

MANAGING HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and Safety law is regularly spoken about and often misunderstood. This guide provides an overview of what is required of you as a business owner in terms of managing the health and safety of your employees and customers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Main principles

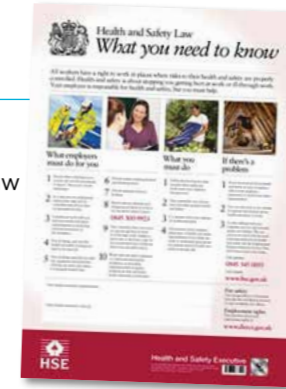
Your obligations with regard to the health, safety and welfare of your staff and customers are contained in the Health and Safety at Work Etc Act 1974.

The most important thing to know about Health and Safety at work law, is that everyone is responsible for ensuring the safety of others. So if anyone working in your business sees something that could cause harm to them, a colleague or a customer it is their responsibility to report it and make sure it is safe.

Poster

Every workplace should have on display the Health and Safety Law poster – it looks like this:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/lawposter-a2.htm>



The main points to know from this poster are:

- Follow the training that you have received, particularly when using equipment in your job.
- Take reasonable care of your own and other people's health and safety.
- Tell someone (your employer or supervisor) if you think there is something or someone that may be putting anyone's' health and safety at risk.

Getting started

The first step in managing health and safety is to have a thorough look at your store and consider what the realistic potential risks are to your staff and customers. Some of the common risks you should consider are set out on pages 4 and 5.

This guide includes a handy checklist that can help you to think through what types of things you should be covering in your health and safety policy. A template checklist is available for members only to download and use here (or at www.acs.org.uk/advice).

Getting outside help

In almost all cases you should be able to manage your health and safety yourself or through a manager that you appoint to manage health and safety in your business. However you can seek outside advice. If you are considering this then you can find advice on seeking outside professional advice from the HSE at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/talkingleaflets/index.htm>

Written policy

If you operate a business that employs more than five people, then you are legally required to have a written health and safety policy. You can choose to have a policy if you have fewer employees.

The Health and Safety Executive advises that a policy should be in three sections:

- The statement of general policy on health and safety at work sets out your commitment to managing health and safety effectively, and what you want to achieve.
- The responsibility section sets out who is responsible for specific actions.
- The arrangements section contains the detail of what you are going to do in practice to achieve the aims set out in your statement of health and safety policy.

A template policy is available for members only to download from www.acs.org.uk/advice

2. RISKS AND HAZARDS

Look closely at your shop and stock room area and think about what the risks are that someone might injure themselves; think about how and where items are stacked; what, if any, trip hazards there are, the lighting in the shop and security for staff.

Identifying these risks and having in place measures to manage them is what is required of you in managing health and safety.

LOOSE CABLES

You should make sure you are not using equipment in a way that leaves trailing electrical cables or other trip hazards on the shop floor.

WET FLOOR

Wet floors are a common cause of slips and trips by staff and customers. Think about your policy with regard to when and how you wash the floor during store opening hours and always ensure you have signs.

CHEMICAL HANDLING

Always make sure you and your employees have read the labels of chemicals you are using in the business. Follow the safety instructions set out on the products.

STOCK REPLENISHMENT

Staff should be trained to ensure that they use roll cages and other stock replenishment equipment safely. Main risks include badly or overly stacked cages, or pushing equipment into or in the way of customers.

SPILLAGES AND BROKEN GLASS

There are lots of items on the shelf in-store that can break and spill. You should be taking immediate action to warn people about the hazard and clearing it up as quickly as possible.

LIGHTING

All areas of your store, including your stock room, should be well lit when people are using them so as to ensure they are able to conduct their work safely.

STACKING AND STORING PRODUCTS

Careful attention should be given to how a product is stacked in the stock room and on the shop floor. Items stacked too high or in a haphazard way can cause a significant risk of products falling and causing injury. Heavier products should be stacked lower down with lighter items above.

