



An Roinn Fiontar,  
Trádála agus Fostaíochta  
Department of Enterprise,  
Trade and Employment

# Occupational Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Safety Statement

July 2023

## Contents

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<b>1. Health and Safety Policy Statement</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Department and Staff Responsibilities</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. Competence and consultation</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4. Safe Work Procedures and Practices</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>5. Blended Working</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Appendix 1 Department contact information.</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Appendix 2 Forms and Records</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Appendix 3 Emergency Contact Information</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Appendix 4 Safety Data Sheets/Reports for Hazardous Substances.</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Appendix 5 Background Information &amp; FAQs regarding Safety Statement and Risk Assessments</b>	<b>44</b>

# 1. Health and Safety Policy Statement

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This updated health and safety statement has been prepared in accordance with Section 20 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

Recognising that safety and health is an integral part of our day-to-day work, I am committed as Secretary General to ensuring we fulfil our statutory obligations to manage and co-ordinate workplace safety, health, and wellbeing through an effective safety management system, and we have systems and a culture in place that adheres to best practice in this area.

This revised Safety Statement reflects our intention as a Department, to continue to strive to safeguard the safety, health and wellbeing of all colleagues to the highest possible standards. It takes into consideration significant changes to our working environment that arose during 2022 including:

- Transitioning back onsite when COVID-19 lockdowns were eased in Q1 2022;
- The Department's formal introduction of Blended Working arrangements and supports from July 2022 onwards (section 5);
- The continued implications of COVID-19 which now include further Infection Prevention and Control requirements as per instructions received from the Minister for Health, Minister Donnelly in December 2022 (section 4.8);

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 places a strong emphasis on the shared responsibilities of both management and staff around safety and health. While responsibility for managing health and safety in the workplace primarily rests with the Department as the employer, as employees, both management and staff also have responsibilities whether working onsite or remotely. The successful implementation of this Statement is dependent on everyone's full cooperation in ensuring that high standards of safety and health prevail.

The pursuit of better safety, health and welfare of staff within the Department must always be dynamic and never overlooked. All staff should ensure they are familiar with their roles and responsibilities as specified in this Safety Statement. Our Health and Safety Committees also provide a framework for staff to contribute, provide feedback and help promote a positive safety culture. This approach is intended to assist us with our commitment to continually identify hazards and their risks so that we may implement the necessary control measures.

Implementing the Safety Statement should be an integral part of everyday operations. All staff, contractors and visitors are expected to co-operate with management in ensuring that high standards of safety and health prevail.

The Department will continue to develop the competencies of our health and safety team to ensure our safety management system is consistent with legislative requirements and prevailing best practice in the provision a safe work environment that is progressive and inclusive.

**Declan Hughes**

**Secretary General**

# 1.1 Health and Safety Statement

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Under Section 20 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, an employer is required to have a written statement based on the identification of the hazards and the risk assessments carried out under Section 19 of the Act, specifying the manner in which the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees shall be secured and managed.

The aims of the safety statement are - (i) to involve management up to the highest level by assigning clear responsibilities in the control of safety, health and welfare at the place of work, (ii) to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to comply with the relevant statutory provisions and that those measures are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis, (iii) to identify hazards and evaluate risks, (iv) to ensure sufficient resources are allocated to safety management, (v) to ensure all at the workplace are informed and involved in the control of safety, health and welfare, and (vi) to ensure systematic follow-up of problems as they arise.

This Safety Statement is specific to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and its Offices. The Department's Health and Safety Unit (H&S Unit) which is part of our Corporate Services Division, is responsible for overseeing the implementation of our Health and Safety Management System to safeguard the health, safety and welfare the Department's staff while at work, whether onsite or remotely as well as visitors to our offices. The Unit provides health and safety advice and assistance to colleagues across the Department's buildings. Locally based colleagues are, in the first instance, best placed to identify potential hazards, issues and report incidents. The Unit also works in partnership with local line managers and staff in this regard. Safety Representatives and Local Health and Safety Committees also play an important role assisting the staff of the Unit in carrying out their work.

This Safety Statement is an iterative document for ongoing safety management that provides, *inter alia*:

- A facility for achieving and sustaining compliance with relevant legislation;
- A structure for the integration of health and safety responsibilities into all staff levels and all day-to-day operations;
- A method for recording initial and ongoing hazard identification, risk assessments, risk elimination and controls including those relating to COVID-19 and Infection Prevention Control in our workplace;

- A method for the evaluation of new risks arising from new buildings, alterations to buildings, additional staff assignments to locations, new equipment, new work practices (such as the introduction of our Blended Working Policy in mid-2022) and ensuring their compliance with all current safety requirements;
- A structure for recording and managing essential maintenance operations relating to health, safety and welfare;
- Identification and recording of ongoing health and safety training;
- A method for recording, investigation and evaluation of accidents and dangerous occurrences on site and the reporting of loss time accidents to the Health & Safety Authority;
- A mechanism for providing information, instruction, training and consultation with all staff and appointed Safety Representatives;
- A periodic evaluation and monitoring process to monitor the effectiveness of our efforts on the health, safety and welfare agenda.

The Department's aim is to ensure a safe working environment for staff and visitors and to improve our safety standards, where possible. This can only be accomplished by the persistent efforts of all of us and in recognition that the health, safety and welfare of our staff is a core Departmental value. The Department's responsibility in this regard also extends to cover specific remote working aspects and in this regard this Statement should be read in conjunction with [our Blended Working Policy – July 2022](#).

This Safety Statement is intended to assist the effective management of all other safety documentation in reducing the possibility of accidents and ill health by bringing to the attention of management and staff, identified procedures and controls applicable to our operations. It will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and the Department will continue its efforts to improve safety awareness aiming to reduce accidents and ill health within the Department.

This Statement is available on our website and is available to the Health and Safety Inspectorate (Health and Safety Authority) on request.

