

The CARE CERTIFICATE

Health and Safety

- What you need to know

Standard

13

Health and safety



Legislation relating to general health and safety in health and social care

The main reason for health and safety legislation is to protect people at work and those who are affected by work activities.

Legislation (that is, laws) is made so that everyone in society knows which behaviours are acceptable and which are not. Laws cover all aspects of our lives including protecting the health and safety of people at work and those affected by work activities including those who receive care and support.



Legislation

This term is used to describe laws and the process of creating statutory guidance on the legal rules that affect people in society.

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 – sets out how employers, employees and the self-employed must work in a safe way, giving every person on the work premises legal duties and responsibilities. As this act is very general, subject-specific ‘regulations’ have also been put in place to help every workplace to be safe.

www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.htm

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 – are often referred to as ‘RIDDOR’. Reporting accidents and incidents is an important part of your work in any health or social care workplace. The most serious accidents and incidents are reportable to health and safety authorities.

www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 – are about how health and safety is managed within a care workplace, including risk assessment, training and ensuring employees receive the information they need.

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999/3242/contents/made

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 – sets out how every workplace must prevent/protect against fire.

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2005/1541/contents/made

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 2002 – are designed to protect people from hazardous substances - that is, any substance that can cause harm or ill health.<http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/>

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 – cover the transporting or supporting of any load (including people) and how to carry this out safely and prevent injury.

www.hse.gov.uk/msd/pushpull/regulations.htm

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 2002 – set out how any type of equipment is to be used safely. Work equipment needs to be checked and maintained regularly and employees trained in its safe use. In a care or health setting, 'equipment' includes not only specialist devices like lifting aids, but also everyday things such as televisions.

www.hse.gov.uk/work-equipment-machinery/puwer.htm

The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER) have specific requirements relating to work equipment which is used for lifting and lowering people or loads.

www.hse.gov.uk/work-equipment-machinery/lole.htm



Health and safety policies and procedures agreed with the employer

Most employers have a health and safety policy which sets out how they will protect everyone who is affected by their business, including employees, visitors, contractors and individuals who access services. Even if your role involves working in the private homes of individuals you need to know what health and safety legislation applies there. Ask your manager about policies that are in place to support your health, safety and wellbeing in all the places in which you work.

What all policies and procedures have in common is to tell everyone how to do something or what must be in place to make sure all people are safe.



Policy

A policy is a formal course of action that everyone must follow.

Procedure

A procedure is the way in which a task must be completed or carried out.

Examples of procedures can include:

- how to store and give out medication
- how to provide personal care
- how to lift and carry loads
- what to do in the event of fire
- what to do to provide first aid
- how to handle soiled bed linen.

Policies must give clear instructions so that everyone is kept safe and no one is harmed through the work that is being carried out. You must familiarise yourself with your own workplace health and safety policy and procedures.

Who is responsible for health and safety in your workplace?

Health or social care worker

As a health or social care worker, you are responsible for taking reasonable care of yourself and **others** in the workplace. You need to follow the policies and procedures of your employer and not act in a way which will cause an accident or ill health to yourself or others. You will probably work with a number of individuals who all have different needs and who require different types of care and support. Any task you do whilst at work, must not put them at risk.

An example of how you can take reasonable care of those within your workplace would be to report anything that could cause someone to trip or fall, like a frayed carpet or a wet floor, and take any action that you are asked to do.



Others

Others could include anyone who could be affected by what you do including your colleagues, the individuals you support and their friends and family or other visitors.

Employer

The employer has many legal responsibilities; these are likely to be carried out by line managers. Their overall responsibility is to ensure the health, safety and welfare (or well being) of all employees. The employer must make sure that this happens by putting in place policies and procedures and ensuring there is enough time and money to put safety at the centre of all tasks. Employers must provide:

- a safe place to work
- necessary training and
- appropriate and safe work equipment.