WORKING AT HEIGHT

This is a major risk area. If you have shelving or other storage that requires your staff to use ladders, you must ensure they are fully trained in how to use them. You should also consider carefully how you arrange your stock room and as far as possible avoid heavy items being stacked on high shelves.

ABUSE AND VIOLENCE

You or your staff could be subjected to verbal abuse or even physical violence. Main flashpoints include refusal of underage sales and apprehending shop thieves. You should think carefully about the training you provide and the ways to ensure your staff feel secure when working in your store.

SAFE HANDLING

All staff should be trained in safe techniques for lifting heavy items. A training guide is available to download for members only at www.acs.org.uk/advice

This illustration sets out some of the common risks that can present in a convenience store and is meant to be used for training purposes. It is not intended to be a definitive list.

3. CONDUCTING RISK ASSESSMENTS

A risk assessment is a way of preventing accidents and ill health in the work place by identifying the risks and then thinking of ways the risks can be minimised or eliminated.

The risk assessment is a process whereby the risk is identified, a strategy for dealing with it is devised and finally once this has been considered and agreed, it is recorded in the form of a written assessment document. The document is a record of the first two stages.

The risk assessments you have will depend on the type of store you work in and the services you offer, but every store should have the following assessments in place:

- Fire risk assessment
- General risk assessment.

Fire risk assessment

You must conduct a Fire Risk Assessment for your premises and keep it up to date. The risk assessment is likely to cover how to:

- Detect fires and how to warn people quickly if they start, eg installing smoke alarms and fire alarms or bells.
- Have the correct fire-fighting equipment for putting a fire out quickly.
- Keep fire exits and escape routes clearly marked and unobstructed at all times.
- Ensure good housekeeping at all times, eg avoid build-up of rubbish that could burn.
- Ensure your workers receive appropriate training on procedures they need to follow.

General risk assessment

A general risk assessment is designed to cover all the potential risks that are present to your employees and customers using the shop.

Use the ACS template checklist as a basis for establishing what you think the main potential risks that are present in your business. This can be downloaded by members only at www.acs.org.uk/advice

These risks may arise because of the nature of the building your shop is in, or the goods you sell or the hours you operate. You do not have to include every possible risk, only the ones you carefully consider to be the most relevant to your store.

Circumstances when additional risk assessments are required

You must ask all employees to inform you if they are pregnant as soon as they are comfortable doing so and no later than 15 weeks before the week the baby is due. A separate dedicated risk assessment should be carried out for any staff that are pregnant. You should carefully consider what additional risks a pregnant employee could face (for example: heavy lifting and long periods stood up without anywhere to sit down) and what aspects of their role can or should be conducted differently. You should record these in a dedicated risk assessment using the template at www.acs.org.uk/advice. You should conduct this risk assessment either in direct consultation with the employee or inform them of the details of the assessment you have undertaken, and that they agree with your assessments.

You should conduct separate risk assessments for any employees that are under the age of 18 years old (for example: young people employed to undertake home news delivery). You should carefully consider the additional risks that a young person faces working in your store or working on a newspaper delivery route. In the case of home news delivery safety of equipment, use of bicycle helmets and a means to ensure they have a means of contacting someone if they having any problems or safety concerns.

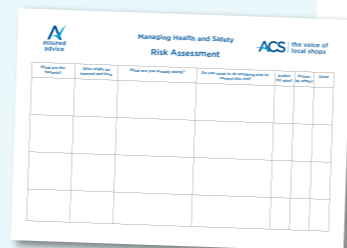
If your store regularly receives stock deliveries, then you should consider having a dedicated safe delivery risk assessment. Your wholesaler should be able to advise you on this and may have one in place that you can use.

If your store has a petrol forecourt, a petroleum risk assessment will also need to be carried out.

All of the above risk assessments are your responsibility as the business owner, but you can delegate a store manager or supervisor to conduct them.

