

Health & Safety

Inspection Checklist



Please photocopy before use



Safety reps have extensive legal rights to carry out inspections of the workplace. It is important for GMB Safety Reps to exercise this right and undertake regular inspections. Inspecting the workplace allows you to meet your members and discuss their concerns. This shows that you are serious about tackling the health and safety issues which affect them and helps to maintain the GMB's profile. For full details of when you are entitled to inspect see Section Six of the *GMB Safety Reps Handbook*.

This checklist is designed to help Safety Reps carry out workplace inspections. Its aim is to help you cover some of the most important areas and consider what improvements need to be made. Some of the questions may not apply to your particular workplace and some new ones may need to be added. The best checklists are those developed by Safety Reps using their knowledge and experience of their workplace. Use this checklist as a basis for developing one of your own, amending it where necessary to suit your needs.

The checklist will not solve your problems, but it is a tool for identifying the priority areas for improvements. Carry out regular inspections and use your checklist each time you do so. Check the accident book before you inspect to find out details of any accidents which may have occurred. When you are on your rounds, communicate with your members. Listen to what they have to say and take note of their suggestions for improvements. Conducting short surveys amongst your membership can also provide useful information on their common problems and concerns.

How to use this checklist

- 1 Photocopy this checklist to use as the basis of your own customised version. Add items which are relevant to your particular workplace on additional sheets of paper, based upon the list on the back page. You will need to develop your own questions for these areas. The question already listed on the following pages cover a number of basic areas only, although many of them will apply to most workplaces. Drawing up your own customised version will allow you to ask the questions which you want to about health and safety in your workplace. This way you will have a checklist which suits your needs. You do not have to cover all the areas listed, so ignore anything on the checklist which doesn't apply.
- 2 Decide which works areas are to be inspected. If you work in a small establishment it may be appropriate to check the whole area. In the case of a larger establishment, particular workplaces or sections can be inspected separately.
- 3 As you inspect, work through the questions on your checklist and decide which measures need to be taken according the following procedure:
 - a) If action is not needed (ie improvements have already been carried out or the inspection has found the area to be safe) tick the NO ACTION column opposite the relevant question.
 - b) If improvements are needed tick the ACTION column. The ACTION column should also be ticked if measures have already been taken but further action is necessary.
 - c) If urgent action is necessary tick the URGENT ACTION column.
 - d) In the COMMENTS section, write your notes on the action which needs to be taken. You may need extra paper to take notes whilst carrying out your inspection.
- 4 After the inspection, insure that management is informed of the problems and take appropriate action to resolve them. Always make your reports in writing using your *GMB Safety Representatives Report Forms*. See Sections Six and Seven of the *GMB Safety Reps Handbook* for more information on action after the inspection and resolving problems. Keep a record of the date, the area(s) inspected and a copy of the checklist for your records. Use your copy to check that management have taken the appropriate action.

	NO ACTION	ACTION	URGENT ACTION	COMMENTS
LIGHTING				
Are all areas of the workplace, including relevant outside areas adequately lit?				
Have excessive glare and reflections have been eliminated?				
Are workstations properly positioned to make the best use of natural light?				
Is local lighting provided to workstations where necessary?				
Is emergency lighting provided, with an independent power source which activates automatically when normal lighting fails?				
Does emergency lighting provide enough light?				

NOISE				
Is the workplace too noisy?				
Is noise reduced at source by the provision of properly designed, well maintained and adjusted tools or machines?				
Are noise levels reduced by the use of sound-absorbent materials?				
Can the source of any excessive noise be enclosed or isolated?				
Is suitable hearing protection provided if noise levels cannot be reduced by any other means?				

TEMPERATURE, VENTILATION & EXTRACTION				
Is the workplace too hot or too cold?				
Can measures be taken to control temperature extremes?				
Is there enough natural ventilation in the workplace, eg windows or open doorways?				
If natural ventilation is insufficient, are ventilators, fans or air conditioners provided to ensure a consistent flow of fresh air?				
Is machinery and equipment which generates heat or fumes isolated or enclosed?				
Are adequate extraction systems fitted to machinery or equipment, or is local exhaust ventilation provided where necessary?				
Are ventilation and extraction systems regularly cleaned and maintained to ensure their efficiency?				

