

PREMISES SAFETY

# GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS



## LEGISLATION

* Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
* School Premises (England) Regulations 2012

## INTRODUCTION

The Regulations aim to ensure that workplaces and/or educational establishments meet the health, safety and welfare needs of all members of a workforce, including people with disabilities.

## MAINTENANCE OF THE WORKPLACE, EQUIPMENT AND DEVICES

All work places and the equipment and devices in them must be suitably maintained. As such all equipment, devices or any mechanical ventilation system must be maintained in an efficient state, efficient working order and in good repair.

In addition a suitable system of regular and effective maintenance including inspection, testing, adjustment, lubrication, and cleaning must be carried out at suitable intervals. Regular maintenance and remedial work must be properly recorded.

Any potentially dangerous defects must be remedied and access to defective equipment must be prevented in the meantime by clearly signing it and isolating it from any energy source where appropriate.

## GLASS AND GLAZING

Glazing in any door, gate, wall or partition should be of the appropriate safety standard. Laminated glazing should carry a mark in one corner indicating it is laminated. Any glazing needing replacement must be of the appropriate standard for safety reasons.

Particular care is necessary in ensuring glazing below waist level (except in glasshouses) is of the appropriate standard. All schools should take the following action:

* Undertake a visual survey of the school’s glazing to identify the areas of high risk that have not been fitted with safety glass or have not been otherwise protected.
* Complete a glazing survey form so you have a record.
* Prioritise the glazing for remedial action.
* Decide upon the most practicable remedial action to take.
* Deal with the highest risk glazing first.
* Programme the rest for action

Certain locations are classed as safety critical based on the fact that accident statistics show that glazing in some locations in buildings is more vulnerable to human impact that in others:

* Doors and gates and door and gate side panels where any part of the transparent or translucent surface is at shoulder level or below
* In windows, walls and partitions, where any part of the transparent or translucent surface is at waist level or below

The relevant British Standard states that precautions should be taken to reduce the risk of injuries from accidental human impact in safety critical locations by selecting glazing of a suitable type, thickness and size.

Other areas of special risk will include:

* Bathing or Washing Areas: This includes any glazing used in bath or shower screens or surrounding a swimming pool, which can be struck by persons slipping on wet surfaces or by articles such as volleyballs used during sports activities.
* Sports Activity Areas: These are areas where activities, organised or otherwise generate a special risk of impact with glass, such as gymnasiums, school halls and playgrounds adjacent to glazed areas. Some glazing panels face directly on to areas where children are running and playing. If children are likely to run into any glazing panel it should be considered as presenting a risk.
* Storage Facilities*:* Glazed bookcases and display cupboards on circulation routes, and also items such as glass top tables etc.

The necessary action to control the risk will depend on its likelihood and severity. Common control measures include:

* Replacement of the glazing with a safer material such as safety glass, strengthened, toughened glass, polycarbonate or thickened annealed glass
* Limiting the size of the glazed area
* Modifying the glass by applying safety film or make its presence more apparent by marking
* Re-organising school traffic routes and recreational activities to avoid the risk of glazing being broken
* Erecting suitable barriers or screens to prevent school users coming into contact with the glazing. The strength of the barrier will depend on whom, or what needs to be kept away from the glazing.

## SLIPS AND TRIPS

The floor of every workplace and traffic route must be constructed so that it is suitable for its purpose and free from holes, slopes unevenness or slipperiness likely to cause a risk to health or safety. Where necessary, floors must have an effective means of drainage.

Handrails and, if appropriate, guards must be provided on all staircases except in circumstances that might obstruct the traffic route.

Floors must be kept free from obstructions and from articles or substance which might cause a person to slip, trip or fall.

Floor and traffic routes should be of sound construction and have adequate strength and stability taking account of the loads placed on them and the traffic passing over them.

The assessment of risks from slips and trips will involve the usual five stages:

* Look for slip and trip hazards around the workplace (the hazard mapping pro-forma will assist in this)
* Decide who may be harmed and how (who comes into the workplace)
* Consider the risks (are precautions adequate to deal with the risks)
* Record the risk assessment
* Review the risk assessment periodically or when significant change occurs

## FINGER TRAPS

Establishments must assess the risk of finger traps in doors and if the risk is significant should take action to minimise the risk of injury. In doing a risk assessment the following should be taken into account:

* Age of any children at risk
* Activities in area of door
* Level of supervision
* Children with special needs
* Other vulnerable client groups or individuals
* Room layout e.g. restricting access to hazard
* Any history of previous incidents
* How easy/difficult is the door to open by a child on their own (position of door handle etc)

Not all doors will require the fitting of finger guards; in most establishments only a few doors will require protection and some may need none at all. Measures to minimise the risk would normally involve the fitting of a finger guard to the hinge side of the door but could also include limiting or changing the activities taking place in the vicinity of the door and/or ensuring that children (or other vulnerable persons) cannot open the door without assistance.

