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GMB

PROTECTING YOU
AT WORK

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GMB SAFETY REPS CHECKLIST

YES NO

- Have adequate risk assessments been carried out? YES NO
- Have GMB safety reps been involved in the risk assessment? YES NO
- Has adequate health & Safety training taken place? YES NO
- Was this training given before work started? YES NO
- Are the HSE management standards on stress followed? YES NO
- Is there a clear policy on violence at work? YES NO
- Are proper procedures in place for lone working? YES NO
- Is suitable personal protective equipment supplied for all circumstances? YES NO

CONTACT GMB—THE UNION FOR SECURITY WORKERS

General Secretary: Paul Kenny
National Office:
22–24 Worples Road
London SW19 4DD
Tel 020 8947 3131
Fax 020 8944 6552
www.gmb.org.uk



HOW DO I JOIN? JOIN ONLINE AT WWW.GMB.ORG.UK

Or just fill in parts 1, 2 and 3 or 4 below and hand the form to your local GMB representative or post it to GMB, FREEPOST (WC2268), London SW19 4YY (you do not need a stamp). If you have any questions call GMB on 020 8947 3131, email info@gmb.org.uk or visit our website www.gmb.org.uk

FOR UNION USE ONLY Section Branch No Membership No Date of joining

GMB membership application form PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

1 TELL US ABOUT YOU

Surname First name Title Mrs/Miss/Ms/Mr Date of birth
 Home address Home Tel Email
 Postcode Mobile I agree to abide by GMB rules Signature
 We ask for your ethnic origins as part of our equal opportunities policy of improving services to all members
 Bangladeshi Black African Black Caribbean Black British
 Chinese Indian Irish Pakistani White
 Other:

2 TELL US ABOUT YOUR JOB

Employer Your job Pay No
 Address where you work How many hours a week do you work? Work Tel Pay Date
 Postcode

3 CHOOSE EITHER AUTHORISATION OF DEDUCTION OF YOUR TRADE UNION CONTRIBUTIONS FROM YOUR PAY

Section 68, Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidated) Act 1992 as amended
 • I authorise my employer to deduct from my pay each week/month the sum of £ or other amounts as may be fixed by the GMB from time to time.
 • Please start the deductions immediately and pay the amounts to the GMB.
 • I note that this agreement may be cancelled by one month's notice in writing.
 • I give permission to my employer to notify the GMB of any future change of address.
 Signed Cash
 Date

4 OR INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY TO PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT

Please fill in the form and send to GMB, 22–24 Worples Road, London SW19 4DD
 Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society branch
 To the Manager of Bank/Building Society
 Address Postcode
 Originator's Identification Number
 For GMB official use only. This is not part of the instruction to your Bank/Building Society. If your A/C number is not available fill in your address below.
 Instructions to your Bank or Building Society. Please pay GMB Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with GMB and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.
 Signature(s)
 Date
 Name(s) of account holder(s)
 Bank/Building Society Account Number
 Bank/Building Society Sort Code
 Reference number (Office use only)

GMB campaigning for better health & safety

Security workers

Workers in the security industry are involved with preserving the safety and security of people, premises and goods, but their own health and safety and security is often neglected. GMB is committed to working with employers to improve health and safety and ensure that our members are safe at work. The security industry is undergoing many changes, and GMB continually campaigns for improved pay and conditions, better standards and full compliance with the licensing requirements and other government regulations for the industry. GMB has a track record of tackling cases where conditions for security workers are below legal requirements. This leaflet looks at the health and safety risks of security work and what can be done to address them. If you have any concerns about safety at work, GMB can provide you with advice, support and assistance.

Join GMB, Britain's General Union and ensure you receive the same protection and advice as thousands of your colleagues.

If you are not yet a member of GMB JOIN TODAY at www.gmb.org.uk

GMB, Britain's General Union, is the union for the security industry. GMB represents many thousands of members in security, including those working as:

- drivers, security guards, ATM operatives, cash processors and vault operatives working with cash and valuables in transit;
- static security guards in control rooms, shops, offices, building sites, public buildings, government premises and airports etc.;
- mobile patrols and keyholders;
- prisoner escort and custodial officers in the immigration service, detention centres and the prison service;
- retail store detectives;
- door supervisors and event security staff;
- managerial, supervisory, clerical and administrative staff.

YOUR RIGHTS ON HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

Your employer has a legal duty to safeguard your health, safety and welfare whilst you are at work. Employers who fail to meet their duty to protect health and safety can be prosecuted and fined. They may also face compensation claims from employees who have been injured by their employers' negligence. GMB believes that avoiding accidents, injury and ill health is more important.

Under health and safety law your employer must:

- ensure that your environment and workplace are healthy and safe;
- carry out an assessment of the risks to your health and safety at work and put measures in place to reduce the chances of an injury or illness happening to you;
- ensure that a supply of drinking water and toilets are accessible to you;
- provide you with personal protective equipment, free of charge, if the health and safety risks of your job cannot be controlled adequately by any other means;
- provide you with information and instruction about the health and safety

hazards that you may be exposed to;

- train you how to carry out your job safely including training in what to do when faced with violence or aggression;
- consult with you and GMB safety representatives about health and safety at work.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES FOR SECURITY WORKERS

Poor health and safety conditions mean that many security workers suffer from high levels of work-related stress. Working in isolation, the risk of violence or threats, long working hours and inadequate rest and hygiene facilities can all contribute towards stress amongst security workers. The key to improving working conditions and reducing stress levels is to identify the causes and then for employers to take steps, as outlined below, to eliminate or control the health and safety risks faced by security workers. The Health & Safety Executive have produced guidance on management standards on stress which your employer should be following.

