

Safety on the Job for Apprentices

This information sheet is written for Apprentices. As you embark on your new journey in the working world, it's important to prioritise your safety, health and welfare. This information sheet provides some essential tips to help you stay safe and healthy as you start your career. Remember, good safety behaviour and a safe and healthy work environment is crucial for health and wellbeing and your success in the job.

Information
Sheet



Apprentices and occupational safety and health

As an apprentice, you may:

- be under 18 years old, and legally, your employer must carry out a risk assessment before you start work or when there is a major change in the place of work. Further information is available from [here](#);
- have never worked before and be less aware of occupational safety and health;
- be a number of years into your apprenticeship and continuing to learn the skills necessary to keep yourself and others safe and healthy at work; or
- have previous experience in a different work setting that may have had either a 'positive' or 'poor' safety culture. This experience may influence how you think about occupational safety and health, and your expectations.



Why am I at an increased risk?

People new to a job, such as apprentices, may be at increased risk of an accident or ill health at work because of:

- a lack of awareness or knowledge of occupational safety and health;
- a lack of or reduced experience in a particular workplace or industry;
- being unfamiliar with the job activities and the work environment;
- not knowing or understanding the workplace culture (i.e., "the way things are done around here");
- not knowing how to raise safety and health concerns or not wanting to;
- an eagerness to do well at work and impress colleagues and managers; and
- reduced physical and mental maturity, particularly for younger workers.



Vulnerable workers

Vulnerable Workers are people who may be particularly sensitive or over-exposed to potential health and safety risks in comparison to the general working population. All people reflect a spectrum of vulnerability – with some people having higher or lower levels of vulnerability.

More information on vulnerable workers is available [here](#).



Key point:

Given certain personal and work factors, an apprentice may be considered a vulnerable worker.

What can I expect from my employer?

Under health and safety law, employers have certain duties to **all** employees (including part-time, temporary and fixed-term employees).

These include:

- providing and maintaining a safe workplace, machinery and equipment;
- managing work to ensure the safety, health and welfare of employees;
- identifying hazards, assessing and controlling risks (in a written risk assessment);
- putting a safety statement in place, reviewing it regularly and making it available to employees;
- preparing and updating emergency procedures;
- consulting with employees and safety representatives (if appointed) on health and safety issues;
- providing appropriate training, information and supervision;
- providing and maintaining personal protective equipment (PPE), where required;
- reporting certain accidents to the HSA; and
- covering the cost of any health and safety measures required.

Key health and safety terms:



A hazard is anything that can cause injury or ill health, such as electricity, dangerous fumes, working at heights, unguarded machinery or moving vehicles.



Risk means the likelihood that someone will be harmed by a hazard and the severity of the harm.

The risk depends on:

- how often the hazard is encountered,
- severity of potential injury, and
- number of people who might be exposed to the hazard.

Employers may need to put in place additional measures to help protect apprentices

These might include:



completing a young person risk assessment for apprentices under 18 years of age and following the restrictions in the [Safety, Health and Welfare at Work \(General Applications\)\(Amendment\)\(No.2\) Regulations 2016](#);



providing an induction that includes a walk-around of the workplace and emergency procedures, employee roles and responsibilities, the name and contact details of the safety representative, and the location of welfare facilities;



delivering information, instruction, and training in a language and manner that the apprentice understands;



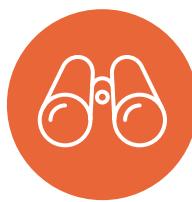
considering vulnerable workers in risk assessments;



encouraging apprentices to raise concerns and explaining how this can be done;



addressing issues affecting apprentices with all employees, e.g. at safety committee meetings;



additional supervision above and beyond the supervision you provide for more experienced employees; and



ensuring that new apprentices understand the information, instruction and training they need to work safely.



Top Tip:

Simple language and visual aids, such as a workplace walkthrough or pictures/graphics, will help you as an apprentice understand safety messages more easily.



How can I keep myself and others safe?

Always seek and ask for help and support.

To avoid accidents and illnesses in the workplace, all employees, including apprentices, have duties under Irish health and safety law. These duties relate to positive safety behaviour.

These include:



cooperating with your employer on health and safety matters;



attending training provided by your employer and following instructions received;



not engaging in poor behaviour that puts you or others in danger, e.g. horseplay;



using tools, equipment and PPE as you have been instructed and trained;



reporting dangerous work situations or hazards to your manager or supervisor;



becoming familiar with the risk assessments in your workplace and following the control measures put in place by your employer to reduce the risk of injury and ill health;



ensuring that you are not under the influence of drugs (including prescribed or over-the-counter medications) or alcohol at work, where the intoxication could endanger your own or another person's safety; and



reporting to your employer if you are taking medication which might pose a risk to the safety of anyone at work.

