

Managers are required to prevent or control the risks to employees' health, safety and welfare from the equipment that they control or are required to use in the workplace. The guidance in this procedure is focused mainly on Kent County Council's (KCC) responsibilities under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER). Though PUWER applies to all lifting equipment, the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER) applies over and above the general requirements of PUWER, in dealing with the specific hazards/risks associated with lifting equipment and lifting operations. Managers should therefore consider the requirements of both sets of regulations when dealing with lifting and lifting equipment (see associated procedures and documentation).

Scope

When deciding what equipment is controlled or provided for use, managers need to decide who may be affected. They need to consider:

- Any equipment which is controlled or provided for use by an employee in the workplace e.g. hammers, ladders, photocopiers and motor vehicles.
- Any equipment owned or used by employees or the self employed at work. This must be suitable for the task and properly maintained.
- All workplaces and groups of staff, including lone workers, cleaners, night staff, contractors, agency staff, visitors and members of the public.
- Workplaces that are shared with another employer, in which case the manager must co-operate with them to ensure that the management of health and safety is co-ordinated.

The why, what and how

KCC carries out a number of work activities, both in-house and in partnership with external organisations. These involve using various types of work equipment.

When using work equipment, managers need to consider the risks associated with each type of equipment and how they can manage its safe and correct use.

In order to manage health and safety, managers are required to ensure that any equipment they control or provide for use, either in-house or externally, is:

- Maintained in a safe condition and inspected at regular intervals to ensure that it is, and continues to be, safe for use.
- Suitable for use and used for the purpose and in the environmental conditions it is designed for.
- Used only by people who have received adequate information, instruction and training

- accompanied by suitable safety measures e.g. protective devices, markings and warnings.

Managers must ensure that people who have to use any piece of work equipment have received adequate training, instruction and information to enable them to use the equipment safely.

Managers are advised to keep records of what information and training has been provided, who has received the training and on what date.

Employees are required to use the equipment as they have been trained to. They are to co-operate with others and take reasonable care of themselves and anyone who may be affected by their actions.

Where possible managers should ensure that any risks created by using the equipment are assessed and eliminated or controlled by:

- Taking appropriate 'hard measures' e.g. providing suitable guards, protection devices, marking and warning devices, system control devices (such as emergency stop buttons) and personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Taking appropriate 'soft measures' such as developing and following safe methods of working e.g. ensuring only trained employees use the equipment correctly, or that maintenance is only performed when the equipment is shut down and providing information, instruction and training to those who will be required to control or operate the equipment.

A combination of the above measures may be necessary, depending on the requirements of the work, the outcome of the risk assessment and how practical it is to implement the measures.

The associated procedures and documentation below refers to legislation and industry standards. To read these in greater detail visit [Knet/Kelsi](#).

Associated procedures and documentation

- Risk Assessment
- PPE Guidance
- Workplace, Health, Safety and Welfare regulations guidance
- Manual Handling

Documentation

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations (PPE) 1992
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Provision and use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998

- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (CDM) 2015
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998
- Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.
- HSE's guidance "Lighting at Work".

For further information on regulations please visit the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website or legislation.gov.uk.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is considered as 'using' equipment?

Using equipment includes starting or stopping equipment, operating, repairing and modifying it as well as maintaining, servicing, cleaning and transporting it.

Who should carry out a risk assessment?

A competent person must carry out risk assessments, ideally in conjunction with the person using the work equipment.

A competent person is someone who has had sufficient training and experience or knowledge of the workplace to enable them to undertake a risk assessment. They must have an ability to make sound judgments and a knowledge of the best way to reduce the risks identified.

Being aware of the activities conducted within their department and managing them safely should already be part of a manager's daily management practices. The risk assessment process is a formal record of how you successfully manage these risks on a regular basis. You should feel confident and aware of the activities you and your staff undertake before carrying out a risk assessment. If you feel you or your staff require further advice, please contact the Health and Safety Advice Line 03000 418456.

How do I carry out a risk assessment?

Please see the risk assessment documentation on Knet/Kelsi for guidance and example forms.

Specific factors to consider when identifying hazards and risks:

Specific risks

Where the use of work equipment is likely to involve a specific risk to health and safety, every manager should ensure that:

- The use of that equipment is restricted to those persons given the task of using it.

- Repairs, modifications, maintenance or servicing of that work equipment is restricted to those persons who have been specifically designated to perform operations on that description.

Dangerous parts of machinery

'Dangerous part' means that if a piece of work equipment could cause injury while being used in a foreseeable way, it can be considered a dangerous part.

Managers are required to ensure they take effective measures to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery or stop them moving before any part of a person enters a danger zone.

Managers are also required to protect or help protect people against other hazards associated with machinery, such as ejected particles and heat.

Your risk assessment should identify hazards presented by machinery and evaluate the nature of any possible injury, its severity and the likelihood of it occurring for each hazard identified. This will enable you to decide whether the level of risk is acceptable or if risk reduction measures are needed.

Control Systems

A control system is a system or device which responds to input signals and generates an output signal which causes the equipment being controlled to operate in a particular manner.

It should be possible to identify what each control does and what piece of equipment it relates to. Both the controls and their markings should be clearly visible.

As well as having legible wordings and symbols, factors such as the colour, shape and position of controls are important; a combination of these can often be used to reduce confusion.

Warnings

It may be appropriate to use warnings or warning devices where there are still risks to health after other hardware measures have been put in place. They may be incorporated into systems of work (including permit-to-work systems), and can require further information, instruction and training. A warning normally takes the form of a notice. Examples are positive instructions ("hard hats must be worn"), prohibitions ("not to be operated by people under 18 years") and restrictions ("do not heat above 60°C"). A warning device is an active unit that gives a signal; the signal may typically be visible or audible and is often connected into equipment so that it is active only when a hazard exists.

