
Your handbook for advanced workplace health and safety



We are Vita Safety

Experts in health and safety consulting for diverse industries including schools, charities, housing associations and businesses.

Whether enhancing existing safety protocols or developing new strategies from scratch, we bring over a decade of specialised expertise to every project.

Our approach combines real-world experience with strategic insights to deliver practical yet innovative solutions tailored to each client's unique needs.

We prioritise a comprehensive view, making sure that every aspect of health and safety is managed with precision and foresight, so our solutions are both effective and sustainable.

Proud

Integrity-driven

Respectful

Ambitious



Master workplace health and safety

Discover all you need to know about the most important and relevant topics within Health and Safety today.

Through expert led information and case studies, our learning pack consolidates essential insights into workplace health and safety, including:

- Fire Safety
- ISO 45001
- Stress and mental wellbeing

Feel confident in your health and safety practices with our toolkit at your fingertips. It's your reference to ensure your operations align with industry standards and best practices. Uphold a safe and compliant work environment that works for you and your employees.



Fire Safety in the workplace

There were **7,649** workplace fires between 2022 and 2023 ([Morgan Clark](#)). Despite the figure decreasing in recent years, accidents still happen.

However, in most cases fires and their consequences can be avoided if the Responsible Person has carried out the correct procedures.

With a Responsible Person managing workplace fire safety, you can drastically lower the likelihood of fires. This means fewer workplace disruptions and potential legal liabilities, safeguarding your business against costly fines and lawsuits.

Who is a Responsible Person?

According to the [Fire Safety Act 2021](#), the Responsible Person oversees fire safety within the workplace. It is a legal requirement to appoint one. They play a crucial part in ensuring a safe and secure work environment. If there's more than one Responsible Person, they work together to meet responsibilities.

Typically, this role is assumed **by the employer**. It can also be the building owner or occupier. Sometimes fire safety duties are shared among several individuals or groups within a premises.

How does a Responsible Person manage fire safety in the workplace?

To manage fire safety in the workplace, the Responsible Person must adhere to the following duties as mandated by the updated Fire Safety Act of 2021:

Carry out fire risk assessments

Your Responsible Person must carry out a [fire risk assessment](#) of the premises and review it regularly. This assessment identifies potential fire hazards, who's at risk, and the quality of existing fire safety measures. You could be surrounded by fire hazards without knowing.

Implement necessary fire safety measures

Your Responsible Person needs to make sure your workplace has fire alarms, emergency lights and portable extinguishing equipment, accompanied by informational or directional signs.

These measures should be tested periodically, typically every 6 or 12 months for the fire alarm and emergency lighting, and annually for portable extinguishing equipment. All emergency exits should be easily identifiable and always accessible with no obstructions.



Create a fire safety plan

Assigning plans for preventing fires and what to do in the event of a fire is a key duty. The Responsible Person needs to consider evacuation procedures and assembly points. They should inform your peers about fire risks and precautions and revisit these measures every 12 months to ensure they are still effective and appropriate for the premises.

Provide fire safety information and training

The Responsible Person must provide staff with fire safety information and training about evacuations, how to use fire extinguishers and what to do if the alarm goes off. Training should be revisited and ongoing throughout the year.

Collaborate with fire safety officials

It's crucial for the Responsible Person to establish and maintain communication with appropriate fire safety bodies, like the local fire and rescue services. This collaboration could involve facilitating inspections of the premises by granting access or supporting fire safety inquiries and investigations.

Ensure compliance for High-Risk Buildings

If you're an employer in higher-risk buildings — defined as having at least two residential units, being 18 meters tall, or having 7 or more storeys — it's crucial to identify and collaborate with any Accountable Persons. These typically include property managers, building owners, or managing agents responsible for the building's structural and communal area safety. Your role involves working together with these individuals or entities to uphold fire safety standards, ensuring the safety and regulatory compliance of your workplace.

The benefits of being an effective Responsible Person

Being an effective Responsible Person for fire safety ensures everyone's safety and compliance with the law. Adhering to fire safety regulations helps avoid fines and building closure. Prompt response to fire safety notices can prevent Prohibition Notices, which could temporarily shut down your business. Proper fire safety management also reduces insurance costs and minimises financial losses from potential fires, ensuring business continuity.



Elevating fire Safety at Norton Way Group

Norton Way Group are a car dealership group of companies who expanded to 40 units across the UK. Their approach to health and safety management, including fire safety, was inconsistent.

Car dealerships face a high fire risk due to the presence of flammable liquids and reactive machinery. As a company with multiple locations and diverse businesses, they needed to establish a unified standard across all their sites.

