European Bank
for Reconstruction and Development

Environmental and social risk management briefing note – health and safety

Environmental and social risk management toolkit for financial intermediaries

June 2026

Introduction

Globally, it is estimated that 340 million occupational accidents occur every year, with many of those injuries in low-risk environments.[1] Many accidents also occur while employees are travelling for business or visiting other premises.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is committed to promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development and recognises the importance of managing occupational safety and health (OSH). It sets out its OSH requirements in Environmental and Social Requirement 4 (ESR 4) of its Environmental and Social Policy.[2] ESR 4 also recognises that providing safe, healthy and secure working environments should be underpinned by respect for, and promotion of, the fundamental principles and rights of workers, as guided by the International Labour Organization (ILO) *Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*.[3]

Financial intermediaries (FIs) are required to comply with the relevant OSH requirements of ESR 4. This toolkit provides briefing notes on how FIs can meet those requirements by implementing preventative and protective measures to prevent injury and ill health.

This toolkit is aimed at all of those who have responsibilities for OSH, such as senior managers, office or line managers, and other employees who may be assigned OSH roles or responsibilities. It outlines good international practice on managing OSH but does not constitute or replace legal advice. The EBRD strongly encourages FIs to seek information from national authorities to ensure the contents of this toolkit do not conflict with or contradict any local requirements.

Hazards

A hazard can be anything that has the potential to cause harm. Sometimes, it can be unique to your business and is not always obvious. You should carry out an assessment of your organisation to identify these hazards, who might be at risk of harm, and how. For most environments, such as offices, hazards can be categorised into four main groups:

- chemical – for example, cleaning fluids
- biological – for example, Covid-19
- physical – for example, violence, noise
- psychosocial – for example, workplace stress.

It can be difficult to identify hazards and you should look at the equipment used by employees and at the conditions in your workplace to identify all activities that are carried out.

Risks

A risk is the likelihood that a person may suffer an injury or ill health because of a hazard. Where the likelihood is high, it is important that controls are put in place to reduce the risk of harm to an acceptable level. For example, using a small trolley for transporting a box of paper is safer than manually carrying the box. A hazard will always exist unless totally removed, but the risk of harm can be reduced.

Controls

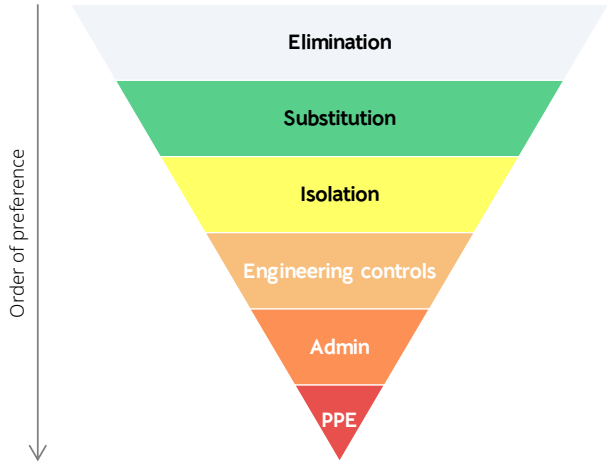
Any significant hazard with a risk of harm must be reviewed and controlled. The method of control will depend on the hazard, although any approach should use the hierarchy of risk control.

1 See ILO (n.d.).

2 See EBRD (2024), pp 51-59.

3 See ILO (2022).

Figure 1. Hierarchy of risk control



Control measures should be selected in the above order of preference. Ideally, elimination should be the goal, but this is not always practical, so you should always work down through the list. If personal protective equipment (PPE) is selected, this should ideally be used in tandem with other controls, as PPE is a control of last resort.

Common office hazards

Some hazards typical to FIs are listed below. These will help in assessing the risks within your workplace.

Fire safety

Most fires are preventable with the right control measures and behaviours. A fire requires three elements to burn, so removing one of the elements will reduce the risk of fire. These elements are:

- a source of ignition – for example, heaters, electrical equipment, smoking materials
- a source of fuel – for example, paper, furniture, rubbish, plastic
- a source of oxygen – for example, the air.