Most of the proprietary finger guards available are easy to fit by someone with minimal DIY ability and are available from a number of suppliers including:

* Fingersafe, tel no 01702 479474, [www.fingersafe.com](https://www.fingersafe.com/)
* Fingershield, tel no 0161 2725500 [www.fingershield.co.uk](https://www.fingershield.co.uk/)

## WELFARE FACILITIES

Suitable and sufficient sanitary conveniences and washing facilities should be provided at readily accessible places. They and the rooms containing them should be kept clean and be adequately ventilated and lit.

Washing facilities should have running hot and cold or warm water, soap and clean towels or other means of cleaning or drying. If required by the type of work, showers should also be provided.

Toilet facilities and washrooms for staff must be separate from those provided for pupils, except in the case of facilities provided for disabled people.

## DRINKING WATER

An adequate supply of wholesome drinking water must be provided and maintained for all persons at work in the workplace.

Every supply of drinking water should be readily accessible and be conspicuously marked by a sign indicating that it is drinking water.

## ACCOMMODATION FOR CLOTHING

Suitable and sufficient accommodation, e.g. coat hook or locker must be provided.

* For any person at work whose own clothing is not worn during working hours.
* For special clothing which is worn at work but is not taken home. For example protective clothing worn by caretakers.

Accommodation for work clothing and workers’ own personal clothing should enable it to hang in a clean, warm, dry, well-ventilated place where it can dry out during the course of a working day if necessary.

Where work clothing (including personal protective equipment) which is not taken home becomes dirty, damp or contaminated due to the work it must be accommodated separately from the worker’s own clothing.

## CLEANING AND WASTE MATERIALS

The regulations require that the surfaces of all floors, walls, ceilings, furniture furnishings and fittings should be kept sufficiently clean depending on the work activity. Some areas such as food preparation or serving areas will need to be maintained to a high standard of cleanliness.

Waste materials should not be allowed to accumulate in a workplace, except in designated refuse areas.

## LIGHTING

Every workplace must have suitable and sufficient lighting provided, so far as reasonably practicable, by natural light.

Lighting should be sufficient to enable people to work, use facilities safely without experiencing eye-strain. In particular circulation areas especially stairs should be well lit so people can move around safely.

It is also important to consider external lighting at pedestrian crossing points on vehicular traffic routes and routes used by pedestrians.

Light switches should be positioned prominently and clearly labelled where necessary.

Each room or other space in a school building shall have lighting appropriate to its normal use. The maintained illuminance of teaching accommodation shall be not less than 300 lux on the working plane. Where visually demanding tasks are carried out, provision must be made for maintained illuminance of not less than 500 lux on the working planes. The "glare index" must not exceed 19.

## VENTILATION

Workplaces need to be adequately ventilated. Fresh, clean air should be drawn from a source outside the workplace, uncontaminated by discharges from flues, chimneys or other process outlets, and be circulated through the workrooms.

Ventilation should also remove and dilute warm, humid air and provide air movement which gives a sense of freshness without causing a draught. If the workplace contains process or heating equipment or other sources of dust, fumes or vapours, more fresh air will be needed to provide adequate ventilation.

Windows or other openings may provide sufficient ventilation but, where necessary, mechanical ventilation systems should be provided and regularly maintained.

## TEMPERATURE

During work hours the temperature in workplaces in buildings should be reasonable for the work activity taking place. Any methods of heating which allow injurious or offensive fumes into a workplace must not used.

Where work does not involve significant physical effort ( for example, sedentary work) the temperature should not fall below 16°C. Where work involves some physical effort temperature should not fall below 13°C.

Where a reasonably comfortable temperature cannot be achieved throughout a workroom, local heating or cooling (as appropriate) should be provided. e.g. Fans in hot weather. In cold weather, draughts should be excluded and self-closing doors installed where appropriate.

Every school room or other space shall have appropriate heating systems capable of maintaining the following temperatures where the external air temperature is –1°C:

* areas with normal level of physical activity 18°C (eg classrooms)
* areas with below normal level of physical activity 21°C (eg sick rooms)
* areas with above normal level of physical activity 15°C (eg gymnasia)

Where part of the school is occupied, and has a heating system, and is colder than the appropriate temperature then it must be heated up to that temperature for as long as it is being used.