

Health and Safety Regulations

Health and Safety Work Act 1974

The Act sets out the general duties which employers have toward employees and members of the public, and employees have to themselves and to each other.

These duties are qualified in the Act by the principle of '*so far as is reasonably practicable*'. In other words, an employer does not have to take measures to avoid or reduce the risk if they are technically impossible or if the time, trouble or cost of the measures would be grossly disproportionate to the risk.

What the law requires here is what good management and common sense would lead employers to do anyway: that is, to look at what the risks are and take sensible measures to tackle them.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (the Management Regulations) generally make more explicit what employers are required to do to manage health and safety under the Health and Safety at Work Act. Like the Act, they apply to every work activity.

The main requirement on employers is to carry out a *risk assessment*. Employers with five or more employees need to record the significant findings of the risk assessment.