

FIRE SERVICES EXAMINATIONS BOARD

STUDY NOTE

EXAMINATION

SUB-OFFICERS EXAMINATION

PAPER

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

ITEM

THE WORKPLACE (HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE)
REGULATIONS 1992

STUDY NOTE No.

2309

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY NOTE

This study note has been prepared as the basis of study in connection with the qualifying examinations for promotion.

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of the information contained in the study note and understand how it should be applied:

The 'References' made at the end of the Study Note are included for information only and candidates will not be expected to study these as part of the bibliography.

THE WORKPLACE (HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE) REGULATIONS 1992

1. Introduction

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 establish minimum requirements at workplaces in or near buildings. The requirements are summarised under the following headings:

- (a) Health;
- (b) Safety; and
- (c) Welfare

They place a duty on employers to provide and maintain a safe and healthy place of work. An awareness of these regulations is important for a Sub Officer who will have responsibility for the workplace in the absence of the Station Commander, and as officer-in-charge of an incident. This study note briefly outlines these regulations

2. Definitions

“Workplace” - means - “premises or part of premises which are not domestic premises and are made available to any person as a place of work.”

The definition includes “any place within the premises to which such person has access while at work and any room, lobby, corridor, staircase, road or other place used as a means of access to or egress from the workplace or where facilities are provided for use in connection with the workplace other than a public road.”

“Premises” - means – “any place including a place out of doors. Remote outdoor workplaces are exempt except for the provisions relating to sanitary conveniences, washing facilities and drinking water.”

3. Maintenance

The regulations place a duty on employers to maintain the workplace, equipment, devices and systems to which the regulations apply in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair.

Efficient, in this context, means efficient from the view of health, safety and welfare, not productivity or economy.

(a) **Health**

(i) *Ventilation*

The regulations require effective and suitable provision for every enclosed workplace to be ventilated by a "sufficient quantity of fresh or purified air."

The fresh air supply rate should not normally fall below 5 to 8 litres per second per occupant.

(ii) *Temperature*

During working hours all workplace temperatures should be reasonable. Heating methods should not be such that injurious or offensive fumes result and there should be a sufficient number of thermometers provided to determine the temperature throughout the building.

An indication of temperature levels is given but there is an element of flexibility to cope with such factors as work involving severe physical effort, temperatures necessary to prevent food from deteriorating and work on hot processes. A normal temperature of 16° is quoted.

(iii) *Suitable and Sufficient Lighting*

All workplaces must have suitable and sufficient lighting which so far as is reasonably practicable should be by natural light. If artificial lighting is provided in rooms where lighting failure could expose the occupants to danger, suitable emergency lighting has to be provided.

(iv) *Cleanliness*

Within the workplace, furniture and fittings must be kept 'sufficiently clean.' Floors, walls and ceilings must be capable of being kept clean and so far as reasonably practicable, waste materials should not be allowed to accumulate in workplaces except in suitable receptacles.

(v) *Work Space*

There must be sufficient floor area, height and unoccupied space for purposes of health, safety and welfare in every room where persons work. If, for example, much of the room is taken up by furniture etc, this should be allowed for by providing extra space.

(vi) *Workstations and Seating*

Workstations should be arranged suitably to accommodate the worker and the work. Factors to be dealt with include the protection from adverse weather, ability to leave the workstation swiftly or be assisted in an emergency and action to prevent slips and falls. The provision of seating is also dealt with.

(b) **Safety**

(i) *Floors and Traffic Routes*

This is defined as routes for "pedestrian traffic, vehicles or both and includes any stairs, staircase, fixed ladder, doorway, gateway, loading bay or ramp."

Floors or workplaces and traffic routes must be suitably constructed for the purpose for which they are used. Holes, slopes, unevenness and slipperiness have to be dealt with to prevent hazard.