Stability

Many types of work equipment can fall over, collapse or overturn unless suitable precautions are taken to fix them to the ground by bolting, tying, fastening or clamping in some way and/or by stabilising them by ballasting or counterbalancing. Where ballasting or counterbalancing is used

for portable equipment, you should re-inspect the stabilising method each time the equipment is repositioned.

Certain types of mobile work equipment, such as access platforms, are inherently stable but can have their stability increased during use by means of outriggers or similar devices. While this equipment cannot be 'clamped' or 'fixed', steps must be taken to ensure that the equipment is always used within the limits of its stability.

High or very low temperatures

Managers need to ensure that work equipment, parts of work equipment and any article or substance produced, used or stored in work equipment which is at a high or very low temperature is protected where appropriate in order to prevent injury by burning, scalding or searing.

Lighting

Any place where people use work equipment should be suitably and sufficiently lit. The lighting should be adequate for the task.

Health surveillance

Managers need to check whether or not the measures taken are protecting employees as they are supposed to. Health surveillance will help you do this and will alert you to any adverse effects on an employee's health.

Some examples of health surveillance include:

- employees who are exposed to high noise levels being given hearing tests
- employees who are exposed to breathable dust being given lung function testing
- employees who are exposed to skin sensitisers being given regular skin tests.

For more information on health surveillance contact the Health and Safety Advice Line 03000 418456 or Staff Care Services (Occupational Health).

Where can I get health and safety help and advice?

Health and Safety Advisers are available to help you carry out your responsibilities. Help is also available from a number of individuals or departments i.e. Staff Care Services (Occupational Health), Total Facilities Management (TFM) and Trade Unions.

What information and instructions must I provide?

Information and instructions

Managers need to ensure they have given any employees who use work equipment adequate health and safety information. Where appropriate they should have written instructions about using work equipment.

Managers must make sure employees and others affected are aware of the risks they face in the workplace and that control measures have been put in place to manage the risks.

Managers need to make sure they communicate in a way that ensures all employees understand what is required of them. Consideration should be given to staff who may require alternative formats or more specific training to suit their individual needs.

Training

Those operating, managing or supervising the use of equipment need to have the appropriate training. This should include training in the methods to be adopted when using the work equipment, any risks associated with that use and the precautions that should be taken. NB: When allocating work to staff you must make sure that the demands of the task do not exceed their individual levels of knowledge or their capabilities.

Managers are advised to keep records of what information and training has been provided, who has received the training and on what date.

What is 'adequate training'?

Training requirements will vary according to such things as the job or activity involved and the work equipment in use. In general, managers will need to:

- Evaluate the competence of employees to manage, supervise and operate the full range of work equipment they will use.
- Train employees to fill any 'gaps' between their existing competence and the level they need to carry out the work with due regard to health and safety. This is particularly important where there is specific legislation relating to work that is being done or equipment that is being used i.e. work at height.

When is training necessary?

Training needs are likely to be greatest when staff are recruited, but there is also a need for training:

- if the risks to which people are exposed to change
- because new technology or equipment is introduced
- if the system of work changes.

Managers should also provide refresher training when necessary. Skills decline if they are not used regularly. Pay particular attention to people who deputise for others occasionally, as they may need more frequent refresher training than those who do the work regularly.

How do I select suitable work equipment?

Managers need to ensure that equipment is constructed or adapted so that it is suitable for the purpose for which it is to be used.

When selecting work equipment, every manager must take into account:

- the working conditions
- the risks to the health and safety of all the people who are working in the premises or where the work equipment is to be used
- any additional risk associated with the use of that work equipment.

Managers need to ensure that work equipment is used only for the specified tasks and under the conditions for which it is suitable.

Conformity with European Union (EU) requirements

Managers need to ensure that items of work equipment have been designed and constructed in compliance with any essential EU requirements i.e. CE marking.

How do I install equipment correctly?

Work equipment should always be installed by a competent person as per the manufacturers instructions and used in such a way as to reduce risks to the people using it.

The installation should take into account other workers. You should, for instance, ensure that there is sufficient space between all moving parts of the work equipment and fixed or moving parts around it.

When and how do I carry out regular maintenance?

Maintenance procedures should be carried out in accordance with any manufacturer's recommendations related to the equipment. The person carrying out the maintenance should be competent and have the necessary knowledge and experience.

Managers must ensure that work equipment is maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair, and that maintenance operations can be carried out without risk to those who are carrying it out.

While there is no legal requirement to keep a maintenance log, KCC does require that such records are kept.

A maintenance log can be either a simple paper record for lower level risk equipment or a more structured system for high risk.

When should I carry out inspections?

Where the safety of work equipment depends on the installation conditions, it must be inspected after installation and before being put into service for the first time, or after being assembled at a new site or in a new location, as per the manufacturers instructions.

Work equipment which is exposed to conditions that cause deterioration, or to exceptional circumstances that are likely to result in a dangerous situation, must be inspected at suitable intervals.

Why should I carry out inspections?

The purpose of an inspection is to identify where the equipment can be operated, adjusted and maintained safely and check that any deterioration (such as a defect or damage) can be detected and remedied before it results in an unacceptable risk.

What should be included in the inspection?

The extent of the inspection required will depend on the potential risks from the work equipment. Inspections should include, where appropriate, visual checks and testing.

The extent of the inspection will depend upon:

- the type of equipment
- where it is used
- how it is used
- how it is stored
- whether or not it is maintained at the required frequency
- manufacturers instructions.