Risk assessment template

A members only template risk assessment form for use in your business is available at www.acs.org.uk/advice



4. REPORTING ACCIDENTS

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) requires you to record accidents that occur to you, your employees or your customers.

Accidents that cause injury to employees

You must record any accident that leads to a person who is injured at work being incapacitated for more than three days.

You must record **and report** any accident that results in an injury that results in one of the following:

- Work-related deaths.
- Work-related accidents which cause certain specified serious injuries to workers (see list in box), or which result in a worker being incapacitated for more than seven consecutive days.
- Cases of those industrial diseases listed in RIDDOR.
- Certain 'dangerous occurrences' (near-miss accidents).
- Most of these are unlikely to be relevant to convenience stores except:
 - Any fire that results in the shop being closed for more than 24 hours.
 - Explosions (especially is related to storage of explosive items like fireworks).

If you have to report a work related death, injury or near miss then you must do so online at www.hse.gov.uk/riddor and complete the form. This is then submitted to the RIDDOR database and forwarded to your local Environmental Health Department. For deaths and specified injuries you may report via telephone on **0845 300 9923** between 8:30am and 5pm Monday to Friday. If you need to report a death or serious incident outside of these hours please refer to <http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/contact.htm#out-of-hours>

Accidents that cause injury to customers

You should record any accidents that occur to customers if the accident leads to them being taken directly to hospital.

You should report any accidents that occur to customers if the accident leads to an injury on the specific injury list (see box).

There is no need to report incidents where people are taken to hospital purely as a precaution when no injury is apparent.

Specific Injuries that have to be reported

- Fractures, other than to fingers, thumbs and toes.
- Amputations.
- Any injury likely to lead to permanent loss of sight or reduction in sight.
- Any crush injury to the head or torso causing damage to the brain or internal organs.
- Serious burns (including scalding) which:
 - Cover more than 10% of the body.
 - Causes significant damage to the eyes, respiratory system or other vital organs.
- Any scalping requiring hospital treatment.
- Any loss of consciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia.
- Any other injury arising from working in an enclosed space which:
 - Leads to hypothermia or heat-induced illness.
 - Requires resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours.

Accident report template

Many businesses choose to purchase and use the HSE Accident Book.

This can be obtained from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/accident-book.htm>



However you can make your own book using the template provided for members only at www.acs.org.uk/advice. The best way to do this is to have a dedicated ring binder or folder that contains template forms that can be filled out when an accident occurs.

It is important that when filling out a new report the person reporting or anyone else is not able to read other accident reports.

5. SAFE HANDLING

Around a third of all workplace accidents reported are as a result of poor manual handling, which means incorrect lifting or handling of goods. It is also a common cause of

accidents for people working in convenience stores. Poor manual handling most commonly lead to back injuries, but it can also cause injuries to the neck, arms and legs.

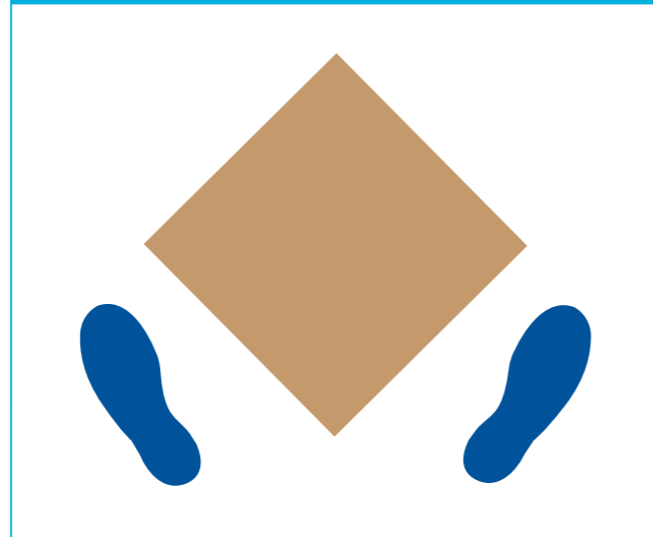
1. EXAMINE THE LOAD



Before lifting

- Examine the load – do you know what is in the load? Are the items heavy?
- Is the load sharp, hot or damaged?
- Is the load unstable and the contents likely to shift?
- Will you need equipment to lift the load?