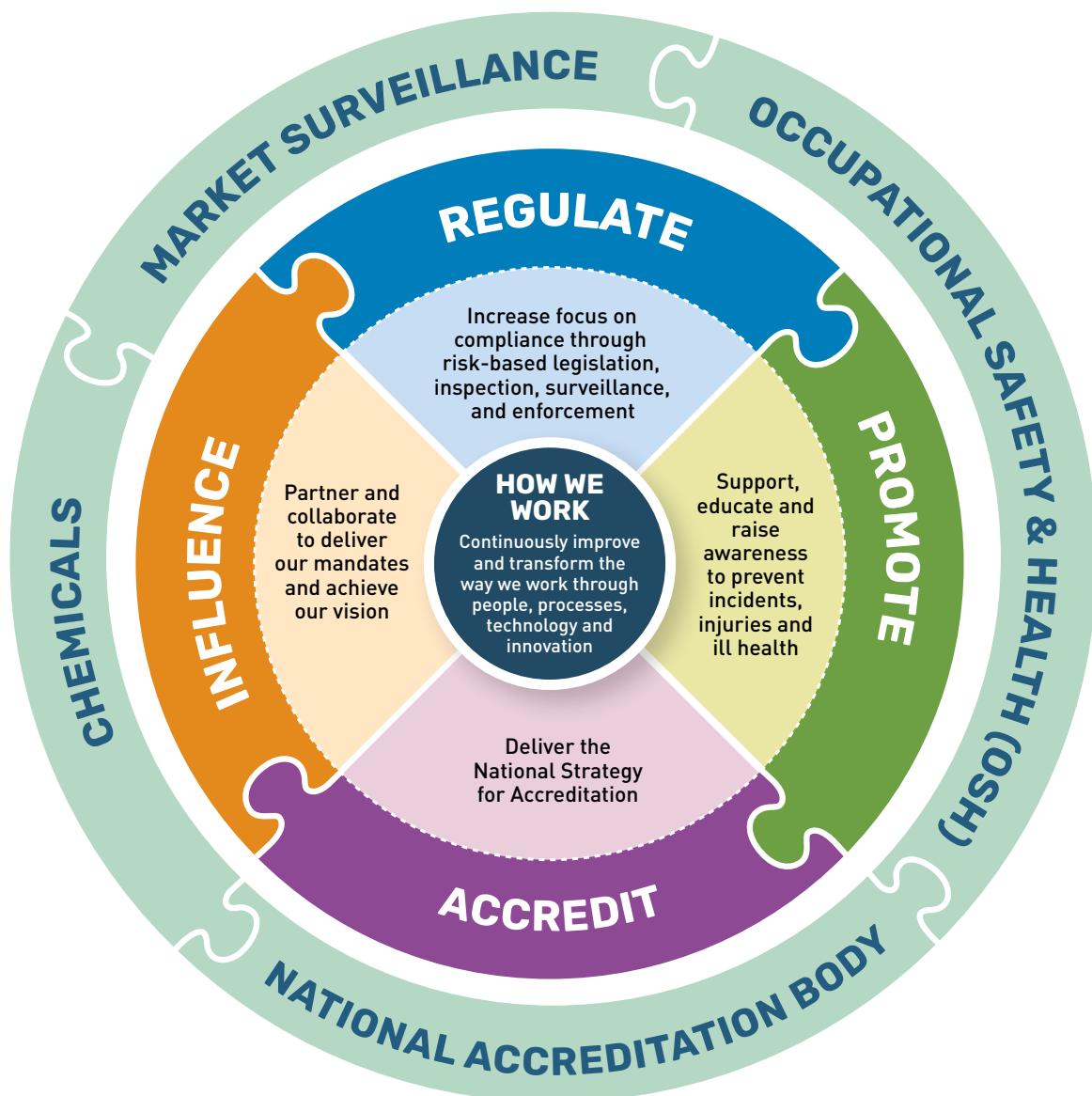
hsalearning.ie has over 50 free online health and safety awareness-raising courses, including “Health and Safety in the Workplace for Apprentices”.



Who are the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), and how can they help?

The HSA enforce occupational health and safety laws to keep people safe and healthy at work and to safeguard people from the adverse effects of chemicals.

We visit thousands of workplaces every year to promote and educate on health and safety. We investigate workplace accidents and complaints. We also create resources to support employers and employees in improving workplace safety. These resources are available for free from www.hsa.ie.



If you wish to make a complaint or have a query about workplace health and safety, you can contact us by phoning 0818 289 389 (Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm) or emailing contactus@hsa.ie

Further information

- www.hsa.ie/education
- www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/vulnerable_workers/vulnerable_workers.html
- www.hsalearning.ie
 - 'Health and Safety in the Workplace for Apprentices.'
 - 'Workplace Safety, Health and Welfare Induction.'
- www.besmart.ie is a free online risk assessment and safety statement tool.



Contact our HelpDesk:

Email: contactus@hsa.ie

Phone: **0818 289 389**

or visit: www.hsa.ie/education



HSA

An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta
Health and Safety Authority