To reduce the risk of fire in your workplace, carry out a fire risk assessment and look for all these elements. Good practice measures include:

- keeping ignition sources away from sources of fuel
- ensuring coats or other objects are not stored above heaters
- ensuring good housekeeping by emptying bins at the end of each workday
- checking to make sure fire doors are not locked, blocked or propped open.

Think about what would happen if a fire did occur:

- How would a fire be detected?
- Is the correct firefighting equipment available?
- Are exits and escape routes clearly marked, showing direction, and unobstructed?
- Are fire drills conducted and is appropriate fire awareness training given to employees?

Case study

A new building had a dedicated server room designed on a lower floor, which was kept locked. The room was only accessible by the information technology (IT) team. Fire detection equipment was in place, but when a server overheated and a fire occurred, it did not activate. Employees could not unlock the door to try to put out the fire. An alarmed emergency key box next to the door would have allowed access to the room to tackle the fire earlier and perhaps prevented the situation from escalating.

Electrical risks

Devices such as computers, heaters, kettles, fridges or vacuum cleaners are potential electrical hazards that may cause electric shocks or burns, or which may overheat, causing fires. Electrical sockets, switches and lighting units are hazards and should be inspected and tested regularly. All faulty equipment should be promptly removed. You should make sure that all electrical equipment is in a safe condition and only used for its intended purpose.

Periodic checks of plugs, sockets and cables can identify any defects or faults and confirm that electrical equipment is safe to use. It is good practice to inspect electrical equipment every year, or when it is relocated to other areas. It is also a good idea to place a small sticker on equipment showing when it was last checked and by whom. Any person inspecting equipment should be appropriately qualified. For electrical installations, you should check who is responsible. Any fixed wiring should also be inspected and tested periodically by a qualified electrician. To maintain a safe workplace:

- make employees aware of how to use electrical equipment safely
- immediately stop using equipment that is faulty, take it out of service and inform the office manager
- switch off electrical equipment when not in use and before cleaning
- tuck cables away so they are not damaged or do not become a trip hazard.

Consider checking any electrical equipment brought into the workplace and confirming that it is safe.

Slip, trip and fall hazards

Statistics have shown that most slips, trips and falls happen on the same level. These can be easily avoided by introducing regular workplace inspections and taking immediate action when hazards are found. Common hazards include:

- electrical cables trailing along floors
- bags, boxes or other obstacles placed in walkways
- bottom drawers of desks left open
- wet floors caused by spills in kitchens or toilets, or rain brought in at the building's entrance
- loose or wrinkled carpets or mats not fixed to floors
- unpredictable or uneven steps or changes in walking levels
- areas of poor lighting.

You should regularly inspect all areas of your workplace to identify hazards and any risks of slipping, tripping or falling. Keep a record of your findings, what action needs to be taken and by whom.

Employees need to be made aware of how and when to report any concerns if they cannot easily act themselves to remove the risk. This includes making others aware of the hazard while they report the unsafe conditions.

Good workplace housekeeping can reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls. You should remove clutter from walkways, tuck away cables around desks, clear up spills immediately and make others aware of wet or slippery surfaces using temporary signs. Promptly replace faulty lighting units or bulbs. Also consider sensor lighting in the workplace to reduce energy costs and avoid the need to search for light switches in the dark.

Look at the floor surface in poor weather conditions and ensure that employees wear appropriate footwear while at work.

Manual handling

Workers carrying, lifting, pushing, pulling or supporting any loads by hand or bodily force can suffer injuries if not done correctly. Lifting small loads awkwardly or moving items like office furniture can result in serious and often long-term injuries. Injuries can include back and joint pain, sprains, bruises and cuts.

Manual handling should be avoided where possible. When it is not, you should assess the risk of injury and introduce controls. This should include providing employees with information, instruction and training on how to lift safely. When assessing any task, you should look at the:

- task – see if this can be avoided, for example, have printer paper delivered directly to a storage area next to a printer
- load – check the weight of the load, whether it exceeds safe limits, whether the object is awkward or has sharp edges
- working environment – whether walkways are clear, unobstructed and well lit
- capabilities of individuals – consider workers' physical capability and any individual factors that may increase the risk of injury. Avoid relying on generic weight limits alone; the risk assessment should consider the weight, size and stability of the load, lifting frequency and duration, posture, carrying distance and working environment
- allocation – who should carry out manual handling tasks, considering employees with existing injuries or those at greater risk
- pace – ensure work takes place at safe speeds and does not place employees at greater risk.

