



Association for Agency-Based Counselling
& Psychotherapy in Ireland Ltd

This document is only to be used as a guideline for organisations

Should you require any further support or have any queries please contact (AACPI National Director)

www.aacpi.ie

Guidelines-Health & Safety Policy

The Company needs to place great emphasis on Health and Safety matters and undertake to carry out its business in such a way as to ensure the safety, health and welfare of all its employees, visitors and the general public in accordance with the Safety Health and Welfare at Work legislation. Therefore, every employee must co-operate to enable compliance with all statutory duties. This section is not the Safety statement which can be requested from your manager.

The Health and Safety policy requires total commitment from all employees consistent with the following:

- Each individual has a legal obligation to take reasonable care for his or her own safety and for the safety of other people who may be affected by his or her acts or omissions.
- Complying with instructions and procedures issued.
- Reporting any serious danger to health and safety to your manager.
- Reporting to your manager, any incidents which have or may lead or might have led to injury. Co-operating with any investigation to prevent accidents.
- Using equipment or substances in accordance with information or training.

When working with young people (under 18 years of age), consideration should be made for their lack of experience and maturity in regard to their safety.

Principles applying to Health and Safety

Look where you are going and proceed cautiously, avoid running and rushing – it's better to be safe than sorry.

Make sure you understand what you are doing before you operate any equipment or machinery, however simple, on your own.



Association for Agency-Based Counselling
& Psychotherapy in Ireland Ltd

When lifting and handling, keep your back straight and if the item is too heavy for you to lift on your own, ask for help.

Clean up - your untidiness or carelessness could cause injury to someone else.

Wear protective clothing (PPE) including goggles, ear protectors, gloves and boots when appropriate or advised to.

Do not operate machinery or equipment without taking proper instruction.

Do not clean any machinery or equipment whilst in motion or without turning it off.

Do not interfere with any safety equipment or guards on machinery.

Do not interfere with any electrical wiring in any way.

Do not obstruct exits and doorways.

Accident Reporting

You have an obligation to report any accident/incident or anything that has come to your attention during the working day that may be unsafe.

If you or your colleague is involved in an accident at work, it must be reported to your manager and appropriately recorded. All accidents, however minor, must be recorded. This gives The Company the opportunity to investigate the causes and prevent similar accidents happening in the future.

In the event of a serious or notifiable accident or dangerous occurrence, it is essential that The Company's safety officer is advised as soon as possible, in order that suitable action is taken.

If you see something which is unsafe and cannot correct it, report it to your manager.

If you have any questions about reporting accidents or safety, please speak to your manager.

Fire

Fire presents significant risk to The Company. It can kill or seriously injure employees or visitors and can damage or destroy buildings, equipment and stock. As an employee you must co-operate with The Company to ensure the workplace is safe from fire and its effects and you must not do anything which will place yourself or others at risk. You must inform your manager if you discover any significant risk of fire which might affect the safety of others and co-operate with all measures to reduce/control the risks. You should ensure you know about the fire warning system and how to operate and respond to it.



Association for Agency-Based Counselling
& Psychotherapy in Ireland Ltd

The following simple points will help to reduce the risk from fire:

- Escape routes must be free from any obstructions.
- Good standards of housekeeping.
- Keep workplaces tidy.
- Regularly remove any combustible waste.
- Keep ignition sources away from combustible material.

If you discover a fire you should:

- Do not, under any circumstances, expose yourself to danger.
- In the event of a fire and providing there is no danger to the persons concerned, every effort should be made to extinguish or contain the fire pending the arrival of the fire brigade. The magnitude of the outbreak must dictate whether attacking the fire should take priority over reporting and evacuation. All staff should be familiar with the exit routes and should also know the location and type of fire extinguishers in the office.
- Leave the building by the nearest fire exit and proceed to your designated assembly point as defined by the Company.
- Report to Fire Brigade.
- When normal business has resumed, record the incident in the Incident Book.

If you hear the fire alarm you should:

- Switch off any equipment under your control and leave the building by the nearest fire exit.
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings.
- Once outside, do not enter the building until you are told it is safe to do so.
- Once a year the company will perform fire drills to ensure that procedures are known and followed in the event of a real fire.

