

SIMPLY SAFE – September 2009

CHANGES TO FIRST AID AT WORK

From Thursday 01 October 2009 changes will come into force in relation to training requirements following a review by the Health and Safety Executive of first aid in the workplace. They found that there were some areas which were issues with compliance with the Regulations and in other cases the existing Regulations were too onerous on lower risk employees. It is hoped that the changes will make it easier for employers to comply with the Regulations.

The changes will entail the current four day First Aid at Work (FAW) course being shortened to three days and the introduction of a new qualification of Emergency First Aider in the Workplace (EFAW) that will only require a one day training course.

The FAW requalification remains unchanged at two days.

The HSE has also strongly recommended FAW and EFAW students attend an annual three hour refresher course to prevent 'skills fade'.

Both the First Aid at Work and Emergency First Aid in the Workplace courses will be approved by the HSE and must be taught by HSE approved first aid training providers. Training for Appointed Persons may be taught by non-HSE approved training providers. Employees with a current FAW Certificate will not need a new qualification until their current one expires, even where this is after 01 October 2009.

It will remain the duty of employers to ensure that they have sufficient numbers of qualified first aid trained staff. Employers are required to carry out a risk assessment to decide on the numbers of first aiders required and the level of training needed. The risk assessment will require employers to consider the following:

- workplace hazards and risks
- the size of the organisation
- the organisation's history of employee accidents
- the nature and distribution of the workforce
- the remoteness of the site from emergency medical services
- the needs of travelling, remote and lone workers
- employees working on shared or multi-occupied sites
- annual leave and other absences of first aiders and appointed persons.

By undertaking a risk assessment you will be able to highlight the level of risk in your workplace and then decide what level of training is required for your first aiders.

Generally speaking, first aiders with a First Aid at Work Certificate will be required in higher risk sites or places with a large workforce or high perceived level of risk; lower risk may only require Emergency First Aid in the Workplace trained staff, but this will be dependant on other factors that a risk assessment will identify.

Further guidance on first aid will be available from the HSE from 1 October 2009 which will provide details of how many first aiders will be needed depending on the size and nature of your organisation. Further guidance will also be available from Perry Scott Nash regarding undertaking a risk assessment for your business.



LOUD MUSIC VENUES - EFFECTIVE USE OF EAR PLUGS

As many businesses receiving this newsletter will be aware, an important control in reducing the levels of noise to which employees working in loud music venues are exposed to involves the wearing of ear plugs. Worn correctly, these small foam ear inserts can reduce the effective noise levels experienced by the wearer by between 20 and 30 decibels. The problems arise when they are not worn (which is a management issue!) and when they are not worn correctly (which is a training issue).

Some businesses operate a 'don't wear – don't work' policy which has been well received by local authorities. Management who are complicit in staff not wearing what is an essential part of persons personal protective equipment, are not meeting their obligations to their Company or under the Control of Noise at Work Regulations.

The correct technique for inserting and wearing ear plugs is essential to obtaining the maximum noise reduction in the ear. The plugs must be narrowed and fully inserted, then left to expand in the ear for them to work. All too often the wearer has not been instructed correctly and complains they are "uncomfortable" and "fall out". Whilst they may feel unnatural to begin with, once worn regularly, the wearer will become used to how they feel and will notice the benefits of reduced exposure to noise.

RECENT PROSECUTIONS

BANNED FOR LIFE!

Owners of a food business were banned from ever running a food business again following the discovery of containers of putrefying foods in the fridges of the restaurant during a routine visit by the local authority.

The Managers of the restaurant admitted 13 food safety offences and were issued with prohibition orders after EHOs found containers of putrefying food and food contaminated with insects in the fridge of their restaurant. They were fined £15,000 and ordered by magistrates to pay costs of £6,000.

After initially not being happy with standards on an initial inspection, EHOs returned to find containers full of putrefying food in the fridge as there was no effective stock control system in place. Food contaminated with insects was also found in the fridges.

ANOTHER FRYER - ANOTHER ACCIDENT - ANOTHER FINE!

An employee of a national pub chain was badly burned when attempting to empty and clean the deep fat fryers. The employee slipped and as a result suffered first and second degree burns to 19% of his whole body. As a result of the accident, Gloucestershire EHOs undertook an investigation which culminated in a successful prosecution of the Company and fines totalling £17,500, in addition to having to pay full costs of £8,151, for a previous offence for which formal caution had been given previously. The investigation found that the risk assessments and safe systems at work were inadequate at the time of the accident, and that employees had not received the proper training. The EHO stated that the accident could have been prevented if the proper guidelines had been followed. The Company had previously been prosecuted for a similar incident at another of their pubs after an employee suffered burns and injuries from a similar incident involving hot oil in March 2006. On that occasion they were fined £10,000 and ordered to pay costs of £4,096 for offences under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

A TO Z OF FOOD SAFETY

L is for "Listeria"

Listeria is a type of bacteria that can cause food poisoning when eaten. It can live and grow in a wide range of foods, in particular chilled ready-to-eat foods such as packaged sandwiches, butter, cooked sliced meats, smoked salmon, certain soft cheeses and pâté. Listeria is killed by pasteurisation and cooking, but these foods are a particular risk for harbouring the bug as processed or pre-cooked foods can become contaminated during the packaging process.

Listeria is significant and has recently become the focus of the Food Standards Agency following identified abuse and prolonged storage of foods beyond their 'use by' dates. As a result, there has been an increase in certain groups of the population of listeria food poisoning. Whilst the concerns do relate to domestic causes of food poisoning, this does highlight the importance of effective food labelling and stock rotation given that foods may be removed from the original packaging and relabelled for later use. Remember that listeria has the ability to multiply at lower temperatures than other bacteria and simply keeping it refrigerated without controlling how long you keep it is not enough!

Perry Scott Nash Associates Ltd, Perry Scott Nash House, 2 Arlington Court, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FS
Tel: 01438 745771 Fax: 01438 745772 Email: info@perryscottnash.co.uk www.perryscottnash.co.uk