Please review EU Directive 90/269/EEC on the safe manual handling of loads.[4]

First aid

Employees suffering an injury at work or falling ill need immediate attention. You should have adequate procedures and provisions in place to deal with common conditions. These will depend on the hazards in your workplace and the number of employees.

Carry out a first-aid needs assessment to confirm what you need. This will require you to explore the following:

- what the hazards are – for example, cleaning liquids, hot surfaces, electrical equipment
- who is at risk – for example, cleaners, maintenance workers, office staff, visitors
- how they are at risk – for example, trips, cuts, burns, electric shocks
- the size of your organisation – you need to check whether local requirements stipulate the number of trained first aiders you need for the size of the workforce.

4 See EU (1990).

Your assessment should identify:

- what and how many first aid kits you may need
- whether these kits are checked regularly to confirm they are restocked and that items have not expired
- whether you need specific first-aid equipment, such as an automated external defibrillator (AED), eye washes, burns kits and so on
- how many first aiders you require and what training they need to take charge of any situation.

Communicate your first-aid arrangements to your employees, especially the names of first aiders. A photo at the entrance or next to printers is good practice, as well as green first-aid signs to indicate where first-aid kits and equipment are located.

Where workers are exposed to high occupational risks, the organisation should review whether national insurance systems provide adequate and accessible coverage and benefits. Where significant gaps exist, appropriate group personal accident insurance should be provided.

Housekeeping

To identify hazards and control risks, employees should be informed of the importance of good housekeeping. This includes tidying away any cables at their workstations, maintaining safe storage areas, ensuring clear walkways and packing away equipment not in use.

A daily safety tour of the workplace to inspect areas will help you confirm good housekeeping or identify any areas that need attention. During any safety tour, you should check that:

- rubbish bins are emptied at the end of each working day
- walkways and traffic routes are clear, dry and unobstructed
- individual workstations, kitchen areas, rest areas and cloakrooms are clean and sanitary.

Make sure all employees are aware that they should report any housekeeping concerns.

Gender-related OSH risks

Risk assessments should consider whether hazards or control measures may affect workers differently because of sex or gender. This should include physical, physiological and psychological factors and consideration of work activities, equipment, tools, PPE, welfare facilities, lone working, business travel and exposure to violence and harassment.

Control measures should ensure that no worker is placed at greater risk because equipment, workplace arrangements or protective measures have not been designed or selected appropriately for their needs.

Psychosocial risks, workplace stress and mental health

Organisations should identify and assess psychosocial hazards and risks as part of their overall OSH risk-assessment process. These may arise from excessive or unpredictable workloads, long or irregular working hours, lack of role clarity or control, organisational change, bullying, harassment, discrimination, lone working, exposure to distressing events or interactions, and other work-related factors.

Demands placed on employees can result in unnecessary pressure. Although a certain amount of pressure may be expected in certain jobs, excessive pressure can result in feelings of stress. The experience of stress can differ between individuals, but work-related stress is often associated with:

- not being in control of your workload
- high work demands with little clarity of responsibility
- concerns about job retrenchment
- bullying and harassment
- having to deal with difficult work relationships
- workplace discrimination
- poor line management and a lack of support.

Work-related stress can affect the organisation and result in:

- high sickness and absenteeism
- high employee turnover
- poor timekeeping, performance and productivity
- low employee morale and motivation
- an increase in complaints and accidents.

Work-related stress and other psychosocial risks can be prevented and managed through measures such as:

- establishing relevant policies and procedures
- training line managers to identify and manage work-related stress and psychosocial risks
- conducting anonymous workplace surveys to identify employee concerns

- providing confidential mechanisms for workers to raise mental-health and psychosocial concerns without fear of retaliation
- arranging appropriate employee support services.

Organisations should take a structured approach to protecting and promoting workers' mental health and well-being. Appropriate preventive measures should be implemented to reduce work-related stressors, and suitable support should be available where mental-health or psychosocial concerns are identified. Organisations should also promote awareness of mental health and well-being across the workplace.

