 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 requires that an organisation produce a written programme to safeguard:

- the safety and health of employees while they work;
- the safety and health of other people who might be at the workplace, including customers, visitors and members of the public.

### **State Claims Agency**

Under the National Treasury Management Agency (Amendment) Act 2000, the management of personal injury and property damage claims against the State and of the underlying risks was delegated to the NTMA. When performing these functions, the NTMA is known as the State Claims Agency (SCA).

### **Work at Height**

Work in any place, including a place:

- (a) in the course of obtaining access to or egress from any place, except by a staircase in a permanent place of work, or
- (b) at or below ground level

from which, if measures required by the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Work at Height) Regulations 2006 were not taken, an employee could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury, and any reference to carrying out work at height includes obtaining access to or egress from such place while at work.

### **Work Station**

An assembly comprising display screen equipment, which may be provided with a keyboard or input device or software, or a combination of the foregoing, determining the operator and machine interface, and includes:

- a work chair and work desk or work surface;
- any optional accessories and peripherals; and
- the immediate work environment of the display screen equipment.

### **Work Related Upper Limb Disorders (WRULDs)**

Work related upper limb disorders are a type of musculoskeletal disorder caused by the work or the environment in which the work takes place. Though symptoms develop over a long time, they can be very severe.

# Reference Sources and Guidance Material

## Department of Education and Skills:

Download free of charge from [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie).

- Adoption of Child Protection Guidelines by Post-Primary Schools in 2005/6 and the Provision of a Telephone Advisory Service (M44/05) [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/m44\\_05.doc](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/m44_05.doc)
- Asbestos Survey (circular letter 49/99) [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/pbu49\\_99.doc](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/pbu49_99.doc)
- Aspects of Safety in Science Laboratories in Second Level Schools (M24/04) [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/M24\\_04.doc](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/M24_04.doc)
- Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for Post-Primary Schools (0062/2006) [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/cl0062\\_2006.doc](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/cl0062_2006.doc)
- Construction Studies [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/lc\\_design\\_communications\\_tg\\_2009.pdf?language=EN](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/lc_design_communications_tg_2009.pdf?language=EN)
- Construction technical guidance documents (Technical Guidance Documents) <http://www.education.ie/robots/view.jsp?pcategory=17216&language=EN&ecategory=54380&link=link001&doc=50431>
- Contingency Planning in the Context of a National Emergency - Circular to Management Authorities of Primary and Post-Primary Schools and Third Level Institutes (PBU04/04) [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/pbu04\\_04.doc](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/pbu04_04.doc)
- Design and Communication Graphics
- Educational Tours by School Groups (both inside and outside the State) (circular letter M20/04) [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/ppm20\\_04.doc](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/ppm20_04.doc)
- Furniture and Equipment lists (Department of Education and Science - Information By Topic) <http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?pcategory=17216&ecategory=50521&language=EN>
- Guidelines on Violence in Schools (circular letter M18/99) [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/ppc18\\_99.doc](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/ppc18_99.doc)
- Health & Safety Matters - Management of Mould (0088/2006) [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/cl0088\\_2006.doc](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/cl0088_2006.doc)
- Insurance Arrangements for pupils on Work Experience Modules in Community/Comprehensive Schools (0148/2006) [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/cl0148\\_2006.doc](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/cl0148_2006.doc)
- Introduction of Occupational Health Service for Teachers (0065/2008) [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/cl0065\\_2008.doc](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/cl0065_2008.doc)
- Prohibition on Smoking in all workplaces (M25/04) [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/m25\\_04.doc](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/m25_04.doc)
- Radon Mitigation for schools (circular letter M46/01) [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/m46\\_01.doc](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/m46_01.doc)
- Report of the Working Group on the weight of schoolbags (Department of Education and Science, 1998) [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/des\\_report\\_of\\_weight\\_of\\_schoolbags.pdf?language=EN](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/des_report_of_weight_of_schoolbags.pdf?language=EN)
- Responding to Critical Incidents, Advice and Information Pack for Schools, National Educational Psychological Service <http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?pcategory=33437&ecategory=33450&language=EN>
- Clarification Concerning Circular Letter PBU5/2005 - Review of Occupational Safety and Health in the Technologies in Post-Primary Schools (0085/2006) [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/cl0085\\_2006.doc](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/cl0085_2006.doc)
- Weight of Schoolbags (M35/05) [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/m35\\_05.doc](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/m35_05.doc)
- Weight of Schoolbags (M41/98) [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/m41\\_98.doc](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/m41_98.doc)
- Wood Dust Extraction Systems in Second Level Schools (M45/01) [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/m45\\_01.doc](http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/m45_01.doc)

# Health and Safety Authority

Download free of charge from [www.hsa.ie/publications](http://www.hsa.ie/publications).