2. FEET PLACEMENT



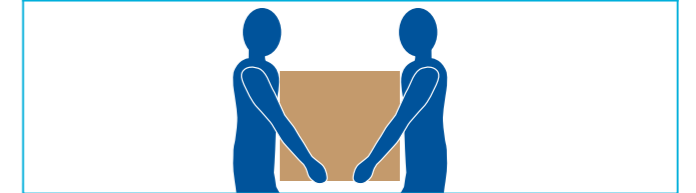
- Place your feet apart, this gives you balance and stability for when you lift the load.

5. HOLDING THE LOAD CORRECTLY



- Keep the head and neck straight whilst lifting.

6. IS THE LOAD TOO LARGE FOR ONE PERSON?



When assessing a load you may decide it is too heavy or too big to be lifted by one person. This may be because:

- The load is too big and to lift it you would have to reach forward awkwardly to hold on to it.
- You can feel the strain in your arms or legs when you try to lift it.
- When lifting the load your line of sight is obscured.

When lifting as two people ensure:

- You stick to the same posture and techniques as when lifting on your own.
- Move at the same pace and communicate clearly.

3. GOOD POSTURE



- Adopt a good posture – keeping your back straight.
- Bend your knees NOT your back.
- Lean forward a little over the load.
- Get a firm grip.
- Don't flex the back any further while you are lifting.

4. HOLDING THE LOAD CORRECTLY



- Keep the load close to the waist, keeping the heaviest side of the load next to the body.

7. PLACING THE LOAD

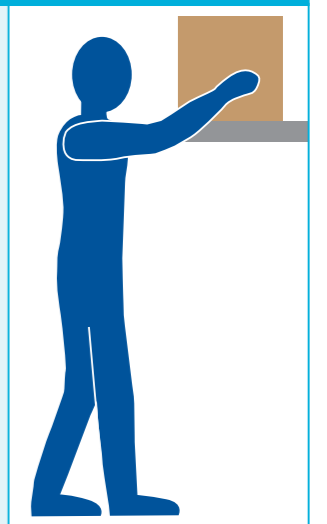


- Lift the load smoothly, keep control of the load.
- When putting the load down do so smoothly keeping back and neck straight.
- Never intentionally drop or throw a load.

8. LIFTING ABOVE SHOULDER HEIGHT

Occasionally you may need to lift a load which is awkward/heavy above your shoulders. Follow these steps:

- Keep the load close to your body.
- Place your feet shoulder width apart with one foot in front of the other.
- Using your arm and shoulder muscles, raise the load, keeping your balance on your front and back foot.
- As the load is lifted shift your weight into your front foot whilst keeping your back straight.



