

# 4 Workplace Inspections

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## Introduction

1. The monitoring and review of preventative and protective measures is a requirement of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations for which routine workplace health and safety inspections are to be conducted to check that such measures are in place and effective. Workplace health and safety inspections cover specific selected work areas within an organisation or workplace and should not be confused with health and safety audits of a safety management system (SMS). All workplace inspections should be recorded as evidence of legal compliance with the requirement to monitor and review preventative and protective measures and may form part of an audit trail demonstrating that appropriate arrangements are in place for active monitoring of the SMS.

2. The aim of workplace health and safety inspections is to prevent work related accidents and ill health by identifying new hazards; and checking that preventative and protective control measures are implemented and effective. Workplace inspections need to take account of premises, plant, housekeeping, procedures, activities and substances, and therefore may need to be undertaken in concert with other stakeholders (e.g. accredited Trades Union safety reps, employee elected safety representatives, site estates personnel and / or contractors, etc).

3. Workplace inspections offer Defence personnel and managers an opportunity to share their knowledge and experience helping the inspection process and should be encouraged in line with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) drive to increase worker involvement.

4. Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) vessels should be inspected in accordance with the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Health and Safety at Work) Regulations, Regulation 16, for which guidance is available in the Merchant Shipping Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seamen, Chapter 3.

5. Work equipment specific legal inspection requirements (e.g. pressure vessels, lifts, cranes, chains, ropes, lifting tackle, scaffolds, local exhaust ventilation ((LEV)), groundwork's etc.) and hazardous workplaces (e.g. explosive areas, fuel installations) are detailed in the relevant chapters of this JSP or subject specific JSPs or Defence Regulations.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Commanding Officers (CO) / Heads of Establishment (HoE)

6. The CO / HoE should have in place procedures to gain assurance from all Officers, managers, lodger units, contractors etc. who have control of activities or areas within the establishment / vessel. Regular workplace health and safety inspections of all activities and areas are to be carried out, records kept and any issues appropriately actioned. The procedures should include the adequate cover for workplace health and safety inspections of common or shared areas (not obviously identifiable as anyone's sole area of responsibility).

### Managers

7. The manager should ensure that regular workplace health and safety inspections are carried out within their identified area(s) of responsibility by competent persons<sup>1</sup>. Where practical any safety representatives (TU or staff elected) who cover the area / personnel involved should be informed of the planned workplace inspections and invited to participate. All deficiencies identified must be acted upon in a timely manner. Where practical, managers are encouraged to co-ordinate all interested parties to conduct joint inspections of their area to minimise "over regulation" and help to resolve any grey areas where responsibility is either shared or not clearly defined.

8. The frequency of inspection will be determined by the level of risk involved in the activities and the type of environment in which they are performed but should be conducted at least once in every 6 months.

9. The manager should ensure that a report of the inspection is produced which:

- a. includes detail of the area of responsibility;
- b. includes the date;
- c. includes the name of the person conducting the inspection;
- d. includes the findings / corrective action taken / required (where appropriate required actions added to the unit / establishment / vessel health and safety action plan);
- e. is copied to the relevant managers for action; and
- f. is copied for information to any local Safety Representatives who cover the area / staff involved.

10. Where applicable, actions failing to meet the target dates or failing to adequately manage the risks must be reported up through the Chain of Command.

11. Where managers are unsure of the requirements of any regulations relating to health and safety in their workplace, they should contact their local Health and Safety Adviser, local Fire Adviser or the TLB Safety Centre / Chief Environment and Safety Officer (SC / CESO) organisation for advice.

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<sup>1</sup> A person is deemed competent by virtue of their appropriate qualification, experience, currency and maturity.

## Safety Representatives

12. Accredited Trade Union safety representatives who represent Defence personnel or groups of Defence personnel at the establishment / site / vessel have a legal right to inspect the workplace following any notifiable accident, dangerous occurrence or disease involving their members (it is MOD good practice that safety representatives are given the opportunity to inspect the workplace after any accident / incident not just those that are notifiable); and to undertake workplace health and safety inspections providing they have given the employer reasonable notice of their intentions if:

- a. they have not completed an inspection within the previous 3 months; or
- b. there has been a substantial change in the conditions of work.