## 2. Department and Staff Responsibilities

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**While responsibility for managing health and safety in the workplace primarily rests with the Department as the employer, as employees, both management and staff have responsibilities whether working onsite or remotely.**

### 2.1 Employer responsibilities

[Section 8](#) of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 requires every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all employees. Section 9 of the Act sets out in greater detail the types of information on safety, health and welfare that are required to be given by employers to employees under Section 8 of the Act.

**Some of the principal duties of the Department as an employer include:**

- Managing and conducting work activities to ensure the safety and health of employees and others affected;
- Preventing improper conduct likely to put an employee's safety and health at risk;
- Providing a safe place of work, which is adequately designed and maintained;
- Providing safe means of access and egress;
- Providing safe plant, equipment, and machinery;
- Providing safe systems of work, e.g., operating procedures;
- Preventing risk to health from any article or substance (e.g., machinery, equipment and chemical substances);
- Providing appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision for all our employees to carry out their duties;
- Providing suitable protective clothing and equipment where hazards cannot be eliminated;
- Preparing and revising emergency plans and designate staff to take on emergency duties;

- Providing and maintaining welfare facilities;
- Providing, where necessary, a competent person to advise and assist in securing the safety, health and welfare of employees (a competent person must have the necessary qualifications as well as sufficient training, experience and knowledge appropriate to the nature of the work to be undertaken).

## 2.2 Staff and Management responsibilities

Under the 2005 Act, an employee is required to report to the employer, or other appropriate person, as soon as they become aware of any instance –

- where work being carried on, or likely to be carried on, in a manner which may endanger his or her safety, health or welfare or that of another person,
- of any defect in the place of work, the systems of work or in any article or substance likely to endanger him or her or another person, and
- a breach of safety and health legislation likely to endanger him or her or another person which comes to his or her attention.

Under Section 13, of the Act, employees have a duty to refrain from improper conduct liable to harm the safety, health or welfare of persons at work. Violence, horseplay and bullying at work would come within the meaning of improper conduct. Horseplay amongst employees can result in serious consequences, particularly when working with potentially dangerous machines or hazardous substances. Workplace anti-bullying policies rely on the co-operation of employees for their effectiveness. It should be noted that bullying at work does not always involve a supervisor/subordinate relationship and may result from unacceptable peer pressure.

Supervisors and line managers have an important role in bringing any known deficiencies in health and safety to the attention of senior management.

**Some of the principal responsibilities of staff per ([Section 13 of the 2005 Act](#)) include:**

- Complying with the relevant health and safety legislation, e.g., co-operating with the Department, reporting unsafe procedures or equipment;
- Complying with safety policies and procedures to ensure your own personal safety and health, as well as that of others;
- Co-operating with the Department in relation to safety, health and welfare at your place of work;



- Reporting all hazards, injuries, incidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses as soon as possible to your Staff Safety Representative and the H&S Unit;
- Reporting any defects in equipment, unsafe activities, or deficiencies in safety procedures;
- Using any protective clothing and equipment that has been provided for your safety;
- Attending any training as required by the Department;
- Not engaging in improper conduct or behaviour that is likely to endanger your own or other's safety, health and welfare while at work;
- Not being under the influence of intoxicants as they may endanger your own or other's safety, health and welfare;
- Not interfering with, misuse or damage anything that may affect anyone's safety, health and welfare.
- Regularly reviewing this Safety Statement to ensure it remains current to their activities and making it known if any new safe work procedures need to be put in place.

Line Managers are the frontline management in the implementation of health and safety policies throughout the Department's buildings and offices.

**Some of the principal responsibilities of managers per [\(Section 80 of the 2005 Act\)](#) include:**

- Ensuring that all activities carried out in their area of responsibility are undertaken safely and without risk to health;
- Ensuring that all members of their staff are competent to carry out their duties safely;
- Taking a direct interest in health and safety and work closely with the Health & Safety Officer to ensure compliance with all statutory requirements;
- Ensuring, where protective clothing or equipment are provided to staff, that they are used and worn by all affected staff;
- Ensuring safe systems of work in their area of responsibility are followed;
- Ensuring that all equipment in their area of responsibility is properly maintained and safe to use;
- Ensuring that access and egress routes within their area of responsibility are always kept free of obstruction. Arrange for unwanted material e.g., old/broken furniture, obsolete ICT consoles, crates/boxes containing old files or personal belongings etc. to be removed from offices with the assistance of local Service Officers and Business Services Unit or local facilities management teams of the Offices, as /where required;

- Ensuring that all accidents to staff, visitors or contractors are reported, recorded and, where necessary, investigated. This is done in conjunction with the local Safety Representative and H&S Unit;
- Regularly 'walk-through' their area of responsibility to ensure a good level of hygiene and housekeeping is maintained and work areas are free from hazards;
- Regularly reviewing this Safety Statement to ensure it remains current to their activities i.e., request H&S Unit to undertake a risk assessment of any new activities, if necessary.
- In line with any prevailing health guidelines, managers may be the first line in response to any issues arising in relation to COVID-19/Influenza/Respiratory viruses or other infection control measures that may be advised. Further details of 'Manager-Employee Guidance on H&S responsibilities' can be found on [the Department's intranet bob](#).

## 2.2 Responsibilities of the Health & Safety Unit

The Health and Safety Unit is part of the Corporate Services Division and manages the Department's Health and Safety Management System. The Unit works with colleagues to ensure compliance with Health and Safety legislation in the Department's three Dublin locations, Kildare Street, Dawson Street and the Earlsfort Centre. Approximately 540 staff currently occupy these buildings, along with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in Kildare Street and Eversheds Sutherland in the Earlsfort Centre.