As part of this broader approach, the EBRD has developed online e-learning courses on mental health and well-being in the workplace. These courses support organisations and workers in identifying, managing and raising awareness of mental health and well-being issues and are freely available through the EBRD E-Learning Platform.[5]

Display screen equipment

Employees within your organisation are likely to use computers, laptops or similar equipment for long periods of time, either in the office or at home. The use of this equipment, often termed display screen equipment (DSE), can place employees at risk of fatigue, eye strain, upper limb problems and back pain if not appropriately managed.

All employees using DSE should have a workstation assessment carried out. This will check that:

- posture and sitting positions are correct
- employees have (and use) the right equipment
- employees take regular breaks.

The correct sitting position and good posture can help prevent long-term health effects, and all employees should set up their DSE with the following in mind:

- The top of the screen should be level with the user's eyes, an arm's length away from the screen.
- Users should relax their shoulders and sit high enough to avoid rolling their shoulders.
- The keyboard should be positioned slightly below elbow height.
- The keyboard and screen should be central, directly in front of the user.
- Seat height should support both the front and the back of the thighs equally.
- The seat should have good lower back support.

Laptop users should have a separate keyboard and mouse and elevate their screen on a laptop riser or similar device.

Breaks

You should familiarise yourself with local legal requirements as to breaks. It is good practice to take frequent short breaks rather than infrequent long breaks. For example, 10 minutes each hour is better than 20 minutes every two hours. Breaks should be taken away from the workstation so that employees can change their posture and stretch.

Training

Employees should carry out DSE training and be provided with OSH information. This should include:

- correct posture when working
- arranging and positioning equipment at your workstation
- adjusting screen and lighting
- risk-assessment arrangements
- breaks and changes in activities
- how to report any problems.

Any arrangements introduced at work should also apply to those who work from home.

Bullying, violence and harassment

Identifying workplace bullying, violence and harassment (BVH) is not always easy, and it is important that signs are identified at the earliest opportunity. Not promptly dealing with BVH events can result in unnecessary workplace stress, low morale, increased absenteeism and legal cases.

BVH can include:

- spreading malicious rumours
- calling names or teasing
- deliberately excluding or isolating
- aggressive behaviour – physical and verbal
- unworkable deadlines
- using a position of power to undermine or create fear

5 See EBRD E-Learning Platform (n.d.).

- unwanted and unwelcomed physical contact and verbal comments or insults
- offensive language.

Unwanted behaviour can be physical, visual or verbal and creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Such behaviour often focuses on an employee's gender, age, disability, political opinions, nationality, race, religious beliefs or sexual orientation. To manage BVH, you should implement measures such as:

- establishing a policy and setting out a clear statement to demonstrate commitment
- providing training to managers and supervisors to ensure they are aware of acceptable behaviour and can identify BVH and how to deal with it
- developing and implementing a grievance procedure to allow formal and confidential reporting to management to deal with any concerns raised by employees.

FI employees may be at greater risk of exposure to violence. Robberies and other violent incidents by strangers and intruders may require additional security measures, such as personal alarms, to prevent physical violence.

It is good practice to offer an employee assistance programme (EAP) that can provide free and confidential counselling to your employees following any BVH cases. This can help with any psychological effects the employee may experience.

Travel safety

All work-related travel should be assessed, regardless of the method of travel. The assessment should be proportionate to the nature of the journey, destination and risks involved, and should take account of individual circumstances, including any gender-related safety or security risks. Before planning work-related travel, consider:

- Is the travel necessary, or could the activity be carried out remotely?
- Are there any individual circumstances that may increase the risks associated with the journey, including lone working, unfamiliar locations or gender-related security concerns?
- What hazards may arise during the journey and at the destination?
- Could the worker be exposed to physical harm, violence, harassment or other inappropriate behaviour?
- Are additional measures needed because of the time, destination, transport method or nature of the work?

Plan the journey and consider all stages of travel, including:

- method – for example, private or company vehicle, taxi, bus or train
- time – for example, night-time, early morning, peak travel periods or adverse weather
- route – for example, rural, urban, remote or higher-risk locations
- communication – for example, maintaining contact with the office and arrangements for raising an alarm in an emergency
- premises – for example, hazards at offices, client premises, construction sites or other workplaces.