13. Safety Representatives may request additional workplace health and safety inspections which should be accommodated where possible by the manager.

## Planning Workplace Inspections

14. Workplace health and safety inspections need to be more than just a simple hazard spotting tour of the premises and should adopt a more holistic and planned approach. The person undertaking a workplace health and safety inspection should already be familiar with the workplace activity, premises, equipment, personnel and procedures pertaining to their area of responsibility and should draw on this knowledge when planning the inspection taking into consideration:

- a. known issues (individual and collectively) and other factors (who does what, where, when and how) to identify significant hazards;
- b. the various categories of people who may be affected by, or impact on, the workplace activity (Defence personnel, contractors, trainees, visitors, Service dependants or members of the public, etc.);
- c. suitability, use, control and storage of personal protective equipment (PPE);
- d. the workplace hazards and the existence and effectiveness of related control measures;
- e. training and competence of Defence personnel;
- f. reviewing previous inspection reports, accident / incident reports and other records;
- g. the timings of the inspection to take place during a time considered to be representative of normal working conditions; and
- h. that any workplace inspection checklist to be used should include cover general workplace health and safety requirements and any other significant matters.

15. An inspection checklist template that may be used and / or modified (e.g. expanded to cover issues / hazards appropriate to the area concerned) is available at Annex A.

16. The workplace inspection should identify remedial actions necessary, by determining the extent to which procedures and controls are being complied with, as well as the condition of plant, equipment, and premises etc.

17. When conducting a workplace inspection, particular attention should be given to the existence and maintenance of suitable engineering controls (rather than the reliance on use of PPE); the arrangements to deal with emergencies; the availability of adequate current information; and if necessary, warnings regarding the nature of the plant / substance hazards concerned (e.g. where and how work activities are being carried out and the potentially exposed population).

18. The following list provides some practical guidance to help complete workplace inspections in the most effective manner:

- a. throughout the inspection, refer to the interaction between: people, processes, premises, plant and substances;
- b. use an inspection checklist as an aide, but do not let it limit the scope of the inspection;
- c. review competencies and training requirements / records for staff;
- d. check risk assessments, equipment documentation and maintenance records;
- e. talk to as many personnel as possible, listen to their observations / problems and suggestions;
- f. expect people to be on their best behaviour; beware of false impressions;
- g. do not get distracted by trivial risks or issues;
- h. look for potential shortcuts in work procedures or deviations from good practice;
- i. take account of both normal and potential abnormal work conditions and activities; and
- j. where possible, put remedial measures in place immediately.

## **Retention of Records**

19. Records should be maintained of any workplace health and safety inspections undertaken (copied to the appropriate Safety Representatives) including any inspection notes and checklists raised, as well as any formal post-Inspection Reports and Action Plans produced; these should be retained for a period of at least three years in accordance with JSP 375 Volume 1, Chapter 39.

20. It is recommended that copies of any work services request; equipment or material demands, and training support requests are kept as evidence of action taken. These records should include, as appropriate, the dates of submission, review, any hastening action, and the completion of tasks.

## Related Documents

21. The following documents should be consulted in conjunction with this chapter:

- a. JSP 375 Volume 1:
  - (1) Chapter 2 – Office & General Workplace Safety; and
  - (2) Chapter 39 – Retention of Records.
- b. Other MOD Publications:
  - (1) DSA01.1 – Defence Policy for Health, Safety and Environmental Protection; and
  - (2) DSA01.2 Chapter 2 – Requirement for Safety and Environmental Management Systems in Defence.
- c. Legislation:
  - (1) [Health and Safety at Work, etc Act](#);
  - (2) [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations](#);
  - (3) [HSE ACoP L24 – Workplace health, safety and welfare](#);
  - (4) [The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations](#);
  - (5) [The Health and Safety \(Consultation with Employees\) Regulations](#);
  - (6) [The Merchant Shipping Act](#);
  - (7) [Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels \(Health and Safety at Work\) Regulations](#);
  - (8) [The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order](#).

