

Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (also referred to as HSWA, the HSW Act, the 1974 Act or HASAWA) is the primary piece of legislation covering occupational health and safety in Great Britain. The Health and Safety Executive, with local authorities (and other enforcing authorities) is responsible for enforcing the Act and a number of other Acts and Statutory Instruments relevant to the working environment.

The full text of the Act (as amended) is available at [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)  where it can also be downloaded free of charge.

- [Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974](#) 

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.

Risk assessment should be straightforward in a simple workplace such as a typical office. It should only be complicated if it deals with serious hazards such as those on a nuclear power station, a chemical plant, laboratory or an oil rig.

The HSE leaflet “Five Steps to Risk Assessment” will give you more information. Besides carrying out a risk assessment, employers also need to:

- make arrangements for implementing the health and safety measures identified as necessary by the risk assessment;
- appoint competent people (often themselves or company colleagues) to help them to implement the arrangements;
- set up emergency procedures;
- provide clear information and training to employees;
- work together with other employers sharing the same workplace.

Other regulations require action in response to particular hazards, or in industries where hazards are particularly high. A list of the main regulations which apply generally is in Appendix 1. Many are not qualified by ‘reasonable practicability’.

The full text is available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999/3242/contents/made>