The Unit acts in an advisory capacity for the Department's Offices. These are the Companies Registration Office (CRO) based in Carlow, the Intellectual Property Office of Ireland (IPOI) based in Kilkenny, the Labour Court and the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) based in Dublin, Carlow, Ennis, Sligo and Cork. The offices are tenants in ten buildings across the country provided by the OPW. Four of these buildings are State owned and six are leased from private landlords by the OPW on our behalf.

The work of the Unit is assisted by voluntary local committees and safety representatives in each of the Department's and Office locations. This assistance can be augmented to allow for any future potential COVID-19 or Infection Prevention Control requirements by the appointment of Lead Worker Representatives at each location. Information on LWRs and their role is available on [the Department's intranet bob](#).

Key functions of the Health and Safety Unit include:

- Providing advice to management and staff of the Department in carrying out their responsibilities in safety and health, particularly in determining the most appropriate order and methods of working;
- Implementing an efficient communication plan each year for disseminating the Health and Safety message to staff;
- Compiling and managing implementation of yearly training schedule;
- Providing Health and Safety induction training for new entrants;
- Organising, on a regular basis, the Health and Safety Forum meetings. The Forum provides an opportunity for the Unit to update local H&S safety personnel on developments in Health and Safety, new work procedures, revised safety documents etc. and allows for an exchange of views and information between members;
- Keeping abreast of current health and safety issues and inform staff of issues that affect them;
- Where work is of a nature not normally carried out by the Department/Office, the Unit must ensure that hazards are identified, and, if necessary, arrange for written instructions to be issued to the person in charge of the work, regarding safe sequence, method of work and precautions to be taken. The Unit will lead on this and work with colleagues in our buildings in this regard;
- Ensuring that any necessary Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment is available as required and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions;
- Ensuring that Material Safety Data Sheets (M.S.D.S.) are available for all cleaning agents/chemicals used by the Department and its Offices;
- Ensuring where applicable, that the Business Services Unit obtains a Fire Certificate for each of the Department/Office buildings, and that all firefighting equipment is maintained, and fire exits kept clear;
- Planning and executing fire drills on a bi-annual basis, record results and brief staff on how to improve evacuation techniques through the relevant Health and Safety Committee;
- Organising for the appropriate amount of first aid boxes to be located at strategic points throughout the Department and its Offices. The Unit checks stock on a regular basis and replenishes contents as/when required;
- Having an adequate understanding of the legislation that governs safety, health and welfare as required in the Department and its Offices;

- Ensuring that Contractors and Sub-contractors provide a site-specific Safety Statement, appropriate insurance, method statement detailing the safe system of work and all other safety documentation as appropriate, in line with the Department's Contractor Policy;
- Ensuring that all Contractors/Sub-contractors and their employees follow the same safe work procedures as would be expected of staff;
- Arranging for the reporting of certain accidents/dangerous occurrences to the HSA/State Claims Agency etc in conjunction with HR Unit;
- Assisting management in carrying out Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS) for staff that request them.
- Ensuring that measures as laid out in the 'Work Safely Protocol' or future revisions of same and Government & Public Health Guidelines in respect of Infection Prevention Control are observed and implemented.

**The Department is legally obliged to ensure that persons are nominated and made responsible for tasks assigned to them. The Department will:**

- identify responsible persons (where required) who will take responsibility for various tasks, e.g., induction, inspections and training;
- arrange training for staff on these tasks and their responsibilities;
- record the names of such nominated persons;
- record details in **Form 2.3 – Responsible Persons Task Register** in **Appendix 3.3**

The Department will review and follow up on a regular basis to ensure arrangements are put in place and that assigned persons are carrying out their roles effectively.

### 3. Competence and consultation

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**Competence of managers and staff is critical to the effective safe management and operation of business activities.**

Competence is determined by knowledge, training and experience. Instruction and training are given by the Department in a form, manner and language that would be reasonably likely to be understood by those receiving it. Such training will include information and instructions in the job to be carried out and measures to be taken in an emergency. Training will adapt to changed circumstances or new risks and will be repeated periodically. Training will be provided to employees on recruitment, in the event of transfer or change of task, and when new work equipment, systems of work or new technology is introduced.

The Department will assess what training each relevant employee needs, to keep up to date with changes in legislation, work practices and technology. By having competent, trained personnel who are adequately supervised, our employees will be capable of completing a job safely, efficiently and to a high standard. Typical training which can be carried out can include:

- Safety Representative training;
- Fire warden training;
- First-aid training;
- Manual handling training;
- Evacuation chair training;
- Training on the use of firefighting equipment;
- Induction training;
- Lead Worker Representative training.

The Department's H&S Unit will compile a yearly training schedule and keep an up-to-date register of all Safety Personnel trained throughout the Department's buildings. The Unit will keep local committees up to date on currently trained H&S staff in their locations and work with committees to identify any vacancies as they arise.

### 3.1 Staff training

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, strongly emphasises the need to provide employees with instruction, information and training necessary to ensure their health and safety. Providing employees with health and safety information and training reduces the chance of them suffering injuries or ill health. It helps them acquire the skills, knowledge, and attitude to make them competent in the safety and health aspects of their work and instils a positive health and safety culture.

The Department's training starts with induction training for new entrants. Thereafter, it depends on the role. For example, Service assistants would require manual handling training, cleaners - chemical handling training etc whereas deskbound staff may only require training when taking up a voluntary role such as Fire Marshal/First aider. In respect of H&S, this is where line managers play an important role in making any such requirements known to the Health and Safety Unit.

The Health and Safety Unit will seek mid & end year updates from all locations on filled H&S related positions including any that hold time-bound certifications (e.g., first aid). As an integral part of the Health and Safety Management System, training needs are planned each year to identify needs and arranging courses as required. Each Office manages same locally.

### 3.2 Induction Training

Induction training is very important in communicating specific health and safety information to our staff when they first arrive at our workplace. As the Department is spread across multiple locations, managers should be health and safety conscious when dealing with contractors, visitors and other relevant persons arriving to a location for the first time.