Methods of travel

Where workers use a private vehicle for work, organisations should establish appropriate minimum vehicle-safety requirements. Vehicles should be safe to drive, well maintained and insured for their intended use. Workers should be required to wear seat belts and comply with applicable road-safety requirements.

Drivers should not use handheld mobile phones or other devices while driving. Organisations should also discourage other forms of avoidable driver distraction, including unnecessary telephone conversations while driving, even where hands-free technology is available.

Where the organisation owns or leases vehicles, arrangements should be in place for regular inspection and preventive maintenance. Driving standards should be monitored and appropriate systems should be established to identify and address unsafe driving behaviour.

Where vehicles or fleets include passenger or goods vehicles, appropriate driver-safety training should be provided. Driving and working hours should also be managed and, where appropriate, monitored to prevent driver fatigue.

When selecting new vehicles for organisational use, safety performance should be considered as part of the selection criteria.

Where taxis or other hired transport are used, organisations should use appropriately licensed and reputable providers wherever practicable. Where booking arrangements allow, the vehicle registration and driver details should be available to the worker or organisation.

Travel risk assessments should take account of gender-related security and harassment risks. Where additional risks are identified, appropriate measures should be agreed with the affected worker. These may include the choice of transport provider, timing of travel, accompaniment arrangements, enhanced communication measures or other suitable controls.

Time

Consider whether the timing of travel may increase risk. Where practicable, avoid travel during periods of severe weather, at times when road or personal-security risks are significantly higher, or during other conditions that may adversely affect safety.

Where night-time or early-morning travel is necessary, additional control measures may be required. The time of year and major local events – such as sporting events, demonstrations or large public gatherings – may also affect travel conditions and should be considered where relevant.

Travel arrangements should provide adequate opportunity for rest. Workers should not be expected to drive where fatigue may impair their ability to do so safely.

Route

Review planned routes to identify potential hazards. Risks may differ between urban, rural and remote environments and can include poor road conditions, limited lighting, severe weather, lack of communications coverage, security concerns or travelling in areas with a known history of road traffic incidents or crime.

Alternative routes or other control measures should be identified where significant risks are present.

Communications

Workers should have an appropriate means of communication so they can obtain assistance or raise an alarm in an emergency. Consider mobile-phone signal coverage, battery capacity and the need for alternative communication arrangements where coverage may be unreliable.

For higher-risk or lone travel, appropriate check-in arrangements should be agreed in advance. These may include periodic contact with the office or another nominated person.

Where location-sharing or tracking applications are used, workers should be informed about their purpose and use, and workers' privacy should be respected. Such systems should normally be activated for travel-related safety purposes rather than used for routine monitoring.

Where relevant, contact details for the destination, host organisation or persons the worker intends to meet should be available so that contact can be made if concerns arise.

Premises

Consider the hazards that may be present at client or other third-party premises. Risks may be relatively low in an office environment but considerably higher at construction sites, industrial facilities, warehouses or other operational locations.

Workers should obtain relevant OSH information before visiting higher-risk premises, where practicable, and should receive an appropriate site induction on arrival. They should comply with applicable site rules and use any required PPE.

Workers should also be able to stop an activity or leave an area where they reasonably believe there is an imminent and serious risk to their health or safety. They should also be able to report unsafe conditions without fear of retaliation.

Following the travel assessment, determine what controls are already in place and what additional measures may be needed to protect workers during travel and while visiting other premises. These measures should be proportionate to the level of risk and communicated to the worker before travel.

For higher-risk or lone travel, the arrangements may include an appointed contact or "travel buddy" who is aware of the travel plan and can check on the worker's welfare. Where justified by the risk assessment, additional personal-security measures may also be provided.

Workplace facilities and worker welfare

All workplaces should have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the OSH of all employees. This should include arrangements for the maintenance of workplaces and equipment. It should also include adequate welfare facilities, such as toilets, washbasins, drinking water and so on for the number of employees in your workplace.