We partnered with Norton Way Group as their internal health and safety resource, helping establish a comprehensive management framework. This included periodic reviews, risk registers, work practice assessments, and training.

We produced a fire safety framework that they could implement across every business in the group. We also provided competent person skills and training for managers and leaders.

There is now a greater sense of accountability for health and safety across the business, benefiting everyone, particularly:

Business leaders: Reassured that health and safety is prioritised for the business and its people.

Management teams: Supported by a trusted advisor in implementing policies and strategies, including fire safety.

Employees: Enjoy safer, healthier working environments and know their well-being is a top priority.

Clients: Appreciate the company's focus on quality and elevated operating standards.

With the rise in electric vehicles in their workshops, we're enhancing training beyond manufacturer standards. By reviewing industries handling high-voltage products, we aim to improve technician training, driving discussions for safer practices, including fire safety, both within the company and across the industry.

“We reprioritised health and safety in all ways. Physically, by making site improvements and enhancing health and safety measures, but more importantly with the management oversight that we've put in place”.

– Jason Cranswick Managing Director



ISO 45001 is a strategic business investment

The impact of occupational injuries and diseases is profound, affecting not only employers through early retirements, staff absences and rising insurance premiums but also the wider economy.

In response to this global challenge, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) developed **ISO 45001 2018**.

What is ISO 45001?

ISO 45001 is the go-to global standard for occupational health and safety (OH&S) management systems. Think of it as a blueprint that helps organisations ramp up safety, dial down risks and boost the overall health and wellbeing of everyone at work.

Digging into ISO 45001's meaning, it's a tool that supports any sized business in any industry to create a safer, healthier environment for their people. Launched in March 2018, ISO 45001: 2018 was a major leap towards getting businesses worldwide to speak the same language when it comes to health and safety at work.

The 10 clauses of ISO 45001

The ISO 45001 standard is structured into 10 clauses that outline the requirements for an OH&S management system. These clauses provide a comprehensive framework for organisations to follow, ensuring a systematic approach to improving workplace safety and health. Here's a brief overview of each clause:

- 1. Scope:** defines standard's applicability for improving occupational health and safety.
- 2. Normative references:** lists essential documents for ISO 45001 application and consistency.

- 3. Terms and definitions:** clarifies key terms for a common understanding across the standard.
- 4. Context of the organisation:** identifies internal and external factors affecting OH&S management system effectiveness.
- 5. Leadership and worker participation:** stresses management commitment and worker involvement in the OH&S system.
- 6. Planning:** involves risk assessment, setting objectives and planning for OH&S.
- 7. Support:** identifies resources, competencies and support needed for OH&S management.
- 8. Operation:** addresses operational planning, control, and emergency response for OH&S.
- 9. Performance evaluation:** involves monitoring, measuring, and evaluating OH&S management system performance through regular audits.
- 10. Improvement:** focuses on continuous improvement and corrective actions for OH&S performance.

These clauses are all connected and work best when you see them as a whole picture for keeping workplaces healthy and safe. By following these steps, organisations can put together a strong safety system that cuts down on risks and makes a better, healthier place for everyone to work.

What to consider if you're thinking of adopting ISO 45001

Thinking about getting the ISO 45001 certification? You're taking a significant step towards making your workplace safer and healthier for everyone involved. Here's what to keep in mind:

1. Success starts at the top. You need strong support and commitment from your organisation's leadership to drive the changes and culture shift required for ISO 45001.
2. This journey includes everyone. Getting your workers involved not only enriches the process with their insights but also boosts their buy-in and participation in the system.
3. Understand what ISO 45001 asks for. Understanding the standard in detail will help you tailor your approach to meet these requirements effectively.
4. Evaluate your existing health and safety practices. Knowing where you stand helps you identify gaps and plan your route to compliance more efficiently.
5. Consider team training requirements. They need to not just understand ISO 45001 but also put it into practice and keep it running smoothly. Make sure you have the resources and support in place.
6. Embrace ISO 45001 as more than just a badge. It's about continuously enhancing workplace safety. Stay committed to regularly assessing, adjusting, and refining your practices.
7. Consider bringing in experts to significantly boost your efforts. From training and gap analysis to system implementation, external consultants can offer crucial insights and support.
8. Understand what the certification process involves. This includes the costs, time and steps you'll need to take.

Note: Not all certification providers offer the same level of service. It's advisable to engage with reputable [UKAS registered](#) certification bodies that possess a deep understanding and knowledge of their industry. Ensuring that the implementation of a management system based on ISO 45001 adds value to your business, rather than being merely a paperwork exercise, is essential.