Induction training includes the following information:

- Specific hazards associated with the workplace and the controls that are in place;
- Roles and responsibilities;
- Emergency procedures and first-aid arrangements;
- Information relating to any infection prevention measures in force in the workplace.

The Health and Safety Unit participates in induction training for new staff, arranged by the Department's Learning and Development Unit. An introduction to the key sections of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, is provided along with an overview of the role of the Health and Safety Unit.

When staff inductions have been completed, **Form 2.1 Induction Checklist** will be completed (see **Appendix 2.1**).

### 3.3 Consultation and Participation

Staff participation in health and safety is an integral part of our Health and Safety Management System. The Department is committed to providing adequate and appropriate consultation and welcomes the views of all employees on issues relating to health and safety.

An important part of this consultation and participation process is the Department's in-house health and safety committees. These committees are comprised of staff in each building occupied by the Department with representation from all grades. The Health and Safety Unit provides advice to the committees as concerns are raised, and a wider Departmental H&S Forum hosted regularly through the year by the Unit provides a platform for further participation and discussion by all in-house committee members.

The Health and Safety Unit will consult with all relevant employees:

- When new risk assessments are being carried out or revised;
- When there is a change, update, or modification to a particular work process;
- When new machines or processes are introduced;
- When new substances or materials are introduced.

Furthermore, should any of our staff raise any matters relating to their health and safety that are connected in any way to our work activities, the Health and Safety Unit will endeavour to take any action that is considered necessary or appropriate to address the matters raised.

### 3.4 Safety Representative

Under [Section 25](#) of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, employees may select and appoint a Safety Representative. The Department will facilitate the training of the Safety Representatives so that they have the necessary competence to carry out the task. The appointed Safety Representative may consult with, and make representations to management, the Health and Safety Unit or the Health and Safety Committee on safety, health and welfare matters at the place of work. The purpose of these consultations is to prevent accidents and ill health, to highlight problems, and to identify means of overcoming them.

The functions of our Safety Representatives include:

- Acting as the liaison between senior management and employees on Health and Safety matters;
- Assisting the Health and Safety Unit in identifying and eliminating or reducing hazards and associated risks in the workplace and assisting with any investigations led by the Unit into workplace accidents/incidents;
- Attending Health and Safety Committee meetings;
- Making H&S-related suggestions to senior management and/or the H&S Unit;
- As regularly as possible reviewing the workplace based on the nature and extent of the hazards and consider findings (as required) with the Health and Safety Unit and supporting implementation of solutions where appropriate;
- Works done will be reviewed by the H&S Unit in conjunction with local Safety Representative (or, in their absence, a member of the local H&S Committee), as required;
- Being given access to non-personal information (that relates to the safety, health and welfare of employees, for example, facilities available, infection prevention procedures and facilities, Safe Work Procedures (SWPs). Personal details such as Personal Evacuation Plans etc will not be shared.
- Reporting accidents and dangerous occurrences to the Health and Safety Unit, subject to any limitations as outlined in the legislation. This may include preserving the scene of an accident/dangerous occurrence until Unit staff and OPW/contractors or other relevant personnel arrive;
- Being provided with, and availing of, the opportunity to receive appropriate health and safety training to help perform the functions of a Safety Representative;

The Safety Representative is a voluntary role and does not have any duties, as opposed to functions under the 2005 Act other than those that apply to employees generally. The Safety Representative shall not suffer any disadvantage in their employment through discharging their functions and cannot be held criminally liable for failure to perform any function of a Safety Representative. Section 27 of the 2005 Act protects employees generally from penalisation for any involvement in safety and health measures. This includes any employee who is a safety representative or is involved in the safety committee processes.

It is recognised that Safety Representatives are undertaking this important work voluntarily and in addition to their duties relevant to their assigned business unit. However, work undertaken in the context of their Safety Representative role should be reflected in their PMDS and agreed with their manager.



## 3.5 The Lead Worker Representative

3.5 The Lead Worker Representative (LWR) role arose from Government advice to prevent the spread of Covid-19. The role of the Representative is to work with the employer to assist in the implementation and monitoring of adherence to measures taken in line with Infection Prevention Control measures taken by the Department. The LWR can assist the Health and Safety Unit in administering Infection Prevention Control (IPC) protocols within their building and to assist with oversight that prevailing guidelines and practices are being followed by those onsite (distancing/masks/sanitising etc as may be in place).

The role of the LWR and the Department in terms of the Government's return to work safely protocol is set out [on the HSA website here](#).

The Health and Safety Unit will continue to monitor and implement public health advice on general Infection Prevention Control. The Department will continue to follow any measures advised in respect of Lead Worker Representatives as they arise.

## 3.6 Local Health and Safety Committees

Under [Section 26](#) of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, employees have the right to make representations to and consult their employer on matters relating to their safety, health and welfare at work, employees may also select and appoint members of a local safety committee. The main purpose of the local Health and Safety Committee is to provide a forum that meets regularly and facilitates employee participation on the steps taken to safeguard their safety, health and welfare within the workplace.

Health & Safety Committees operate in all the Department's buildings and in our Offices. For details and updates on local committees, please refer to our [Department's intranet bob here](#).

### **The Committee's role includes:**

- Making representations to the Health and Safety Unit on matters relating to safety, health and welfare at work;
- Supporting and implementing recommendations arising from Safety Audits and Risk Assessments in the building in conjunction with local line management, the H&S Unit & Accommodation Unit;
- Reporting accidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses in the building to the H&S Unit in the absence of the Safety Representative;

- Making representations on behalf of staff to the H&S Unit who are qualified in Health and Safety;
- Liaising with the H&S Unit when arranging training for staff who volunteer to perform H&S roles in the building;
- Working with H&S to ensure Safety signage is kept up to date with relevant names e.g., fire marshals; first aider/cardiac first responders etc.
- Attendance of one (or more) members at the DETE H&S Forum;
- Hosting Fire Drills;
- Working with the H&S Unit to monitor current practices and procedures including good housekeeping / hygiene practices;
- Assisting the H&S Unit in raising health and safety awareness amongst all staff, management, and visitors in the building.

