

Elliott Nash Limited Office Welfare Procedure (SHE 14)

Introduction

This guidance and information document is intended to inform Regional Directors and other Managers of the requirements of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.

Elliott Nash Limited as an employer has a general duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees at work. The Workplace Regulations expand on these duties and apply to all places of work, except construction sites (CDM2007) and domestic households.

The Regulations cover a wide range of issues, aim to protect the health and safety of everyone in the workplace and ensure that adequate welfare facilities are provided for people at work.

Regulatory Requirements - Maintenance of Workplaces

The workplace and certain associated equipment and devices should be maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair. 'Efficient' in this context means efficient from the view of health, safety and welfare, not productivity or economy.

Maintenance is required for mechanical ventilation systems and equipment and devices which would cause a risk to health, safety or welfare if a fault occurred. This includes emergency lighting, fencing, fixed window cleaning equipment, devices for restricting the opening of windows, etc.

If a potentially dangerous defect is found, the defect should be rectified immediately or steps taken to protect anyone who might be put at risk, for example by preventing access until the defect can be put right or equipment replaced.

A system of maintenance is required where appropriate for certain equipment and devices and for ventilation systems. A suitable system of maintenance involves ensuring that:

- Regular maintenance is carried out at suitable intervals, including as necessary inspection, testing, adjustment, lubrication and cleaning
- Any potentially dangerous defects are remedied and access to defective equipment is prevented in the meantime
- Regular maintenance and remedial work is carried out properly
- A record is kept to ensure that the system is properly implemented and to assist in validating maintenance programmes.
- The frequency of regular maintenance, and precisely what it involves, will depend on the equipment or device concerned. The likelihood of defects developing and the foreseeable consequences are highly relevant. The age and condition of the equipment, how it is used and how often it is used should also be taken into account.

Section	Revision No	Issue Date	Review Date	Approved
SHE 14	1	July 2011	July 2012	Yes/BP

Ventilation

Workplaces should be adequately ventilated so that stale, hot or humid air is replaced at a reasonable rate by fresh or purified air and unpleasant smells are minimised.

Windows or other openings normally provide sufficient ventilation, but where necessary mechanical ventilation systems should be provided and regularly maintained. Ventilation should not subject staff to any uncomfortable draughts.

Temperature in Indoor Workplaces

The workroom temperature should ensure reasonable comfort without the need for additional clothing and be at least 16°C in office locations. If work involves physical effort it should be at least 13°C, unless other laws require a lower temperature.

In parts of the workplace other than workrooms, such as sanitary facilities or rest facilities, the temperature should be reasonable in all the circumstances including the length of time people are likely to be there. Changing rooms and shower rooms should not be cold.

Thermometers should be available at a convenient distance to enable temperatures to be measured throughout the workplace, but need not be provided in each workroom.

Where a reasonably comfortable temperature cannot be achieved throughout a workroom, local heating or cooling should be provided. In extremely hot weather fans and increased ventilation may be used instead of local cooling.

Where, despite the introduction of local heating or cooling, employees are exposed to temperatures which do not give reasonable comfort, suitable clothing and/or rest facilities should be provided. Where practical there should be systems of work (e.g. task rotation) to ensure that the length of time for which individual workers are exposed is limited.

Lighting

Lighting should be sufficient to enable people to work, use facilities and move from place to place both safely and without experiencing eye-strain. Stairs should be well lit in such a way that shadows are not cast over the main part of the treads.

Where necessary, local lighting should be provided at individual workstations and at places of particular risk such as pedestrian crossing points on vehicular traffic routes. Outdoor traffic routes used by pedestrians should be adequately lit after dark.

Dazzling lights and annoying glare should be avoided. Lights and light fittings should be of a type and located so that they do not cause a hazard, including electrical, fire, radiation or collision hazards. Light switches should be positioned so that they may be found and used easily and without risk.

Automatic emergency lighting, powered by an independent source, should be provided where sudden loss of light would create a risk.

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SHE 14	1	July 2011	July 2012	Yes/BP

Cleanliness and Waste Materials

Every workplace, the furniture, furnishings and fittings should be kept clean. It should also be possible to keep the surfaces of floors, walls and ceilings clean. Cleaning and the removal of waste should be carried out as necessary by an effective method, waste should be stored in suitable receptacles.

Apart from regular cleaning, cleaning should also be carried out when necessary in order to clear up spillages or to remove unexpected soiling of surfaces. Workplaces should be kept free from offensive waste matter or discharges, for example leaks from drains or sanitary conveniences.