First Aid

The Company has a designated employee trained in Emergency First Aid. For details ask your manager to familiarise you with these people and the position of First Aid boxes.

Personal Protective Equipment

Your job may require you to wear personal protective equipment (PPE). Please ensure that you do so at all times that it is required and that it is fit for its intended use. Any deficiencies or damaged equipment must be reported without delay.



Association for Agency-Based Counselling
& Psychotherapy in Ireland Ltd

Electrical equipment

Electrical equipment poses a particular risk and special care must be taken as a result. Sockets must not be overloaded, there must be no trailing wires and all fittings must be in a good condition. Anyone carrying out any electrical work must be competent to do so safely.

Smoke-free Workplace

Since 29th March, 2004 the Irish government has implemented a ban on smoking in the workplace. This ban was introduced as part of the Public Health (Tobacco) Act, 2002 (Section 47) Regulations 2003. The purpose of this ban is to offer protection to employees and the public who are exposed to the harmful and toxic effects of tobacco smoke in the workplace. The Company is obliged to protect the health of staff, customers and visitors to their premises. Any person found guilty of breaching the ban may be subject to a fine under the legislation. Breaches of the smoking regulations will be dealt with under The Company's disciplinary procedure. The Company does not provide smoking breaks for employees.

Guidelines for Visual Display Unit (VDU) users

It is the policy of the company to ensure that any employees who, as part of their duties, spend long periods of time using visual display screens, that any necessary adjustments will be made to avoid Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI), eyestrain and other ailments associated with work on screens, which must be adjustable for height, tilt and brightness.

No employee will be asked or expected to work any computer that is not in proper working condition, or does not meet the highest specifications.

Employees working continuously on-screen should alternate tasks so that at least 10 minutes during each 60 minutes of work is spent doing off-screen type of work. This work is to be undertaken away from the screen, but does not constitute a break.

Employees who habitually use VDU's have the right to an eyesight test, the cost of which will be met or reimbursed by The Company.

Where eye tests, carried out by a doctor or optometrist, reveal that particular lenses are required for VDU work, The Company will pay for the costs of minimum requirement frames and lenses.

Where an employee already wears glasses to correct a visual defect (normal corrective appliances), and routine change of lenses arises, if these glasses are adequate also for VDU work, the Company is not liable as regards meeting the cost.



Association for Agency-Based Counselling
& Psychotherapy in Ireland Ltd

The cost of dealing with more general eye problems which are revealed as a result of the tests and which are not directly related to working with a VDU is a matter for the employee as part of his or her general health care, taking account of health care entitlements.

Work Stations

Your desk and chair should be set at a height that is suitable for you. You should ensure that you are the correct distance from your VDU screen. You should have an adjustable VDU chair: change the chair height, back positioning and other features offered to suit the task you are undertaking. Change it regularly during the day for different types of work.

The floor underneath workstations should be kept clear for maximum comfort and paper files should not be stored on the floor as they present a trip hazard.

Review the guidelines on the use of the computer system regularly and put the model seating position diagram in front of you to remind you to sit properly.

Additional factors

Stress-related illness is an area of health that The Company would like to manage as an integral part of good management practice. Stress has both positive and negative aspects and both need to be managed for enhanced work performance and benefits at work. Stress can be summarised by considering the constant experience of demands made on us and our ability to meet those demands. The relationship between each of us to be able to meet the demands is endlessly variable because of the interplay between constraints, demands, and support mechanisms at different times of our lives.

If you feel that your work is contributing to an unhealthy level of stress to you, please see your manager or the Chief Executive Officer.

Stress factors - are you relaxed as you work? Do you vary your work and take breaks when doing repetitive tasks? Do you make sure you have a lunch break?

If not - please do something about this - talk to your manager about how you can make changes to your work organisation. Prevention of a problem is always better than trying to find a cure later.

Physical factors - do you have aches in your body that continue from one day to the next? Look at your physical environment - are you sitting properly? Have you altered your workspace and equipment to suit you?



Association for Agency-Based Counselling
& Psychotherapy in Ireland Ltd

If not - please consult and inform your line manager: s/he has a responsibility to ensure that you have the correct equipment for the job and that you know how to use it.