Section 26 of the 2005 Act places a duty on the employer to consult employees to make and maintain arrangements to enable the employer and employees to co-operate to promote and develop safety, health and welfare and to monitor the effectiveness of those measures. As part of those measures, the employer must consult the employees or their safety representatives, or both, on:

- Any proposed measure that is likely to substantially affect safety, health and welfare at the place of work including any measures required by safety and health legislation;
- The designation of employees having duties under Section 11 in relation to emergency, or serious and imminent danger planning and preparation;
- Any matters arising from measures related to the protection from and the prevention of risks, the hazard identification and risk assessment carried out under Section 19;
- The preparation of the safety statement under Section 20;
- The information required to be given to employees under Section 9;
- Information on reportable accidents and dangerous occurrences required under Section 8(2)(k);
- The appointment of competent persons under Section 18;
- The planning and organisation of training under Section 10;
- The planning and introduction of new technologies and the implications for the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to the consequences of the choice of equipment and working conditions and the working environment.

Employees have a right to make representations to and consult their employer on matters relating to their safety, health, and welfare at work. Consultation must be made in advance

and in good time to allow employees time to consider, discuss and give an opinion on the matters before managerial decisions are made. The information given under Section 9 must be sufficient to allow employees to participate in the consultation process fully and effectively. The difference between the provision of information and consultation should be noted. Consultation with employees involves listening to their views and taking them into account as part of the decision-making process.

The health and safety committee can be used to meet the consultation requirements under this section. The provisions relating to safety committees are set out in Schedule 4 to the 2005 Act. Membership of the Local Health and Safety Committee is in a voluntary capacity and does not have any duties, as opposed to functions, under the 2005 Act other than those that apply to employees generally. The Local Health and Safety Committee member shall not suffer any disadvantage in their employment through discharging their functions and cannot be held criminally liable for failure to perform any function of a Local Health and Safety Committee member.

It is recognised that Local Health and Safety Committee members are undertaking this important work voluntarily and in addition to their duties relevant to their assigned business unit. However, work undertaken in the context of their Local Health and Safety Committee member role should be reflected in their PMDS and agreed with their manager.

### **3.7 Contractors Responsibilities**

In the context of this safety statement a contractor is a person or organisation which signs a contract to do certain work for payment within a specified time. All contractors involved in a work activity on our premises must comply with our policy for safety, health and welfare including additional measures necessary regarding Infection Prevention and Control that may prevail.

Section 12 of the 2005 Act sets out the duty that employers owe "so far as is reasonably practicable" to those who are not their employees but who may be exposed to risks to their health or safety at the place of work while work is being carried on. The section applies to multi-occupancy workplaces, such as the Department, where the duty holder would have to determine if his or her undertaking exposes the other occupiers and employees to risk. Section 12 has even greater significance when contractors are brought into a place of work. Under this section the duty holder needs to make an appropriate assessment of the competence of a contractor to undertake a particular task where there is the potential for exposure to risk.

In compliance with this, the Health and Safety Unit request Risk Assessments and Method Statements (RAMS) and Permits to Work from all directly arranged contractors (OPW managed contractors deal with OPW on this directly, but we oversee any potential affect to colleagues onsite - e.g., management of paining - fumes etc).

**Contractors carrying out work must:**

- Be competent to carry out the work;
- Have adequate resources to carry out the work;
- Provide, in advance of works, copies of their own:
  - o Risk Assessment and Method Statements (RAMS) which includes details of any noise, dust, vibration etc. that may be caused during works.
  - o Insurance.
- Ensure that work activities do not affect the well-being of our employees or visitors;
- Ensure they identify potential hazards arising from their work activities and implement appropriate control measures and safe systems of work while carrying out work;
- Report to the contact person on arrival at our workplace, and sign/out in the Visitors Book;
- Complete appropriate **Permit to Work (Form 2.3 in Appendix 2)**.

Contractors must be made aware of escape routes in case of emergency when arriving onsite, whilst their planned work will be checked to ensure it takes account of our employees and any hazards in our workplace. All reception areas now have printed Emergency Plans for presentation to visiting contractors (in case of no H&S representative onsite). All engaged works will be cleared by Health and Safety Unit following assessment of their submitted Risk Assessment and Method Statement.

**Responsible Persons Task Register in Appendix 3** can be used to identify employees who agree to carry out key tasks, in this case the overseeing of contractors who may be carrying out work.

### 3.8 Visitors

In the context of this safety statement a visitor is a person other than an employee or contractor. Visitors may not be aware of the potential hazards associated with our place of work.

**To minimise the risk of injury to visitors, the Department will:**

- Practice good housekeeping, including:
  - Keeping walkways clear.
  - Cleaning up spills immediately.
- Restrict access to hazardous areas;
- Prevent visitors from using equipment or machinery;
- Ensure appropriate safety signs and notices are displayed;
- Ensure safe walkways and safe access and egress routes are maintained;
- Put procedures in place to ensure visitors are evacuated in a safe and timely manner in the event of an emergency;
- Make provision for sanitising, hygiene facilities and adhere to prevailing best practice Relating to infection prevention control measures as necessary.

**Visitors are required to:**

- Always conduct themselves in a safe manner;
- Observe the fire evacuation procedure and, in the event of an emergency, to identify themselves to an employee and be escorted to the designated assembly point;
- Ensure that they satisfy all Infection Prevention Control specific requirements as necessary when conducting work onsite.