Cleaning methods should not create any health and safety risks such as dust, fumes, slippery surfaces etc.

Floors and indoor traffic routes should be cleaned at least once per week. These tasks should be carried out more frequently where necessary to maintain a reasonable standard of cleanliness or to keep workplaces free of pests and decaying matter. This paragraph does not apply to parts of the workplace which are normally visited only for short periods.

Interior walls, ceilings and work surfaces should be cleaned at suitable intervals. Except in parts which are normally visited only for short periods, or where any soiling is likely to be light. Ceilings and interior walls should be painted, tiled or otherwise treated so that they can be kept clean and the surface treatment should be renewed when it can no longer be cleaned properly. This paragraph does not apply to parts of the workplace which cannot be safely reached using a 5 metre ladder.

Room Dimensions and Space

Workrooms should have enough free space to allow people to move about with ease. The volume of the room when empty, divided by the number of people normally working in it should be at least 11 cubic metres, (all or part of a room over 3.0 metres high should be counted as 3.0 metres high). Eleven cubic metres per member of staff is a minimum and may be insufficient depending on the layout, contents and the nature of the work.

Workstations and Seating

Workstations should be suitable for the work undertaken and the persons using them who should also be able to leave the workstation swiftly in an emergency. Workstations should allow any person who is likely to work there adequate freedom of movement and the ability to stand upright

If work can or must be done sitting, seats which are suitable for those using them and for the work being done should be provided. Seating should give adequate support for the lower back, footrests should be provided for staff who cannot place their feet flat on the floor.

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SHE 14	1	July 2011	July 2012	Yes/BP

Floors and Traffic Routes

'Traffic route' means a route for pedestrian traffic, vehicles or both and includes any stairs, fixed ladder, doorway, gateway, loading bay or ramp.

Workplace floors and traffic route surfaces must be suitably constructed for their intended uses and be kept free from obstructions, articles or substances likely to cause slips, trips or falls. They must not have any holes or unnecessary slopes, be uneven or slippery. Floors must be provided with adequate drainage where necessary.

The hazards from snow and ice should also be taken into account.

Additional measures need to be taken where pedestrians have to cross or share vehicle routes, these may include marking of routes, provision of crossing points, and barriers.

A handrail should be provided on at least one side of every staircase and on both sides if there is a particular risk, additional handrails may be required down the centre of wide staircases. Open sides of staircases should be fenced with an upper rail at 900 mm or higher and a lower rail.

Falls and Falling Objects

Secure fencing should be provided to prevent people falling from edges and objects falling onto people. Where fencing cannot be provided other measures should be taken to prevent falls.

If a person might fall and risk serious injury, fencing should be available at least 1100 mm high and have 2 guard rails. Tanks, pits and structures should be securely covered or fenced.

Materials and objects should be stored and stacked in such a way that they are not likely to fall and cause injury. Racking should be of adequate strength and stability having regard to the loads placed on it and its vulnerability to damage, for example by vehicular traffic etc

Roof Work

Slips and trips which may be trivial at ground level may result in fatal accidents when on a roof. It is therefore vital that precautions are taken, even when access is only occasional, for example for maintenance and cleaning. As well as falling from the roof edge, there may be a risk of falling through a fragile roof. Care should be taken of old materials which may have become fragile because of corrosion. The risks may be increased by moss, lichen, ice etc.

Where regular access is needed to a roof, suitable permanent access should be provided and there should be fixed physical safeguards to prevent falls from edges and through fragile roofs. Where occasional access is required other safeguards should be provided, for example crawling boards. Fragile roofs or surfaces should be clearly identified. Refer HSG 33 prior to initiating roof work.

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Transparent or Translucent Doors, Gates or Walls and Windows

Windows, transparent or translucent surfaces in walls, partitions, doors and gates should, where there is a foreseeable risk of injury through persons coming into contact with the glazing, be made of safety material or protected against breakage.

If there is a danger of people coming into contact with a transparent or translucent surface it should be marked where necessary to make it apparent.

Windows and skylights should be designed so that they may be cleaned safely. When considering if they can be cleaned safely account must be taken of the ease of access, the equipment used as well as devices fitted to the building. A safe system of work should be established which may include the use of a fall-arrest system or safety lines and harnesses and secure anchorage points.

Doors and Gates

Doors and gates must be suitably constructed and where necessary fitted with safety devices. In particular, sliding doors and gates must be fitted with devices to prevent them from leaving their tracks, upward opening doors and gates must be fitted with devices to prevent them falling back, powered doors and gates must have suitable and effective means to prevent trapping type injuries and must be able to be operated manually unless they open automatically during a power failure.