Others in the workplace

Health and safety at work is everybody's business; that means others in the workplace have a duty too. Everyone in the workplace should avoid any actions that could harm others, act respectfully and not cause any damage to property. You should always report any known health and safety hazards that might affect others.

Health and safety tasks that require special training

There are a number of activities that you must not carry out until you have received special training. Usually such training would include some practical elements and assessment by a competent trainer. These activities include:

- Use of equipment such as hoists and lifts to move people and objects safely: each piece of equipment that you will use will have instructions for safe use.
- Medication: there is legislation and guidance that controls the prescribing, dispensing, administration, storage and disposal of medicines.
- Assisting and moving: it is essential that you know about safe moving and handling so you don't hurt yourself or the individual.
- First aid: this is the immediate assistance given to someone who has been injured or taken ill before the arrival of qualified medical assistance. If you have not been trained you should get help from a qualified first aider or call an ambulance. You should not attempt first aid without training as you could make their condition or injury worse. However, you should also know your 'basic life support' duties (see Care Certificate standard 12).
- Emergency procedures: for emergency situations such as fire, explosion, flood, building damage, etc.
- Food handling and preparation: this will help you to prepare food that is safe for individuals to eat and stop you from causing food poisoning.

Working in unsafe ways, ways that have not been agreed with the employer and without appropriate training can mean that you are putting yourself, the individuals you support and others at risk of harm.



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Competence

To make sure that you are keeping the individuals you support as safe as possible, you should only undertake certain activities once you are competent to do so.

Additional support and information about health and safety

There may be times when you feel you need to know more about how to prevent accidents or ill health. Your employer may already have lots of information or procedures so ask your manager if you can look at these and discuss them.

Also, the workplace may have a designated health and safety person who can help you to find information or answer a question. Health and safety law posters (displayed in the workplace) or leaflets (provided to each individual) are other ways of gaining more knowledge. Additional support and information can be found on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website.

www.hse.gov.uk

Accidents and sudden illness

Accidents are caused by the risks found in the particular workplace. Risk assessments should be available which identify all the potential risks and steps to reduce the likelihood of them happening.

Potential accidents could include:

- slips and trips
- falls
- sharps injuries (an incident in which a sharp object e.g. needle, blade, broken glass or cannula penetrates the skin)
- burns and scalds
- injuries from operating machinery or specialised equipment
- electrocution
- accidental poisoning.

As well as injuries arising from accidents, the nature of health and social care means that individuals may have existing conditions which can cause sudden illness. You may be faced with sudden illnesses including:

- diabetic coma
- epileptic seizure
- fainting (this might also be caused by an accident)
- bleeding (after an operation, or such as a nosebleed, as well as from an accident)
- stroke
- heart attack.



If an accident or sudden illness happens you must ensure the safety of the individuals concerned and everyone else who may be affected. All workplaces will have a health and safety procedure to outline what to do in an emergency and you must ensure that you are familiar with it. You must also be familiar with the individual's care plan, for example if they are known to have a condition that could lead to sudden illness, and how you should respond.

First aid

There are three levels of first aid training: first aider, emergency first aid at work and appointed person. If you have not received training in any of the levels, you should not attempt any form of first aid, but must seek help immediately. Without specialist first-aid training, you should not attempt first aid as you could make the injury or condition worse. For example, moving someone into the recovery position could make a neck or spinal injury worse.

'Basic life support' is different from 'first aid'. You need to be assessed in basic life support as part of the Care Certificate, see standard 12.

In emergency situations:

- remain calm and send for help by shouting, phoning or finding someone
- observe the individual, listen to what they are saying, try to find out what happened and reassure them, but do not move them unless it is absolutely necessary for safety
- stay with the injured or sick individual until help arrives, observing and noting any changes in condition, as you will need to tell relevant medical staff or others what you have seen
- do as little as you need to do in order to keep the casualty stable and alive until qualified help arrives (see basic life support in Care Certificate standard 12)
- complete a full written report and follow the agreed ways of working to inform managers, carers or family members who need to know.