## 4. Safe Work Procedures and Practices

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**If an accident or incident occurs in the place of work (whether onsite or in your remote workplace), or in the course of our work activities which has affected employees or a third party, this should be made known immediately to the Health & Safety Unit.**

### 4.1 Accident Reporting and Investigation

The Health and Safety Unit in conjunction with locally based health and safety colleagues conduct regular reviews of each location's Risk Assessment identifying hazards, risks and preventative control measures. Risk Assessments are conducted to account for the key hazards and as pertains to SHWW (General Application) Regulations 2007, charting what control measures we put in place to reduce the likelihood of occurrence. Depending on severity & likelihood, each risk is assigned a rating.

Notwithstanding this oversight, accidents, incidents or near misses can, and do occur despite best efforts. In the event of such occurrences, it is essential that we investigate and learn from what has happened and how this can be prevented from happening in future. In this regard it is essential that all such occurrences are made known by way of a completed Incident Report Form (NIRF) complete with detailed description including what led to the incident, outcome, witness statement (if any) and any further supporting information such as images.

#### **When a workplace accident occurs, the Department will:**

- Ensure that all accidents and dangerous occurrences are recorded (see **Appendix 2, form 2.4**);
- Promptly investigate the accident or dangerous occurrence to determine the cause and, on completion of the investigation, put in place measures to prevent a re-occurrence.
- Ensure that all accidents are reported to the National Treasury Management Agencies (NTMA), State Claims Agency (SCA) via the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

- Ensure that where a fatal accident has occurred the Health & Safety Authority (HSA) are notified as quickly as possible, and **Form of Notice of Accident (IR1)** (see Appendix 2, form 2.4.1) is sent within 5 working days.
- Ensure that other accidents are reported to the HSA on Form **IR1** within 10 working days where:
  - Employees are out of work or not able to perform their normal work for more than 3 consecutive days (excluding the day of the accident but including any days which would not have been working days).
  - Members of the public injured due to a work activity and who are taken from the location of the accident to receive treatment in a hospital or medical facility.
- Ensure that dangerous occurrences are reported to the HSA online **here [Notice of Dangerous Occurrence](#)** (see Appendix 2, form 2.4.2) within 10 working days.

The local manager of the injured party with the assistance of H&S Unit is responsible for the reporting of accidents on Form IR1 when required. A record of any accident or dangerous occurrence reported to the HSA must be kept for a minimum of 10 years.

Any report to the HSA can be made online at **[www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)**, or by completing the relevant **Form (IR1 or IR3)** available online on [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie) and posting it to:

Workplace Contact Unit,  
Health & Safety Authority,  
Metropolitan Building,  
James Joyce Street,  
Dublin 1.

## 4.1.1 Emergency Procedures

The Health and Safety Unit has completed Emergency Evacuation Plans for all buildings occupied by DETE staff with the respective local H&S/house committees. These plans have been made available to all staff through signage in corridors and on the Department's intranet. Local health and safety committees and coordinators are involved in the creation of these plans.

The Health and Safety Unit and local H&S committees will ensure appropriate plans and procedures are in place to deal with emergencies and imminent dangers by:

- Identifying the types of emergency situations that could occur and ensuring that suitable plans and procedures are put in place for dealing with them, e.g.
  - Fire.
  - Explosion.
  - Chemical spills.
  - Accidents/injuries.
  - Leaks.
  - Power outages.
- Ensuring that employees are trained in the specific plans and procedures that are in place to deal with emergencies at our workplace;
- Ensuring that emergency procedures are included in the workplace induction training;
- Designating where employees are needed to implement emergency plans and procedures;
- Providing the equipment and training needed;
- Emergency contact information is at **Appendix 3**.

In the case of any of the building emergencies listed above, or similar, the protocol is as follows:

1. Local management contact Business Services Unit (BSU) and outline the issue and the potential impact on staff and work procedures;
2. BSU/ Local Management requests immediate assistance from OPW or relevant contractor, ESB, Bord Gais, Emergency Services etc.
3. DETE staff (BSU, local staff) await updates on timelines from OPW, ESB/Bord Gais, Emergency Services etc.



Other colleagues such as ICT Unit and HR Unit may play a role in assessing each emergency on a case-by-case basis, and contribute to the decision on what steps should be taken with local management in terms of sending staff home, evacuating the building for a period etc.

Other influencing factors may include Government advice, extreme weather conditions, waiting for weather forecast updates etc, and potentially, the Secretary General's decision on the closure of a building(s).

## 4.1.2 Fire Safety and Evacuation

Each location should conduct at least two fire drills per annum. These should be observed by **ALL** colleagues onsite as they serve to ensure all are familiar with the procedure in the event of a real occurrence and highlights any potential improvements to the process.

We also strongly advise regular (weekly) Bells Tests are conducted at all locations which will highlight if there are any system failures or malfunctions (e.g., fire doors not operating correctly). The H&S Unit will ensure appropriate plans and procedures are in place for dealing with fire, and that employees are trained, including:

- Location of firefighting equipment and means to raise the alarm;
- Location of assembly point(s);
- Evacuation drills and fire warden(s);
- Location of emergency shut-off points where relevant (e.g., gas).

Some emergencies (e.g., gas leak, fire, bomb threat, etc.) may require an evacuation of the workplace. The person who becomes aware (or is made aware) of a potential emergency should follow the emergency procedures. All employees and visitors must follow the procedures below for evacuation:

- **GO IMMEDIATELY TO THE NEAREST EXIT**
- **DO NOT WAIT TO FIND OUT WHAT IS HAPPENING**
- **DO NOT STOP TO COLLECT PERSONAL ITEMS**
- **GO AT ONCE TO THEIR ASSEMBLY POINT AND WAIT FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTION**
- **DO NOT RE-ENTER THE BUILDING UNTIL AUTHORISED TO DO SO BY THE EMERGENCY SERVICES.**
- **CO-OPERATE WITH SERVICE OFFICERS AND FIRE MARSHALS E.G. DO NOT ENTER THE BUILDING IF REQUESTED NOT TO DO SO.**

### 4.1.3 FIRST AID

At each Department and office location, there will be first aid boxes located throughout the building. These will be checked regularly to ensure they are up to date with supplies required. Each location also provides a dedicated sick/ rest room for the use of those in need of attention or feeling unwell. Our Buildings Overview control sheet maps all first aid boxes. Each should be identified for a specific location in the building to avoid misplacement.