HOUSEKEEPING & WASTE MATERIALS				
Is the workplace kept generally clean and tidy?				
Are appropriate and convenient storage racks provided for tools, raw materials, parts and products?				
Are oil spills and other 'slips, trips and falls' hazards promptly cleaned up or removed?				
Are all work areas cleaned and tidied up daily (or more frequently if necessary), with all hazardous waste materials disposed of properly?				
Are there enough waste receptacles or containers of adequate size?				
Is there provision for proper drainage of waste water or other liquids?				

	NO ACTION	ACTION	URGENT ACTION	COMMENTS
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TRAFFIC ROUTE & PASSAGEWAYS

Are there separate routes for pedestrians and traffic (eg fork lift trucks, etc) in the workplace?

Are aisles, passageways and traffic routes free from obstructions and other hazards, and clearly marked for safe movement of people, vehicles and materials?

Have measures been taken to prevent workers from being struck by moving materials or vehicles?

Are warning notices, signs or signals posted where hazardous conditions exist?

Are barriers placed around temporary floor openings, and used to restrict access to dangerous machines and processes?

Are sharp, dangerous or hot objects removed, or located so that workers cannot be hurt accidentally?

EMERGENCY EXITS

Are all fire escapes and routes to emergency exit free from obstacles?

Are all emergency escape exits clearly marked?

Are there enough fire extinguishers of the correct type within easy reach and near each exit?

Have workers been instructed in the evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency?

FALLS OR FALLING OBJECTS

Are all staircases secure and fitted with suitable handrails?

Are ladders, platforms, crawling boards and other equipment for working at heights in good repair and suitable for the task?

Are all fragile roofs and surfaces clearly identified?

Have measures been taken to prevent falls into vessels containing dangerous substances?

Are materials and objects adequately stored or stacked to prevent them from falling and causing injury?

Are vehicles unloaded safely, without workers having to climb on top vehicles or loads?

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Are there any exposed, loose or entangled wires or connections?

Are all switchboxes, panel boards and sockets provided with suitable covers?

Is all electrical equipment effectively earthed?

Is all electrical equipment regularly inspected for signs of wear and tear?

	NO ACTION	ACTION	URGENT ACTION	COMMENTS
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HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

Have all substances used in the workplace been assessed and adequately controlled under the COSHH Regulations?				
Have safer materials and substances been substituted where possible?				
Are dust or fume producing machines enclosed or isolated?				
Are sources of hazardous gases or vapours completely enclosed or sealed?				
Is local exhaust ventilation adequate? Is it regularly cleaned and maintained?				
Is suitable protective equipment provided where exposure cannot be controlled by other means?				

HANDLING HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Is work organised to eliminate or minimise the handling of hazardous materials?				
Where direct handling is unavoidable, are workers provided with suitable personal protective equipment, clothing and gloves?				
Are there emergency procedures and facilities for dealing with chemical spillages and other accidents?				
Are all hazardous substances and materials properly labelled?				
Is suitable protective equipment provided with the full information, instruction and training on the hazards of the materials?				

PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Has the need to use personal protective equipment been minimised by the introduction of other risk control measures?				
Is the protective equipment provided (eg safety glasses, face shields, masks, ear defenders, safety footwear, helmets, gloves, etc) suitable for the task?				
Has all protective equipment which is used only at work been provided at no cost to the worker?				
Is all protective equipment in good condition and well maintained?				
Have all workers who use personal protective equipment been provided with full information on the risks they are being protected from, and given instruction and training on proper use of the equipment?				

	NO ACTION	ACTION	URGENT ACTION	COMMENTS
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MACHINE SAFETY

Are all moving parts of machines and equipment fitted with appropriate guards?				
Are all machinery guards securely fastened to the machines?				
Do machines have safety cut-out switches or other safety devices to prevent the operation of machines while workers' hands are in danger?				
Can emergency stop controls be easily reached by all machine operators?				
Are safety devices and controls regularly checked, and the machines properly maintained to ensure safe working?				
Is maintenance work carried out safely, and machinery maintenance logs kept up to date?				

TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

Are tools and work equipment suitable for the job?				
Are tools of appropriate size, and shaped for easy and safe use?				
Are locking devices (or similar) fitted to tools to reduce gripping or handling force and vibration?				
Are all tools and equipment kept in good repair and properly maintained?				
Has the location where the equipment or tools are being used been assessed to identify any particular risks which may arise? For example, working in confined spaces or a flammable atmosphere?				
Is training provided for those who use tools and work equipment, and also for their managers and supervisors?				