Manual handling

Lifting and handling heavy or awkward loads, such as cash boxes and cash bags, can lead to back and other strain injuries. Employers have a legal duty to avoid the need for manual handling where possible, but when it cannot be avoided, they must assess the risks from manual handling and take steps to reduce the risk of injury.

Preventative measures can include:

- providing handling and lifting aids;
- making sure that equipment is properly maintained;
- ensuring that loads (e.g. cash boxes, cash bags etc.) do not exceed agreed weight limits;
- taking individual capability into account when planning work;
- storing loads where they can be reached and handled safely.

Violence and aggression

Security workers are often at daily risk of threats, abuse and assault. Many security workers mistakenly see violence as 'part of the job' rather than a crime and are

therefore less likely to report it than other workers. GMB offers free legal advice and assistance to members who have been assaulted at work, or who have had allegations of assault made against them.

Employers must carry out a risk assessment and take measures to protect security staff from violence. These could include:

- improving the working environment—for example, by providing adequate lighting or securing items of furniture to the ground so that they cannot be used as weapons;
- ensuring sufficient numbers of staff are on duty in high-risk situations;
- issuing personal protective equipment, such as safety helmets with visors, where the risk of violence cannot be eliminated;
- providing training in how to respond appropriately to violent incidents.

Lone working and remote locations

Working alone or in a remote location can increase health and safety risks. For example, violence may be more likely to occur when a worker is isolated, and the risk of back strain increases if heavy loads have to be handled alone. If an accident or emergency occurs, it may be difficult to summon help. The law states that lone workers should not be at greater risk than any other worker.

GMB recommends that employers:

- provide a procedure for communicating back to base by telephone or radio;
- provide devices or systems to raise the alarm in the event of an emergency or non-contact from a lone worker;
- check that the worker has returned to their base on finishing the job;
- provide access to adequate first aid provision.

Lack of welfare facilities

Many security workers act as guards on the premises of other companies when the normal work has ceased for the day and welfare facilities may be unavailable. Night security are often expected to work long shifts and may be forbidden to leave the site.

Security staff are entitled to adequate welfare facilities including:

- accessible toilets, washing facilities and drinking water;
- a warm, comfortable rest room (if a suitable office is not available);
- facilities for making hot drinks and warming food, if they cannot leave the premises.

Exposure to adverse weather conditions

Security staff required to work outdoors in all weathers can be exposed to extreme cold or hot weather conditions. Employers must take reasonable steps to protect such workers from suffering health problems.

Where employees are expected to work outdoors in adverse weather conditions, protective measures can include:

- the provision of suitable protective clothing;
- facilities for drying and storing clothing;
- adequate rest breaks in comfortable surroundings;
- access to the welfare facilities described above.

Prolonged standing or sitting

Having to work in a static posture standing or sitting for long periods at a time can contribute to back and other muscular problems. Long periods of immobility are also a recognised risk factor for deep vein thrombosis.

Employers must provide suitable seating where work can be done sitting down. GMB also recommends that security work should be arranged so that workers can take regular short breaks from standing or sitting in order to walk around.

Display screen equipment

Many security workers use screen based equipment in their work. They may spend long periods looking at CCTV screens, or work in Alarm Receiving Centres, which rely on computers. Work with display screen equipment can contribute to a range of

health problems such as headaches, sore eyes, backache, and pains in the hands, wrists and neck.

Employers must assess display screen equipment workstations and reduce risks by:

- providing suitable and adjustable seating and workstations;
- organising work so that there are breaks and changes of activity;
- providing regular eyesight tests for users and paying for VDU spectacles if they are prescribed by an optician;
- providing training and information to users.

Biological and chemical hazards

Security workers can be exposed to hazardous chemicals and other substances that may be harmful to health. Security guards may encounter discarded needles, or have to deal with members of the public who pose a risk. Security guards in hospitals can be at risk of developing infections such as hepatitis B if they are exposed to human blood or bodily fluids. They may also be exposed to high levels of vehicle fumes in cash depots and warehouses, whilst those guarding workplaces that use chemicals may also be at risk, as they are often overlooked when any possible exposure is assessed.

Employers are required to:

- assess the risk of exposure to any biological or chemical hazard that might be encountered by security workers;
- prevent or control their exposure to the hazards, with personal protective equipment only being used as a last resort
- consider providing vaccination against hepatitis B, where there is an infection risk.

Patrolling and inspecting premises

Security staff are often required to inspect all parts of premises, including areas that other staff rarely enter. Security staff may be required to patrol areas such as rooftops

where there may be additional risks that will require safety precautions. A risk assessment should identify the steps to be taken to protect the health and safety of security staff.

The occupier of the site should ensure that it is in a safe condition, but the security company also has a duty to its employees. The occupier and security employer should liaise with each other to:

- ensure that areas where guards are expected to patrol are safe and without risks;
- provide adequate information, instruction, supervision and training to enable them to avoid danger;
- provide suitable equipment, such as a torch, radio etc.

Training

Providing adequate health and safety training is an important way of protecting security workers. However, training has often been minimal and all too frequently security workers have been ill-prepared to deal with the risks they encounter, such as violence.

GMB campaigned vigorously for regulation of the industry. The Private Security Industry Act 2001 means that previously unregulated sectors of the industry have to be licensed. Employers will now have to ensure that all security staff are trained and competent to do the work.

Health and Safety training should be provided for all security staff and should include topics such as:

- dealing appropriately with incidents of aggression and violence, and the procedure for reporting such incidents;
- the specific health and safety risks of the job, such as manual handling, lone working procedures, use of equipment etc.;
- emergency and fire procedures;
- first aid.