After assessment of the workplace and the type of hazards that exist, the H&S Unit will ensure adequate provision of first-aid equipment and facilities, including:

- At least one adequately stocked and accessible first-aid kit will be provided.
- The Department will ensure first-aid equipment is prominently placed, that employees are aware of its location and that it is accessible to all employees.
- Local first-aiders will keep first-aid kits stocked and in date. They will request new stock from the H&S Unit, as required.

### 4.1.4 Violence/Robbery/Threats

Where there is a risk of robbery or violence in the workplace, the H&S Unit will facilitate a risk assessment to ensure that adequate plans and procedures are put in place. In 2022 the Department engaged An Garda Síochána who performed a dedicated security review including postal security for our Kildare Street Building with resultant guidelines shared where necessary.

The Department and its Offices will train relevant staff, as requested and where relevant to their own specific situation, on how to deal with the threat of robbery / violence, for example:

- Keep calm and make no sudden movements.
- Do what the offender asks.
- Memorise as many details about the offender as possible, e.g., height, clothing, features.
- Note the direction and method of escape, e.g., car, motorbike, on foot.
- Notify the Gardaí as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Provide first aid to victims.

In the event there are specific or personal threats to the safety of staff or premises, H&S Unit will assist with any further risk assessments, Safe Work Procedures or reviews that may be required to mitigate against this.

## 4.2 Welfare Facilities and Workplace Requirements

In accordance with our statutory obligations the Department will provide and maintain adequate welfare facilities and a suitable and safe workplace environment for use by all employees and visitors, including but not limited to:

- Suitable toilet facilities;
- Suitable seated area for staff to sit and eat – adjusted to cater for any Infection Prevention Control measures that may be advised as necessary in line with prevailing guidelines and government advice;
- Changing areas (if Personal Protective Equipment / Clothing is required to be worn).
- Adequate ventilation, temperature and lighting;
- Interior walls, floors and traffic routes that are maintained in good condition and kept clean;
- Working environment kept free of pest infestations including by staff undertaking good housekeeping habits e.g., keeping flooring and surfaces free of clutter for regular vacuuming and cleaning;
- Fire detection and firefighting equipment;
- Emergency routes and exits;
- Suitable area for breastfeeding; administering prescribed medication etc.
- Sick bay/ Rest Rooms.

## 4.3 Personal Protective Equipment

Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as identified in our risk assessments, will be provided and must be worn by our employees when required. Typical PPE worn by employees in the Department are gloves worn by our cleaner team, body suits and masks worn by staff involved in filing, archiving etc and workwear worn by our Service Attendants.

Where required, typical PPE could include:

- Eye protection;
- Hearing protection;
- Gloves;
- Safety footwear;
- High visibility clothing;
- Respiratory protection, e.g., mask.

The Department will ensure that:

- Adequate and suitable PPE is provided, if and where required;
- The suitability of the PPE for the job is assessed;
- PPE is maintained, used and replaced as recommended by the manufacturer's instructions;
- Personal protective equipment is only used as a last resort when a residual risk remains after all other measures have been taken to eliminate / reduce the risk;
- Where it is not possible to reduce or eliminate the risk, then PPE appropriate to the task and work environment, as identified in our risk assessments, will be used;
- The H&S Unit will record details of the supply and training in the use of PPE as required using **Form 2.2 PPE Register** in **Appendix 2**.

The Department expects our employees to:

- Use PPE correctly;
- Report any defects or damage to PPE immediately to their line manager, the Safety Representative, or the H&S Unit;
- Participate in any training or instruction provided on PPE;
- Inform their line manager or H&S Unit of any medical conditions they have that might be affected using the PPE provided to them.

## 4.4 Protection of Pregnant, Post Natal and Breastfeeding Employees

As required by Part 6 of the Safety Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, on becoming aware that an employee is pregnant, has recently given birth or is breastfeeding, the Department will assess the specific risks arising from the employment to that employee and act to ensure that she is not exposed to anything that would damage her health or that of her developing child. As detailed within the [DETE Maternity Leave Policy](#) (April 2021), to have a Pregnancy Risk Assessment conducted, this should be requested via HR, Line Manager or the Health and Safety Unit who can assist.

The Pregnancy at Work Regulations require employers to risk assess the workplace for any hazards that may cause harm or injury to employees (and their unborn child) that are in any of the 3 stages of pregnancy:

1. Pregnant,
2. Post Natal, or
3. Breastfeeding.

During the three stages of Pregnancy (Pregnant, Post-Natal and Breastfeeding), all employers are required, under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and the General Application Regulations, 2007, to carry out a **risk assessment** of the hazards and risks within their workplace environment and work tasks that may pose a threat to the health of the employee and her developing child. The Department will:

- Make sure that a specific risk assessment is made available to that employee, if requested, taking account of any medical advice that the employee has received;
- Assess any risk likely to arise from exposure to specified agents and work activities and, where possible exposure exists, ensure she does not carry out these activities;
- If a risk cannot be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level, then:
  - Adjust the working conditions or hours of work or both; or,
  - If this is not possible, provide alternative work; or,
  - If this is not possible, grant the employee health and safety leave.
- The Department will ensure that pregnant, postnatal or breastfeeding employees have suitable facilities to rest or feed, where possible, or make alternative arrangements.