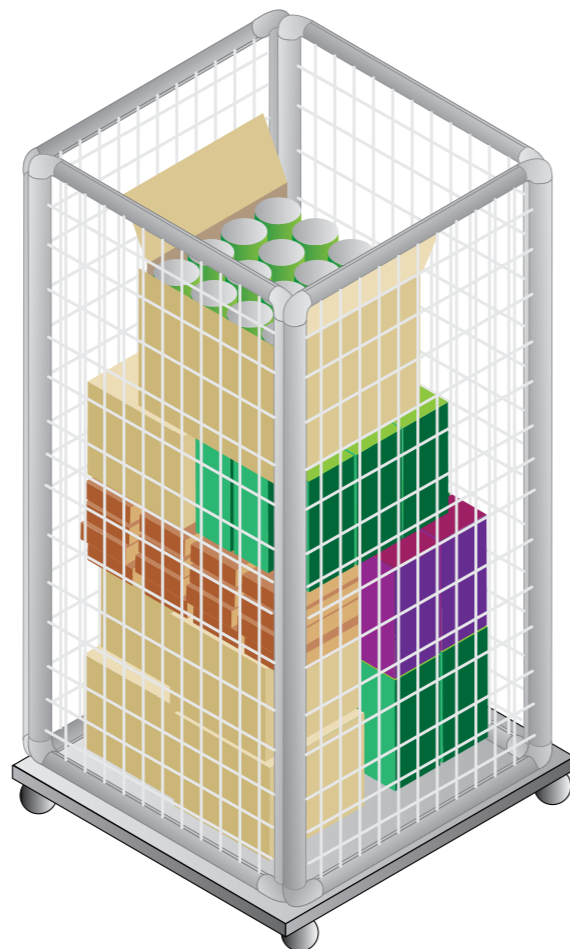
6. USING EQUIPMENT

When you are working around the store you may use many different pieces of equipment such as roll cages, case cutters, dollies, ladders, kick stools and there are many more that you will probably use within your workplace.

Before using any piece of equipment you and your staff must be familiar with the instructions on how they are used safely. You should ensure that all staff are aware of the instructions and or trained in their use.

Roll cages

- Products should not be stacked above the height of the sides of the roll cage.
- Load the cage safely – heavier, bulky loads at the bottom, lighter, fragile loads at the top.
- Tighten the straps on the roll cage before moving.
- Use the upright bars not the strapping to move the cage.
- Wherever possible, a roll cage should be pushed, as this is ergonomically better than pulling it.
- Make sure the route is clear before moving a roll cage.
- Beware of tight doorways and spaces – especially risk of trapping hands.
- Ask for help when moving a cage on a slope.
- If a roll cage is damaged – don't use it.



7. FIRST AID

Most convenience store environments would be considered to be a small workplace with low risk hazards. If you employ less than 25 people then you are required to meet the following minimum standards:

- You should have a suitably stocked first-aid kit.
- An appointed person to take charge of first-aid arrangements (this person does not have to be formally trained in first aid).
- Information for employees about first-aid arrangements.



There are no rules on what your first aid kit must contain, however as a guide the HSE suggests the following contents:

- 20 individually wrapped sterile plasters (of assorted sizes), appropriate to the type of work (you can provide hypoallergenic plasters if necessary).
- Two sterile eye pads.
- Four individually wrapped triangular bandages, preferably sterile.
- Six safety pins.
- Two large, individually wrapped, sterile, unmedicated wound dressings.
- Six medium-sized, individually wrapped, sterile, unmedicated wound dressings.
- At least three pairs of disposable gloves (you can find more advice at www.hse.gov.uk/skin/employ/gloves.htm).

Medicine such as pain killers must not be stored in the first aid box.

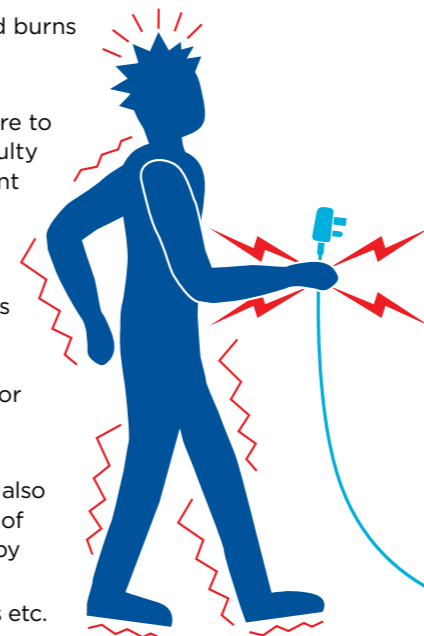
8. ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Electricity can kill or severely injure people and cause damage to property. However, you can take simple precautions when working with or near electricity and electrical equipment to significantly reduce the risk of injury to you, your workers and others around you. This section provides a summary of those precautions.