## Construction

- Approved Form (AF1) - particulars to be notified by the Client to the Health and Safety Authority before the design process begins
- Clients in Construction - Best Practice Guidance
- Guide for Clients involved in Construction Projects
- Guidelines on the Procurement, Design and Management Requirements of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2006
- Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Work at Height) Regulations 2006
- Safety with Asbestos
- Safe Use of Work Platforms/Trestles
- Safety and Health on Construction Projects - The Role of Clients (P84) - Guide for Clients involved in Construction Projects
- Use Ladders Safely - Information Sheet
- Work at Height Regulations - Information Sheet

## Ergonomics

- Back Pain - Poster
- Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at work (General Application) Regulations 2007, Chapter 5 of Part 2: Display Screen Equipment
- Ergonomics in the Workplace
- Get a Grip - Stop Slips and Trips
- Guidance on the Management of Manual Handling in the Workplace
- Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations: Manual Handling - Chapter 4 of Part 2
- Manual Handling Risk Assessment Case Studies (DVD)
- Prevention of Slips, Trips and Falls in the Workplace - Information Sheet

## First-Aid

- Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, Chapter 2 of Part 7: First-Aid

## General:

- Incident Report Form (IR1) - *report online or request a hard copy from Health and Safety Authority*
- A Short Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- A Strategy for the Prevention of Workplace Accidents, Injuries and Illnesses (2004-2009)
- Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work, 2007
- Dignity at Work Charter Poster English & Irish - A4 Size 2007
- Employees with Disabilities
- Form of Notice of Dangerous Occurrence (IR3)
- Guidance for Directors and Senior Managers on their Responsibilities for Workplace Safety and Health

- Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- Guidelines on Occupational Dermatitis
- Guidelines on Risk Assessments and Safety Statements
- Guidelines on Safety Representatives and Safety Consultation
- Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Applications) Regulations 2007
- Obligatory Safety Signs
- Violence at Work
- Workplace Health and Well Being Strategy
- Work Positive Pack
- Workplace Safety and Health Management

### **Pregnant Employees**

- Protection of Pregnant, Post-Natal and Breastfeeding Employees

### **Safety on Farms - teaching aids**

- Children and Safety on Farms
- Children's Book - Stay Safe on the Farm with Jessy
- Child Safety on the Farm - Information Sheet
- Code of Practice on Preventing Accidents to Children & Young Persons in Agriculture
- Play Safe, Stay Safe on the Farm
- Slán Sábháilte ar an bhFeirm le Jessy

### **Work Experience**

- Safety and health matters for pupils embarking on work experience - A short guide for teachers

### **Workplace Transport**

- Workplace Transport Checklist
- Workplace Transport Safety - Management Information Sheet
- Workplace Transport Safety - Reversing Vehicles Information Sheet
- Workplace Transport Safety - Safe Driver Information Sheet
- Workplace Transport Safety - Safe Workplace Information Sheet

### **Working with Chemicals**

- Carbon Monoxide - Information Sheet
- Guidelines on Occupational Asthma
- Legionnaires Disease - Information Sheet
- Risk Assessment of Chemical Hazards

## State Claims Agency

Download free of charge from [www.stateclaims.ie](http://www.stateclaims.ie).

- Guidelines for Principals and Boards of Management on Managing Mould Growth in State Buildings
- Guidelines for School Cleaning Staff on Managing Mould Growth in State Buildings
- Guidelines for School Maintenance Staff on Managing Mould Growth in State Buildings

## Second Level Support Service

- Safety in School Science, Department of Education and Science, 1996
- Safety in the School Laboratory - Disposal of Chemicals, Department of Education and Science, 1996
- Technology Support Service [www.t4.ie](http://www.t4.ie)
- School Development and Planning Initiative [www.sdpi.ie](http://www.sdpi.ie)
- Second Level Support Service [www.slss.ie](http://www.slss.ie)

## Legislation

- Building Control Acts 1990 and 2007
- Civil Liability and Courts Act 2004
- Education Act 1998
- Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003
- Occupiers' Liability Act 1995
- National Treasury Management Agency (Amendment) Act 2000
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Chemical Agents) Regulations 2001
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2006
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007
- 2007 Code of Practice for the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Chemical Agents) Regulations 2001

## UK Resources:

Note: These resources are compliant with UK legislation which differs from Irish law in terms of duties of care. However, you may find some of the links useful as examples of good practice.

- Adventure Activities Licensing Authority
- Health and Safety Executive: education, information sources and guidance - [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
- Watch your Step in Education - Health and Safety Executive
- Health and Safety Executive link to Guidelines on school trips [www.hse.gov.uk/schooltrips](http://www.hse.gov.uk/schooltrips)
- Safety and Health of Pupils on Educational Visits - Department for Education and Skills
- Safety and Health on Educational Excursions: A Good Practice Guide - Scottish Executive Publications
- The Association for Physical Education (UK) [www.afpe.org.uk](http://www.afpe.org.uk)
- Safe Practice in Physical Education and School Sport, Association for Physical Education
- Teacher net website: [www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthandsafety](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthandsafety) includes information on:
  - Safety and health on educational visits
  - Managing medicines in schools
  - First-aid for schools
  - Safe practice in PE
  - School security
  - Coping with the sudden death of a pupil
  - Rights of way through school premises
  - Other safety and health material
  - Emergency planning