(ii) *Preventative Measures*

Suitable and effective measures must be adopted to prevent certain listed events. These are:

1. persons falling a distance likely to cause personal injury;
2. persons being struck by a falling object likely to cause personal injury; and
3. any containers of dangerous substances (hot, toxic, corrosive, fumes or free flowing or viscous materials which could envelope persons) must be covered over or fenced in.

(iii) *Windows and Doors*

Where there is a risk of walking into transparent material in walls or of windows or other translucent surfaces breaking precautions must be taken.

The precautions called for include the use of safety material or protection of breakable material and/or the use of markings or features to make them apparent.

(iv) *Opening Windows*

No windows, skylights and ventilators should be capable of being opened, closed or adjusted in a way exposing persons to risk when they are undertaking the tasks mentioned. Hazards from open windows, skylights and ventilators (from walking into them) should be prevented by locating them in positions where they cannot pose a risk.

(v) *Safe Window Cleaning*

All windows and skylights should be designed or constructed so that they can be safely cleaned.

(vi) *Organisation of Traffic Routes*

This deals with the safety of pedestrians from risks posed by traffic. The following points are covered:

1. workplaces have to be organised so that vehicles and pedestrians can circulate in a safe manner; and
2. traffic routes have to be suitable for the vehicles and pedestrians using them and sufficient in number, position and size. (Note: For existing workplaces this clause only applies "so far as is reasonably practicable.")

The general requirements relating to traffic routes state that they are not satisfactory unless:

1. they prevent danger to persons working near them;
2. there is sufficient separation of vehicles from doors, gates and pedestrian traffic routes; and
3. traffic signs and indications of all traffic routes are called for, where this is necessary for safety reasons.

(c) **Welfare**

(i) *Sanitary Conveniences*

Employers must provide suitable and sufficient sanitary conveniences at readily accessible places. To be suitable, regard has to be given to ventilation, lighting, cleanliness and separate provision for men and women, except where each convenience is in a separate room with a door capable of being secured from the inside.

(ii) *Washing Facilities*

Suitable and sufficient washing facilities must be provided in readily accessible places. The facilities have to include showers, if required by the nature of the work, for health reasons. Suitability relates to the provision of washing facilities near to sanitary conveniences and changing rooms.

It also relates to the availability of clean hot and cold or warm water (running water so far as practicable); soap, towels (or other suitable means for drying) and the location of facilities in clean rooms. Separate facilities should be provided for men and women, except where they are provided in a room the door of which is capable of being secured from inside, and the facilities in each such room are intended to be used by one person at a time.

(iii) *Drinking Water*

Employers must provide an adequate supply of wholesome drinking water and cups for their employees. It must be readily accessible at suitable places and conspicuously marked by an appropriate sign where necessary for reasons of health or safety. This is to ensure that taps controlling drinking water are not mistaken for taps, which may control some other liquid, which may harm anyone drinking it.

(iv) *Clothing Accommodation*

Suitably located clothing accommodation must be provided for employees' own clothing and for special work clothing which is not taken home. Matters, such as the security of the clothing, separate accommodation for working clothing and other clothing, where there could be health risks (by contamination with harmful substances used at work) are also covered. Facilities for drying clothes also have to be provided.

(v) *Changing Facilities*

Changing facilities must be provided for persons at work in all cases where they have to use special clothing for their work and those persons, for reasons of health or propriety, cannot be expected to change in another room.

(vi) *Suitable and Sufficient Rest Facilities*

Employers must provide, at readily accessible places, suitable and sufficient rest facilities. (In new workplaces the facilities must be rest rooms, in other workplaces, rest areas must also meet the requirement.)

Facilities have to include places to eat meals where food eaten in the workplace could become contaminated. They also have to include suitable arrangements to protect non-smokers from discomfort caused by tobacco smoke and facilities for pregnant women or nursing mothers to rest. Suitable facilities have to be provided for persons at work to eat meals where meals are regularly eaten at the workplace.

References

A Guide for Managers - Fire Service Health and Safety Guide Volume 2, issued by HM Fire Service Inspectorate, publications section.

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.