Risk assessment

A risk assessment helps the individual to have their choices met in the safest possible ways. Risk assessments are not only a legal requirement, they also provide clear guidance and information on how to keep people safe and prevent danger, harm and accidents. They identify **hazards** in a workplace, evaluate the level of risk and put in place measures or procedures to reduce the risk.

There are five steps to a risk assessment which you will need to **understand**:

1. Identify the hazards of an area, a specific task or situation.
2. Identify those who may be harmed, such as individuals being supported, visitors, other workers and contractors.
3. Evaluate the risk by looking at what methods are in place to control risks or reduce them.
4. Record the findings of the risk assessment to help to remind everyone of what the risks are and how to reduce them.
5. Review and modify the risk assessment if and when changes happen to the tasks or workplace. Changes may increase risks or reduce them.





Hazard

This is something with the potential to cause harm. For example soiled bed linen or clothing, spillages of bodily fluids and assisting people to move.

Risk

The likelihood of the hazard causing harm. For example picking up an infection from soiled bed linen, slipping on fluids from spillages or trapping injuries from using a hoist.

Reporting health and safety risks

The most important part of hazard reporting is that you act quickly and tell a manager or supervisor who can take action to prevent an accident or harm. It is a legal requirement that you do this. Once a hazard is identified, a risk assessment needs to be carried out. You should be familiar with your agreed ways of working for reporting health and safety risks.



Agreed ways of working

This refers to the organisation's policies and procedures. This includes those less formally documented by individual employers and the self-employed, and formal policies such as the Dignity Code, Essence of Care and Compassion in Practice.

Moving and assisting

Your role may include moving and assisting people and will certainly involve moving and handling objects. There are laws specifically about tasks that involve lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving by hand or bodily force. These tasks are governed, in particular, by the last three regulations in the list of legislation at the start of this standard in this workbook.

Some work roles require the use of assisted beds and hoists to help with moving and assisting individuals. You must have proper training before using this equipment, to ensure that you use it properly and do not injure yourself or the individual. Other tasks that require training and an assessment of competence include:

- supporting an individual to transfer from a bed to a chair
- helping with daily assisting routines like bathing
- moving on and off the toilet.

You should always carry out moving and assisting tasks in the agreed ways found in your policies and procedures and the individual's care plan.

Over a third of injuries in the workplace, which lead to time off work, are due to moving and handling. It is extremely important that specialist training on moving and handling is provided. This will prevent accidents and minimise the likelihood of injury to the individuals you support, yourself and others.

Medication and healthcare activities and tasks

Some of the people you support may use medication and require support to store and take it correctly. Others may be able to manage their own medication safely. Individuals who can manage their own medication safely should be encouraged to do so as this promotes their independence and makes mistakes less likely to happen. Information about the support each person requires will be included in their care plan.

Whenever you are dealing with medication you need to be aware of the main points of agreed procedures about handling medication:

- **Ordering:** the process should be quick and efficient.
- **Receiving:** a list of medication ordered should be checked against that received.
- **Storing:** controlled drugs (CDs) must be stored in a locked cupboard or might be kept by the individual if self-administering.
- **Administering:** ensure the right person receives the right dose of the right medication at the right time.
- **Recording:** use the medicine administration record (MAR) which charts the administration of drugs. Make sure the records are clear.
- **Transfer:** medication has to stay with the individual as it is their property, so if they are transferred the medication goes with them. ('Staying with' includes being kept in a locked cupboard if necessary.)
- **Disposal:** return unwanted medication to a pharmacy. Care homes must use a licensed waste management company.

It may be that your role does not require you to work with medication and therefore you won't be required to undertake any specialist training. However, it is important to know what your employer's ways of working are.

Tasks like cutting or filing fingernails or toe nails, continence maintenance and assisting with medication can be carried out only if they have been written in the individual's care or support plan. That's why it is vital that the individual's needs and wishes are agreed and clearly written down as a care plan, so all workers know when and how to provide support for that particular person, as well as whether the person has the mental capacity or mobility they need to manage themselves.