LIFTING & HANDLING

Have all work tasks been assessed to determine whether the handling of loads can be avoided altogether?				
Have manual handling assessments taken account of factors other than weight, such as the size and shape of the load and the condition of the work environment?				
Is mechanical equipment, such as lever, conveyors, vacuum lifters, cranes, lift trucks and trolleys used to avoid manual handling?				
Can the load be altered (for example, by reducing the size or weight or providing handles) to reduce the risk of injury?				
Are workers properly trained in lifting and other manual handling techniques?				

	NO ACTION	ACTION	URGENT ACTION	COMMENTS
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WORK DESIGN

Does the layout of working surfaces, controls and equipment cause workers to bend, stretch or adopt awkward postures?				
Are footstands or platforms provided for standing workers to avoid the need to work with raised hands or arms?				
Are workbenches or tables for seated workers positioned at the correct height to avoid awkward hand and are positions?				
Are frequently operated switches and controls easily distinguishable from each other by clearly identified sizes, shapes, colours and positions?				
Are all racks, storage bins and materials within easy reach of workers?				

SEATING

Could work which is carried out standing be done just as well whilst seated?				
Are all seats individually adjustable to suit the height of the work surface and posture of the worker, and are footrests provided when necessary?				
Are seats in good condition, with comfortable surfaces and cushions?				
Do chairs have correctly sized and positioned backrests to provide lower back support?				

FIRST AID FACILITIES

Is there at least one fully equipped first aid box provided in all workplaces?				
Where necessary, is there a first aid room with adequate facilities and equipment (taking into account the type of work or workplace, the numbers employed, etc)?				
Is there a sufficient number of qualified first-aiders?				
Are qualified first-aiders available at all times (on late and night shifts, for example)?				

WORKPLACE FACILITIES

Are there sufficient toilet facilities near to work areas, with separate hand washing facilities and an adequate supply of hot water, soap or hand cleaners?				
Are toilet and washing facilities regularly cleaned and in a sanitary condition?				
Is a clean locker room provided for changing clothes, with facilities for separating soiled working clothes from personal clothing?				
Is there a comfortable separate room for workers to take rest breaks?				
Is there a separate rest room (or area of the rest room) for non-smokers?				
Is there a rest room for pregnant women and nursing mothers, near to sanitary facilities and with somewhere to lie down?				
Is there an adequate supply of fresh drinking water?				
Is there a separate, hygienic and comfortable eating area which is adequate for the numbers employed?				



The questions on the preceding pages will not cover all the things you may need to check during the course of your inspection. They will get you started, but you will need to add subjects from the list opposite to your checklist. The exact items you add will depend upon the particular circumstances in your workplace.

You will need to develop specific questions for each subject, perhaps after you have carried out one or two inspections to get the feel of things. The list opposite is not exhaustive and there may be other areas or subjects not listed which need to be checked at your workplace. Use your knowledge and experience of the workplace to add anything which is not listed to your own customised checklist.

Some items which may need to be checked could include:

- Accident reporting arrangements
- Asbestos
- Boilers and boiler-rooms
- Cleanliness (windows, work surfaces, general state of the building etc)
- Competent persons—their appointment and ability (ie the skills and knowledge to do the job)
- Deliveries to, and goods out of, the workplace
- Doors, gates and escalators
- Dust control measures
- Display screen equipment (VDUs)
- Eye protection
- Food hygiene
- Fire precautions
- Health and safety training and instruction
- Health surveillance arrangements
- Information provision
- Loading and unloading (of goods, materials, products etc)
- Lone workers
- Maintenance activities
- Non routine operations (for example, work activities which don't necessarily happen everyday, or those that are not being carried out at the time of inspection)
- Occupational health provision
- Office furniture and equipment
- Overcrowding and space requirements
- Protection of pregnant women and nursing mothers
- Planned changes to processes, machinery or work organisation
- Risk assessments
- Transport
- Safe systems of work
- Safety supervision and management
- Supervision and training for young and inexperienced workers
- Shiftwork arrangements
- Violence to staff
- Welfare and welfare facilities
- Work in confined spaces
- Workers with exceptional or addition needs (eg, safety systems and welfare facilities covering the needs of disabled workers, young workers, trainees etc)
- Work organisation (ie too much work, repetitive or monotonous work, too little control over how the job is done etc)
- Working time and rest breaks (systems of work or work schedule, too few rest breaks or difficulties taking breaks)

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