Work organisation - do you have to do all the things you do in the way you do them? Is there another way of getting the end result you want which requires less effort on your part?

Talk about these issues with your line manager.

If any staff member feels that s/he is "at risk," s/he should inform his or her line manager, who will initiate discussions aimed at eliminating or avoiding the risk.

Manual Handling

Manual Handling is defined as the “transporting of a load by one or more employees and includes lifting, putting down, pushing, carrying or moving a load, which by reason of its characteristics or of unfavorable ergonomic conditions involves risks, particularly of back injury to employees”.

This is a priority issue because it is a major cause of accidents in the workplace. It is The Company policy to minimize the need for manual handling of loads and so therefore should be avoided as far as is reasonably practicable.

Employees must check the weight of the load before attempting to lift it and if the load is too heavy get help. When lifting, follow the following basic principles.

1. Relax the knees. Lowering movements should start at the knees not the head.
2. Get close to the object to be lifted. Get a good balance by keeping the feet apart. One foot will automatically be ahead of the other.
3. When in position, bend the knees and lift with the strong muscles in the legs.
4. Lift gradually, smoothly and without jerking, keeping the object close to the body and the back straight.

Cleanliness and tidiness

The office is cleaned regularly, but spillages and similar must be attended to at once by the person responsible. All waste must be disposed of safely and quickly (with recyclable waste disposed in the recycle bins available). The office must be



Association for Agency-Based Counselling
& Psychotherapy in Ireland Ltd

kept free of obstacles and sufficient room for manoeuvre must be provided at all times.

All files, paper, reports, etc. should be filed in the appropriate place and should not be stored on the floor.

Rubbish

Please remember to respect your colleagues as well as The Company's guests and contractors by keeping your work area and all common spaces neat and tidy. It's EVERYONE'S business!

General points about keeping work areas tidy:

- Do not put rubbish (black bags), recycling (cardboard boxes/clear plastic bags), or store papers in public access areas, e.g. corridors.
- Keep your desk and room tidy and do not build up paperwork, as it can become a fire risk.
- Keep the kitchens clean and tidy: clean up after yourself
- Ensure that the electrical equipment, e.g. the coffee pot/kettle, is switched off if you are the last person when leaving the office.
- Keep central areas such as around the photocopier and fax machine area tidy.
- Use the bins supplied for waste/recycled paper.

Security

Your personal security naturally has an effect on your health.

You should be especially careful if you are working out of office hours. If you believe you are the last person to leave in the evening or while working on a weekend, ensure that you are definitely the last person. Otherwise, the people left in the building will set off the alarm.

Storage

Do not overstock racks, filing cabinets or shelves. Heavy items should not be stored overhead but on bottom shelves. If you cannot reach your shelves or other storage area, inform the Health & Safety Officer. Continually review what you need to store and bear in mind that it is only efficient to store what you can retrieve easily.



Association for Agency-Based Counselling
& Psychotherapy in Ireland Ltd

Training

If you do not know how to do something required of you for your work then you should ask your line manager for training. You should be clear what your responsibilities are and to whom you are responsible. You should know what the key tasks of your job are and what standards are expected.

All members of staff should discuss training and development needs with their line manager(s) as part of the Performance Management System. Training can include everything from practical courses in First Aid to career development-focused programmes.

You may be asked to attend training programs and re-training programs relating to health and safety as part of a larger group of staff.

Visitors and Contractors:

You are responsible for your visitors on site. Make sure they know where the nearest emergency exit is, and what to do in the event of an emergency. **If you are hosting a meeting with external people, please advise them of the nearest emergency exit at the start of the meeting.**

If contractors or engineers are on site, make sure they are aware of any potential hazards in the area in which they are working. Make sure they leave the area clean and safe when they leave.

All visitors and staff entering the building are required to sign in and out of the building. This is essential.

Working alone

If a staff member is working alone, they must have as much as is possible a fully charged mobile phone with them on their allocated work days. Check if you are insured to only have one person on the premises, some insurance companies do not cover this.

Handling cash

Large amounts of cash will be handled by (name job spec) This cash shall not be kept on the premises, to minimise the risk of robbery or attack.

COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS WILL NEED TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS DOCUMENT.