Doors and gates that swing both ways and conventionally hinged doors on main traffic routes should be fitted with a transparent viewing panel.

Sanitary Conveniences and Washing Facilities

Readily accessible, suitable and sufficient sanitary conveniences must be provided which are adequately ventilated and lit, kept clean and maintained in an orderly condition. Separate conveniences for male and female staff must be provided except where the convenience is in a separate room, the door of which is capable of being secured from the inside.

Sanitary accommodation should be connected to a suitable drainage system, have means for flushing water, contain toilet paper in a holder or dispenser, have a facility for hanging coats and where used by female staff, contain a means for the disposal of sanitary dressings.

Readily accessible, suitable and sufficient washing facilities must be provided including the provision of showers where necessary by the nature of the work or for health reasons.

Washing facilities will be considered 'suitable' if they are:

- In the immediate vicinity of sanitary conveniences.
- In the vicinity of changing rooms.
- Provided with a clean supply of hot and cold or warm water, where practicable the water supply should be running.
- Provided with soap or other means of cleaning.
- Provided with towels or other means of drying.

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- Sufficiently ventilated, lit and kept clean and orderly.

Separate facilities must be provided for male and female staff except where the facilities are provided in a room intended for use by one person at a time that can be secured from the inside. This last provision does not apply to washing facilities intended for washing the hands, forearms and face only.

The table below shows the minimum number of sanitary conveniences and washing stations which should be provided for employees. Where separate sanitary accommodation is provided for men and women, a separate calculation should be made for each group.

Number of People at Work	Number of Water Closets	Number of Wash-Stations
1 to 5	1	1
6 to 25	2	2
26 to 50	3	3
51 to 75	4	4
76 to 100	5	5

An additional water closet and one additional wash-station should be provided for every 25 employees above 100 (or fraction of 25).

Access for disabled persons should be taken into account.

Where workers are employed in remote workplaces, without running water and a nearby sewerage system, sufficient water in containers for washing and chemical sanitary conveniences should be provided. In the case of temporary work-sites, suitable and sufficient sanitary conveniences and washing facilities should be provided, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Sanitary accommodation and washing facilities, including showers, should ensure the privacy of the user.

Drinking Water

An adequate supply of wholesome drinking water with an upward drinking jet or suitable cups should be provided. Water should only be provided in refillable enclosed containers where it cannot be obtained directly from a mains supply. The containers should be refilled at least daily, unless they are chilled water dispensers where the containers are returned to the supplier for refilling.

Bottled water or water dispensing systems may still be provided as a secondary source of drinking water.

Drinking ware supplies should be adequately marked as such if persons may otherwise drink from supplies which are not meant for drinking.

Accommodation for Clothing

Suitable and sufficient accommodation must be provided for personal clothing not worn at work and clothing worn at work but not taken home. Such clothing accommodation must be secure when personal clothing not worn at work is being stored. Separate work clothing and other clothing where necessary to avoid health risks or damage. Such accommodation should be in a suitable location and, so far as is reasonably practicable, include drying facilities.

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Facilities for Changing Clothing

Where special clothing must be worn at work and for reasons of health or propriety staff cannot change in another room, suitable and sufficient changing facilities must be provided. Separate facilities or separate use of facilities for male and female staff must be taken into account.

Changing facilities should be readily accessible to workrooms and eating facilities if provided, they should contain adequate seating arrangements. The facilities provided should be sufficiently large to enable the maximum numbers to use them comfortably and quickly at any one time.

Facilities for Rest and to Eat Meals

Suitable and sufficient, readily accessible rest facilities should be provided. Rest areas or rooms should be large enough, have sufficient seats with backrests and tables for the number of staff likely to use them at any time. They should include suitable facilities to eat meals where meals are regularly eaten in the workplace and the food otherwise would be likely to become contaminated.

Where provided, eating facilities should include the means for preparing or obtaining a hot drink. Where hot food cannot be obtained in or reasonably near to the workplace, staff may need to be provided with a means for heating their own food.

Work areas can be counted as rest areas and as eating facilities, provided they are adequately clean, there is a suitable surface on which to place food and staff are not subjected to excessive disturbance during breaks, for example by contact with the visitors etc.

Facilities for Pregnant Women and Nursing Mothers

Suitable rest facilities should be provided for pregnant women and nursing mothers. They should be near to sanitary facilities and where necessary include the facility to lie down.

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