You always have to obtain the individual's consent before carrying out healthcare tasks or assisting with medication.

Detailed policies and procedures about handling medication

Appropriate training must be provided for health and social care workers who are required to provide medication.

You are not allowed to remind about, assist with or give individuals their medication or carry out related healthcare tasks unless it is part of your role and until you have completed and satisfactorily passed the appropriate training. This applies to inhaled medication, any medication that needs to be swallowed, medical creams or ointments, drops, cutting or filing nails or prompting or helping with injections (for example EpiPen).

Except in emergency, you should not carry out any actions that are not covered by the individual's care plan (but remember it is always part of your job to work with your manager to help individuals change their care plan if necessary). As legislation on medication and related tasks is forever changing, you need to keep yourself up to date with current laws and guidance from NICE and from your employer.

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/service-delivery--organisation-and-staffing/medicines-management/medicines-management--general-and-other#pathways>

Hazardous substances in your workplace

Hazardous substances found in a health and social care environments include:

- cleaning materials
- disinfectants
- body fluids
- medication
- clinical waste such as dressings
- contaminated clothes, towels and bed linen.



Consent

This means to get the individual's permission.

These substances can enter the body via inhalation (breathing in), ingestion (swallowing), injection (needle stick) or absorption (through the skin). For all products you use, read the hazard information found on the label; this will inform you about their hazards and help you to keep yourself and others safe.

Dealing with hazardous substances

The workplace must have a secure and specific area especially for the storage of hazardous substances.

Some hazardous substances should only be handled when the worker is wearing personal protective equipment (PPE). Your employer will have policies and procedures which set out when PPE should be worn which will normally include handling clinical waste and some chemicals.

You must always work within agreed ways to protect your own health and wellbeing as well as those around you.

Cleaning products and disinfectants should be kept in their original containers as these give the manufacturer's instructions for correct usage. These instructions must always be followed. An individual may choose to transfer products out of their original containers in their own home. For your own safety You should only use products that are in their original containers.

Identifiable human tissue must always be incinerated. Other biological waste needs to be put in orange or yellow bags and disposed of separately from household waste. Local authorities may arrange a separate collection for this type of waste from individuals' own homes.

Body fluids such as blood, urine, vomit and faeces must be cleaned up immediately. Disposable items used for cleaning the spills, such as paper towels and gloves, should be disposed of as clinical waste.

Clinical waste includes contaminated waste such as used dressings and contaminated personal protective equipment. This waste should be put into bags which identify it as potentially harmful (these are usually yellow or orange) and stored securely until it can be disposed of as set out in the procedures for your workplace. Many local authorities will arrange safe collection of clinical waste from individual's homes if it has been assessed as clinical waste by a community healthcare professional.

Some contaminated clinical waste can pierce the skin and should be stored in sharps bins rather than bags, to protect workers from injuries. You must follow the agreed ways of working. If supporting a person in their own home, be familiar with any risk assessment for disposing of sharps there. Sharps should normally be returned, in an approved sharps box, to the place they were prescribed.

Waste is considered hazardous if it is potentially harmful to humans or the environment. Disposal must be done in a way that avoids any danger or harm. Your employer will have procedures in place for the storage and disposal of hazardous waste.

Linen which has been contaminated with body fluids should ideally be washed immediately if you are supporting a person to live in their own home. In the health and social care workplace it should be placed in identifiable bags and placed in a hot wash, separate from other linen. There will be agreed ways of working, which may vary from person to person, for washing clothing.

Fire safety

Fires are a hazard in any workplace and can lead to injury or death. Basic fire prevention measures include:

- No smoking or naked flames within the building.
- Do not have fire doors propped open as this will increase the speed at which a fire spreads in a building.
- Do not allow waste to accumulate which could provide fuel to a fire.
- Check escape routes are not blocked and keep them clear of furniture or boxes.
- Check that appliances and plugs are turned off to help prevent an electrical fire from starting.