Ventilation systems must provide fresh, clean, uncontaminated air to the workplace. Where these systems are mechanical, they should be checked and tested periodically by qualified engineers.

Temperatures should ensure thermal comfort for all. Due to the nature of work in an office building, workplace temperatures should not fall below 16°C (61°F).

Lighting should be provided so workers can move around the workplace safely. Separate lighting may be required at individual workstations. Independently powered automatic emergency lighting should also be made available in the event of a loss of power.

Cleaning arrangements should ensure all walkways, furniture and fittings are kept clean. Door handles, light switches and similar objects that are touched frequently should be sanitised regularly to reduce the risk of infection. Rubbish should be segregated, placed into appropriate bins and emptied at the end of each working day. Food waste should be separated and disposed of appropriately to avoid blocking sinks or attracting rodents.

Workspaces should not prevent employees moving around safely and should provide sufficient space to work. It is good practice to ensure employees have at least 11 cubic metres of space at their workstations.

Preventive maintenance arrangements should be in place, along with arrangements to deal promptly with breakdowns, to ensure all equipment and facilities are kept in good, safe condition. Any defects or damage should be reported immediately and not create a risk to employees.

Floors and walkways need to be kept clear, unobstructed and in a good state of repair to prevent any slips, trips or falls.

Any translucent or transparent surfaces, such as glass doors and windows, should be made of safety materials and clearly marked to prevent accidental contact.

Windows, skylights and other similar openings should be easy to open, but should not cause any accidental falls.

Where an organisation provides sleeping accommodation for workers or visitors in connection with their work, arrangements should ensure structural safety and reasonable standards of decency, hygiene, comfort, ventilation and temperature control. Accommodation should be managed in accordance with good international practice, non-discrimination and equal-opportunity principles, with appropriate safeguards against sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence and harassment. Workers' freedom of movement to and from employer-provided accommodation should not be unreasonably restricted.

OSH management

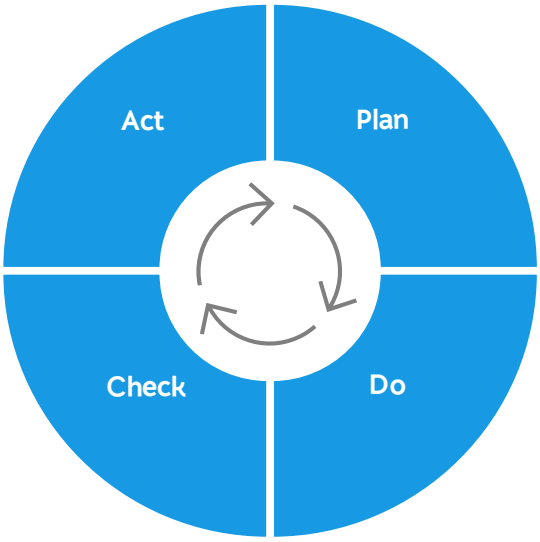
Effective OSH management requires a structured and systematic approach that is proportionate to the nature and level of risks associated with the organisation's activities. An OSH management system should provide a framework for identifying hazards, assessing risks, implementing appropriate preventive and protective measures, assigning responsibilities, consulting workers, monitoring performance and taking corrective action where necessary.

Effective OSH arrangements can provide a range of benefits, including:

- preventing accidents, incidents and work-related ill health
- reducing the risk of legal, financial and operational consequences
- improving productivity and organisational performance
- strengthening worker confidence and participation
- demonstrating corporate responsibility
- supporting continuous improvement in OSH performance
- protecting the organisation's reputation among workers, clients and other stakeholders.

A practical way of structuring OSH management is through the plan – do – check – act (PDCA approach).

Figure 2. PDCA OSH management model



The PDCA model is globally recognised and considered good international practice for managing OSH. The model can be used by large and small organisations to help incorporate OSH into day-to-day management arrangements.

Plan

At this stage, two main areas should be covered:

- developing policy
- planning for implementation.

Policy

Policy aims to set out your approach to OSH, establish your objectives and set your organisational goals.

Planning

Planning aims to identify where the organisation currently is and where it needs to be. To help you with this stage, you should consider the following:

- How is your organisation intending to control risks created by your business?
- What are the most suitable controls for managing risks?
- Do you need some specific safety equipment or advice?
- What emergency procedures are needed?
- What training do employees require?
- Do employees require any PPE?