## Inspection checklist

Location:	Manager:			Date:
<b>Access and Egress</b>	yes	no	n/a	Comments
Are vehicle and pedestrian routes separated and kept clear?				
Are doors to restricted areas (e.g. plant room) secured?				
<b>Asbestos</b>				
Are any areas containing asbestos identified and marked?				
Are materials containing asbestos in good condition / sealed?				
Is a copy of the asbestos risk assessment readily available to all personnel concerned?				
<b>Chemicals</b>				
Are all containers clearly labelled with contents, hazards warnings, etc?				
Are COSHH assessments available for substances used / stored?				
Are emergency and clean up procedures readily available?				
Are substances used / stored in minimum quantities and in secure cabinets?				
<b>Cleanliness</b>				
Are work surfaces, walls and floors kept tidy and clean?				
<b>Electrical Safety</b>				
Is electrical equipment, tools, etc checked and maintained (in-date); and sockets not overloaded?				
<b>Emergency Precautions</b>				
Are emergency instructions displayed throughout the workplace?				
Are flammable materials stored in appropriate cabinets/facilities?				
Are escape routes / exits clearly marked, illuminated and kept clear at all times?				
Are firefighting appliances of the correct type and in the correct place?				
<b>First Aid</b>				
Is there a first aid box and is it fully equipped and accessible to staff?				
Are first aider(s) / appointed persons lists displayed and up-to-date?				
<b>Lighting</b>				
Is the lighting suitable for the task, especially for intricate or safety critical work?				
Are stairs and corridors etc properly lit?				
Do any light bulbs need replacing?				
Is there adequate natural light (are windows clean)?				
<b>Lifting, Manual Handling and Storage</b>				
Is mechanical equipment available and used whenever possible?				
Are personnel trained in manual handling and heavy items stored at a convenient height to suit the user?				

	yes	no	n/a	Comments
<b>Storage Areas</b>				
Is racking / shelving in good repair, inspected and the load capacity clearly labelled where appropriate?				
Is the weight of loads known and / or clearly marked?				
<b>Machinery and Work Equipment</b>				
Has defective equipment been taken out of service when awaiting repair?				
Are all guards on machinery in place and well maintained?				
Do personnel have the appropriate competences and / or trained to use machines / work equipment?				
<b>Noise</b>				
Are noise levels acceptable or are adequate controls implemented to mitigate to an acceptable level?				
Are noise hazard zones and entrances marked with the appropriate signage?				
<b>Space</b>				
Is there enough space for personnel to undertake their tasks safely and comfortably?				
<b>Personal Protective Equipment</b>				
Is appropriate PPE provided effective, comfortable, well-fitting and used?				
Are PPE checks recorded and defective equipment promptly replaced?				
Is PPE stored in a clean and safe place?				
<b>Slips, Trips and Falls</b>				
Are floors and stairs in good condition and kept dry and clear of obstructions?				
Are trailing leads and cables secured or covered?				
Are guardrails, handrails, edge protection etc in place and in good repair?				
<b>Temperature (working indoors)</b>				
Is the temperature comfortable?				
Can breaks be taken away from hot / cold areas?				
<b>Toilets and Washing Facilities</b>				
Are toilets clean and in good repair?				
Are washing facilities (hot water, soap and towels) serviceable?				
Are sanitary disposal facilities provided where appropriate?				
<b>Ventilation</b>				
Are ventilation systems to remove fumes, steam etc working and used properly?				
Is there an adequate supply of fresh air?				
<b>Other Issues</b>				
Is relevant documentation appropriately disseminated? (risk assessments, posters etc.)				
<b>Remedial Actions</b>				