If you are supporting someone in their own home these measures may not apply. You can support individuals to get advice to make their homes safer but you must respect the choices that they make; for example they may choose to smoke or not to have smoke alarms. (See also Care Certificate standards 3 and 9 on supporting independence and managing risk.)

A workplace will have their own specific procedures and actions to be taken in the event of a fire and you must make sure that you familiarise yourself with these procedures. If you work in someone's home make sure you familiarise yourself with escape routes and agree with your employer what you would do in the case of a fire. Sometimes there may be increased risks in an individual's home that you need to be aware of; they may choose to smoke for example.

Working safely and securely

In order to stop intruders and prevent individuals from becoming victims of crime, good security measures are important. Your organisation will have security procedures in place, so ensure you familiarise yourself with them. Your employer may also have guidance or advice about safe working. Ask your manager about this.

Examples of security measures include:

- challenging any strangers you find on the premises or in restricted areas
- requiring visitors to secure premises to sign a visitor book
- setting alarms where they are fitted
- checking the identity of individuals who ring and ask for information.

If your workplace is small, outside doors should be locked and fitted with a door bell to ensure no unauthorised access. Never let in visitors or give out information unless you have consent to do so.

If you are working in an individual's home you can support them to get advice about how to make their home more secure, for example by accessing information on the internet <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/care/home-safety/>

Signs and indicators of stress in yourself and others

Stress, depression and anxiety lead to millions of lost working days. Stress can be both positive and negative. Some pressures and challenges are good as they can help us to work more effectively, but negative stress such as undue pressure, overwork or difficult working conditions can affect our wellbeing and cause illness. Challenging events themselves are not the root cause of stress; it is the way that we see and think about the event or challenge that leads to feeling stressed.



Stress

Work-related: Stress is defined by the **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)** as: 'The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed upon them'.

The signs and indicators of stress can be separated into different categories:

- psychological or emotional – anxiety, anger, depression, low self-esteem, feeling helpless, sensitivity or tearfulness, irritability and indecisiveness
- physiological or physical – heart palpitations, stomach complaints such as irritable bowel syndrome, uneasiness and tension
- behavioural – aggression, increased substance misuse such as smoking or alcohol, sleeping more or less, changes in eating patterns and changes to mood and consequent behaviour impacting on relationships and work.

The circumstances and situations that can trigger stress vary from person to person. Some people can take on lots of pressures and demands before they will show signs of stress whereas others may be affected by situations and events more easily. This can depend on their personality, their ways of coping with stress and their personal history.

Stress triggers may include:

- increased demands from others in the workplace or at home
- changes in working practices or new working practices
- changes to team members
- relationship issues
- unexpected changes relating to finance, personal circumstances or work
- challenging behaviour of individuals you support
- tiredness
- getting something wrong or being criticised.



Managing stress

We all deal with and respond to 'stressors' in very different ways and our reactions and strategies for responding to them will vary greatly. Some helpful strategies to deal with stress are:

- taking more exercise or going for a walk
- taking time out for yourself
- doing something that you enjoy
- taking a deep breath
- counting down slowly in your head
- removing yourself from a situation and taking time out
- talking through how you feel with your line manager
- attending any stress management courses or workshops available
- engaging in relaxing activities whilst away from work
- looking at your diet and substance intake, for example caffeine, and managing a sensible intake
- undertaking self-awareness activities
- talking through your stresses with a counsellor
- talking to a human resources advisor or occupational health advisor (if available in your organisation).

Think about the events and situations that tend to cause you to feel stressed. It is very important to be aware of these so that you can develop positive ways of coping and managing stress. Sometimes it might not be possible to remove the thing that causes stress but if you develop ways of coping then you are able to take the time to look after yourself so that the stress does not have too much of a negative impact on your health and wellbeing. Managing stress well will reduce the negative effects on others including the individuals you care for, your colleagues, family and friends.