Having an ISO 45001 certification is a clear sign that you're serious about creating a safe and healthy workplace. It's a journey worth taking, with plenty of rewards on the table

How does ISO 45001 improve your business's safety?

Adopting ISO 45001 means identifying hazards before they become problems, like spotting a spill before it causes a slip, or recognising the need for ergonomic workstations to prevent long-term injuries. It involves everyone, from the CEO committing to safety as a core value, to employees feeling empowered to voice concerns and suggestions.

You're building a culture where safety is lived and breathed, **significantly reducing accidents** and **boosting overall morale**. A school, for example, could see fewer playground accidents with updated equipment and safety protocols. Similarly, a consulting firm might notice a decline in work-related stress and physical discomfort by adopting flexible schedules and ergonomic workspaces.

ISO 45001's impact on your bottom line

An ISO 45001 certification can boost your business commercially by **reducing costs** linked to workplace accidents and **improving productivity** through a healthier work environment. It **enhances your reputation**, offering a competitive edge and helping comply with regulations, reducing risks. This standard **attracts and retains top talent**, significantly contributing to your bottom line by making your business more resilient, efficient, and attractive to stakeholders.

Samsung creates a culture of safety and productivity

Samsung SDI, the company's battery and storage system arm, prioritised worker wellbeing by [adopting ISO 45001](#).

The challenge involved upgrading from an older safety standard to ISO 45001, enhancing safety integration with the company's overall management systems. This strategy aimed to maintain Samsung SDI's high safety standards while also streamlining operations across the company.

Achieving ISO 45001 certification facilitated a cohesive strategy that combined quality, energy and environmental management standards. The outcomes included a **stronger safety culture, increased productivity, improved system integration, and a stellar safety reputation** both locally and globally, alongside a commitment to ongoing enhancement.

The company achieved zero in-house partner injuries from accidents in 2022 and received high marks on the Dow Jones Sustainability Index and Morgan Stanley Capital International ESG score.

This shows a committed approach to adopting ISO 45001 can lead to substantial benefits. It's about building a culture of safety and health that can elevate your company's reputation and give you a competitive edge.



Managing stress and mental health

76% of UK professionals feel moderate to high levels of work stress.

To build an effective health and safety strategy, we must look at the bigger picture of workplace stress and risks. Both physical and emotional.

The role of health and safety is evolving to incorporate mental health and wellbeing. It isn't just about fires and falls. Risk assessments and control measures need to be carried out to identify and manage wellbeing at work holistically.

Stress symptoms and causes

Stress is a leading workplace health hazard. It can be caused by excessive workloads, poor management processes and bullying and harassment. Rigid working hours, job insecurity, insufficient support and a lack of recognition for good performance can further exacerbate stress levels among employees.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) also highlights how stress can significantly affect an individual's quality of life, leading to various potential hazards, including:

- Prolonged psychological damage
- Impaired judgement
- Increased risk of accidents
- Substance abuse
- Physical health effects
- Sleep disturbances

A healthy and thriving workforce depends on the mitigation of these risks.

What does the law say?

Laws and regulations are in place to protect individuals and your business.

- Employers must make sure they're following the Working Time Regulations (1998). This law sets rules for factors like working long hours and breaks and maximum weekly work hours.
- The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) requires employers to protect their employees from the health, safety and welfare of their employees.
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) states all employers must undergo a 'suitable and sufficient assessment' of the risks to the health and safety of their employees at work.

This means that by law, employers must identify any risks to their employees' health. Carry out risk assessments and take steps to prevent or reduce workplace stress.



How to reduce stress through a risk assessment

Stressed employees are more likely to take time off, resulting in decreased productivity and higher costs for the company in terms of sick leave and temporary replacements.

The best way to manage workplace stress is to spot and handle possible causes early on with a **stress risk assessment**.

A workplace stress risk assessment involves identifying:

- The primary causes of stress such as increased workload and managerial pressure.
- Who is most likely to be affected by stress such as junior employees taking on more responsibility or customer-facing teams.
- Your existing processes for managing workplace stress. Do you provide 1-1's? Are there enough people on your team to manage the work?
- Those responsible for each procedure. Who oversees wellbeing at work? What processes are in place that need to be monitored?

By doing this, you're prioritising employee wellbeing. Just like how you assess other health and safety risks.

The benefits of managing workplace stress

Effectively managing workplace stress mitigates risks associated with high-pressure environments. It can also enhance employee satisfaction, mental health and productivity.

By prioritising the emotional wellbeing of employees, employers directly address the concerns of the 20% of the workforce who view 'wellbeing' as their main workplace priority.