What are the hazards?

The main hazards of working with electricity are:

- Electric shocks and burns from contact with live parts.
- Injury from exposure to arcing, fire from faulty electrical equipment or installations.
- Explosion caused by unsuitable electrical apparatus or static electricity igniting flammable vapours or dusts, for example in a spray paint booth.
- Electric shocks can also lead to other types of injury, for example by causing a fall from ladders or scaffolds etc.



What do I have to do?

You must ensure an assessment has been made of any electrical hazards, which covers:

- Who could be harmed by them.
- How the level of risk has been established.
- The precautions taken to control that risk.

The risk assessment should take into consideration the type of electrical equipment used, the way in which it is used and the environment that it is used in.

You must make sure that the electrical installation and the electrical equipment is:

- Suitable for its intended use and the conditions in which it is operated.
- Only used for its intended purpose.

Maintenance

So far as is reasonably practicable, you must make sure that electrical equipment and installations are maintained to prevent danger.

Users of electrical equipment, including portable appliances, should carry out visual checks. Remove the equipment from use immediately and check it, repair it or replace it if:

- The plug or connector is damaged.
- The cable has been repaired with tape, is not secure, or internal wires are visible etc.
- Burn marks or stains are present (suggesting overheating).

Repairs should only be carried out by a competent person (someone who has the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to carry out the work safely).

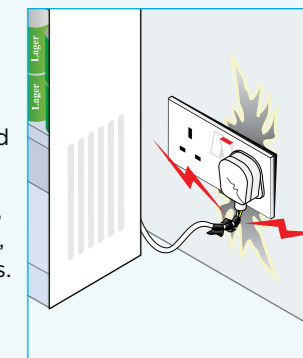
Have more frequent checks for items more likely to become damaged (eg portable electrical tools and equipment that is regularly moved, or used frequently or in arduous environments). Less frequent checks are needed for equipment less likely to become damaged (eg desktop computers etc).

Visual checks are not usually necessary for small, battery-powered items, or for equipment that works from a mains-powered adaptor (laptops or cordless phones etc). However, the mains-powered adaptor for such equipment should be visually checked.

Make arrangements for inspecting and testing fixed wiring installations, ie the circuits from the meter and consumer unit supplying light switches, sockets, wired-in equipment (eg cookers, hairdryers) etc, to be carried out regularly so there is little chance of deterioration leading to danger.

Key points to remember

- Ensure that workers know how to use the electrical equipment safely.
- Make sure enough sockets are available. Check that socket outlets are not overloaded by using unfused adaptors as this can cause fires.
- Ensure there are no trailing cables that can cause people to trip or fall.
- Switch off and unplug appliances before cleaning or adjusting them.
- Make sure anyone working with electricity has sufficient skills, knowledge and experience to do so. Incorrectly wiring a plug can be dangerous and lead to fatal accidents or fires.
- Stop using equipment immediately if it appears to be faulty – have it checked by a competent person.
- Ensure any electrical equipment brought to work by employees, or any hired or borrowed equipment, is suitable for use before using it and remains suitable by being maintained as necessary.



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is provided by the Association of Convenience Stores in consultation with Surrey Heath Borough Council. It was last updated in January 2026. Please refer to the ACS website for the most current version of this guidance.

ACS Primary Authority Scheme

This advice was developed by ACS and Surrey Heath Borough Council; as part of a dedicated primary authority scheme. This means that all the advice that has this mark against it is 'Assured Advice'.

Assured Advice means that if you adopt this policy in your business, then it must be respected by all other local authorities and they cannot ask you to adopt a different policy.



This guide covers a range of different issues of best practice and law. Those that qualify as assured advice are marked by this hallmark.

To benefit from assured advice you must sign up to the ACS scheme. All ACS members can sign up to the ACS Primary Authority Scheme for details of how to join up visit www.acs.org.uk/advice

CONTACT

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