While planning for implementation, you should check that your plans align with your policy.

Do

This stage aims to put your policy and plans into action. The main areas you should consider at this stage are summarised below.

Risk assessment

Carry out a risk assessment to identify hazards, who might be at harm and how, what control measures are in place and what further measures are needed. You should consider all events that may occur. Look at previous events within your organisation, but also learn from others. Typical events may include first aid (injury, heart attack, stroke and so on), fire, earthquake, terrorism, flooding or robbery.

A video to help you undertake a risk assessment is available from the British Health and Safety Executive (HSE).[6]

Organising

You will need to assign roles and responsibilities to certain employees to help with the implementation of your OSH management system. This may include the appointment of a competent OSH professional to provide you with OSH guidance and advice.

Implementation

You will need to implement your plans, ensuring that any control measures identified in your risk assessment are put in place, procedures are developed and followed, and training is provided to employees. It is important to ensure that all employees receive OSH training so they are aware of workplace hazards, risks to their health and safety, and what control measures are necessary.

You should carry out an OSH training needs assessment to identify what OSH training is required for what roles. Typical training may include first aid, fire safety awareness, managing OSH and, if food is being handled in your workplace, food safety. For those with more detailed responsibilities, training related to managing OSH in the workplace may also be required.

OSH training should be delivered by a competent and qualified professional, with refresher training provided periodically. You should review your OSH training needs regularly and identify whether any new or additional OSH training is needed due to changes in your working environment or lessons from accidents or incidents.

Contractor management

Where contractors undertake work on behalf of the organisation, the organisation should assess the OSH risks associated with the work and the contractor's capability to manage those risks.

For higher-risk activities, such as building maintenance, refurbishment, electrical works, security or other technical services, this should include reviewing the contractor's OSH standards, previous OSH performance, competence and proposed arrangements before appointment, wherever practicable.

Contractor OSH performance should subsequently be monitored at a frequency proportionate to the level of risk, and appropriate corrective action should be taken where deficiencies are identified.

Emergency plans

When preparing for an emergency or writing your emergency plans, you should consider:

- What are the likely emergency events your organisation may experience?
- Where are your exit routes and safe areas?
- What are your plans for evacuating the building?
- How will you communicate with employees during an event and what training do employees require?
- What roles and responsibilities do you need to assign to help administer your plans?
- What exercises and drills are needed?
- How and when will you review and update your plans?

6 See HSE (2020).

Important note: Employees should only tackle a fire if it is safe to do so and they have been trained in the use of firefighting equipment.

Check

Once arrangements have been implemented, you will need to undertake regular checks to ensure they are working and performing as expected. You can do this by:

- undertaking regular inspections of the workplace and work equipment
- observing employees undertaking any manual work to ensure they are carrying out tasks safely
- periodically checking workstations to ensure they are set up correctly
- testing equipment such as water systems, heating units, ventilation and air-conditioning systems regularly to confirm they are performing correctly and pose no risk to employees' health
- checking employees have been provided with OSH information and have received OSH training relevant to the risks to which they are exposed
- checking incident and accident reports and learning opportunities and what actions need to be taken to prevent recurrence.

Where OSH arrangements are not in place or not performing as planned, they should be brought to the attention of the relevant person, such as the office manager, and action should be taken immediately to prevent the risk of injury or ill health.

The organisation should establish a workplace OSH committee with balanced representation of management and elected workplace representatives. Representation should be diverse and inclusive. The committee should facilitate communication, consultation and cooperation on OSH matters and contribute, as appropriate, to risk assessments, accident and incident investigations, the development of safe systems of work and review of workplace equipment and controls.

Act

Lastly, you should evaluate your OSH performance to confirm that plans are being implemented correctly and that you are meeting the commitments stated in your OSH policy.

During the "act" stage, you may identify areas of your OSH system that are not performing as they should or some opportunities to improve your OSH. You may also require some further OSH arrangements due to recent changes within your organisation that have introduced new risks to your employees, or to lessons you might have learnt after previous accidents or incidents.

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