This alignment with employee values fosters a culture of support and understanding, which, in turn, promotes resilience and reduces the adverse effects of stress. Such an approach can not only improve morale and engagement but also lead to increased focus and efficiency among staff. Heightened productivity, coupled with a supportive workplace atmosphere, attracts and retains top talent, nurturing a positive organisational culture.

In essence, effectively managing workplace stress through a focus on emotional health signifies an organisation's commitment to its employees' holistic wellbeing. Ultimately contributing to the long-term success and sustainability of the business.

Not only this, but by managing workplace stress, employees are less likely to be off work with stress.

Securing a healthy future with stress risk assessments

Stress risk assessments are invaluable, not only enhancing the wellbeing of your employees but also contributing significantly to the health and longevity of your business (and society as a whole!).

Discussing this topic, we've covered:

- How stress risk assessments are just as important as any other assessment.
- Causes and signs of stress at work.
- Legalities surrounding wellbeing at work.
- Changes in society that require a new approach to emotional health at work.
- How assessments and action can reduce the risks associated with work stress.

Prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of your employees. Take the first step towards a safer, less stressful work environment and [contact us today](#).

Principal Insurance: ensuring wellbeing and compliance

Principal Insurance is a specialist broker operating for over 12 years, insuring around 40,000 customers on motorcycles, classic cars, motorhomes and fleets of vehicles.

As the company grew, we helped facilitate change with increasing numbers of remote workers. Principal wanted to make sure that they were caring for the mental health of the people working from home. Our agile health and safety consultancy helped ensure Principal's employees were being considered and cared for, wherever they were working.

We suggested video consultations, online and check-ins with colleagues, extending occupational health considerations to include mental health and connectivity, as well as physical hazards.

For remote and hybrid workers, we helped to implement team questionnaires, ensuring that people working from home are checked in on regularly, their working environment is always optimal, and they have access to health and safety support whenever they need it.

With initial audits and surveys of the business, we helped Principal understand and implement their legal health and safety responsibilities. When setting up a business, health and safety responsibility can feel overwhelming, and important things can be missed.

“The fact that I can sleep at night because we’re doing things properly; that’s huge to me.” – Dave Bowcock, Director, Principal Insurance.



Safer workplace practices FAQ

Q: Who is a Responsible Person for fire safety?

A: A Responsible Person is legally required to manage fire safety in the workplace. This could be the employer, building owner, or occupier, responsible for overseeing and implementing fire safety measures.

Q: What are the key duties of a Responsible Person under the Fire Safety Act 2021?

A: Conduct fire risk assessments, implement necessary fire safety measures, create and maintain a fire safety plan, provide fire safety training and information and collaborate with fire safety officials.

Q: What is ISO 45001

A: ISO 45001 is a global standard for occupational health and safety management systems. It helps organisations increase safety, reduce workplace risks, and enhance health and well-being at work.

Q: How can adopting ISO 45001 impact a business?

A: It improves safety standards, reduces the risk of workplace accidents, boosts employee morale, and enhances overall productivity, potentially leading to lower insurance premiums and better compliance with regulations.

Q: What strategies can help manage workplace stress effectively?

A: Performing stress risk assessments, prioritising mental health through supportive policies and training employees in stress management practices and healthy work protocols.

Q: What are the benefits of effective stress management in the workplace?

A: Reduces health risks associated with stress, improves employee satisfaction and productivity, fosters a supportive work environment, and aligns with employee values on well-being.

Q: How can I ensure my organisation complies with current health and safety laws?

A: Regularly review and update safety protocols, ensure thorough training and information dissemination, and consult with health and safety experts like Vita Safety for compliance and best practices.

Q: How can I contact Vita Safety for more information or assistance?

A: Reach out to our team for personalised advice or to discuss implementing safety strategies. Contact us via **0161 486 5020** or **enquiries@vitasafety.com** to make your workplace as safe as possible.



Make safety a priority

With the insights from our guide to safer workplace practices, you now have the tools to strengthen your fire safety measures, leverage ISO 45001 standards, and enhance mental well-being in your organisation.

Use this valuable information to update your protocols, apply best practices, and drive meaningful improvements in your workplace safety culture.

Ready to take the next step? Reach out to our team at Vita Safety for further assistance, personalised advice, or to discuss implementing these strategies in more detail.

We're here to help you create a safer, healthier work environment that not only complies with regulations but also supports your team's wellbeing and productivity.

Contact us today on **0161 486 5020** or **enquiries@vitasafety.com** to ensure your organisation is as safe as it can be.