## 4.5 Young Persons

To ensure compliance with the specific regulations dealing with young people at work i.e., those less than 18 years of age (e.g., Transition Year Student on temporary placement), the Department will:

- Carry out a risk assessment before employment of a young person (over 16 but less than 18), considering their relative lack of experience, absence of awareness of potential risks or lack of maturity;
- Put in place all required control measures identified by the risk assessment, taking account of:
  - Their lack of experience, maturity or awareness of risk;
  - Any work activity likely to involve a risk of harmful exposure to physical, biological or chemical agents;
  - The physical and psychological capacity of the young person.
- Make sure the recommended working hours are not exceeded for young persons;
- **Responsible Persons Register in Appendix 3** can be used to identify the person responsible for carrying out young persons at work risk assessment.

Further information on the Department's guidelines regarding Child Safeguarding and Work Placement can be found on [the Department's intranet bob here](#).

## 4.6 Work related stress and Dignity at work

The Department as the employer has a duty to have safe systems of work in place and should ensure that the system of work also for those working from home is reasonable. This includes supervision, communication, training, breaks, supports, fairness, allocation of work, respectful behaviour, and management. Information will continue to be issued by the DETE Wellbeing Newsletter and on [Wellbeing during COVID-19](#) page.

The Department's Wellbeing Framework has been updated to include physical and mental wellbeing for jobholders working from home [Wellbeing Framework](#).

In the context of remote working during the outbreak of COVID-19, the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) advises that where jobholders who feel added stress from the location of their work, the Department should be informed and act accordingly. The HSA provides a [Guide on Work Related Stress](#) and has released a [podcast](#) which addresses this topic in the context of returning to work under COVID-19.

Useful links:

- [Link to the Disability Liaison Officer \(DLOs\) page](#)
- [Link to Learning & Development \(L&D\)](#)
- [Link to Civil Service Employee Assistance Service availability and video support](#)
- [Link to mediation access for the Public Service](#)
- [Link to Subgroup on Wellbeing page](#) with links to mental wellbeing, bereavement counselling services; Coping with financial stressors; Depression/anxiety counselling e.g., Aware website and others; Expert speakers for staff talks by VC in conjunction with LDU and Lunch and Learn Webinars on Wellbeing while Managing Remotely

The Department will, so as far as is reasonably practicable, will work to ensure that:

- No employee's workload is so great that it involves consistently work overtime;
- No employee will be subjected to harassment from, or degrading behaviour by, colleagues or managers and that everyone in the workplace treats others with respect and courtesy;
- No employee must work in an environment which is unsafe and in which there are risks of accidents;
- Employees are trained so they can do their jobs effectively and safely.

- Everyone knows what their core job is;
- Colleagues have access to appropriate supports relating to alcohol or drugs misuse including Circular 08/2009: [Civil Service Alcohol and Drugs Misuse Policy \(circulars.gov.ie\)](#) is in place and is applicable across the Civil Service;
- [Dignity at Work Policy](#) is in place. It outlines procedures to address bullying, harassment and sexual harassment at work. This is a Department of Public Expenditure and Reform policy applicable across the Civil Service.

There are several Departmental policies which staff should familiarise themselves with, which are available on the following links:

- [Attendance Management Policy](#);
- [Disciplinary Procedure](#);
- [Grievance Procedure and Mediation](#);
- [Smoking and e/Smoking/Vaping](#);

Further information may be found on the Department's intranet (**bob**) HR Unit pages.

[HR Advice and Support Unit](#)

Services provided to staff by the [Civil Service Employee Assistance Service here](#) e.g., issues relating to misuse of drugs and alcohol.

## 4.8 COVID-19 & Infection Prevention and Control

This Safety Statement is revised while continuing to take account of any prevailing Government advice in line with Public Health Guidance that may relate to Infection Prevention Control and any potential further risk from COVID -19 variants. In December 2022, the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly wrote to all Ministers reiterating the public health measures that Departments, Offices, Agencies and businesses need to be cognisant of, particularly during the annual flu season/winter stating; *“it is again important to reinforce basic requirements around Infection Prevention and Control for respiratory viruses, and the key public health advice at every possible juncture”*.

In this communication, he acknowledged that throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic, our collective efforts reduced the risk from the spread of infection throughout our workplace considerably. This hard work and observance of measures and practices is what helped mitigate the risk from COVID-19.

In light of this, whilst the Department provided a raft of risk control measures during COVID, we continue to advise:

- hand sanitiser at points within each building along with supporting any other measures that may be required to assist those more vulnerable;
- Provision of CO2/Air Quality monitors as an ‘assist’ measure to alert of low air quality requiring opening windows/doors by those onsite;
- Procedures to respond to suspected cases of Covid-19 and managing staff who present with symptoms while at work;
- Continued attention to the existing high quality cleaning regimes;
- Provision of disinfectant wipes at communally used facilities such as printers/copiers;
- Management of water systems to account for reduced footfall and subsequent use resulting in reduced flow which can be a cause of bacterial build up;
- Online signposting of employee assistance services.

This document should be read with particular attention to the Department’s [‘COVID-19 Response Plan’](#) developed in line with the Work Safely Protocol and subsequent revisions & our support areas on our intranet (BOB) for specific COVID related staff matters, protocols and procedures that may remain.



## 5. Blended Working

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**Whether working in the employer’s work premises, or on a blended arrangement, the employee’s terms and conditions of employment remain the same, save for any changes to the place of work when working remotely.**

In line with the [Blended Working Policy Framework](#) for the Civil Service published in March 2022, and the [DETE Blended Working Policy](#), launched in summer 2022 ([revised June 2023](#)), blended working encompasses both working on-site from an office and working remotely, either from home or from another remote working station. The purpose of blended working is to strike the right balance between the needs of the Department and the needs of our staff. Health and Safety considerations are clearly defined as one of the 5 key principles underpinning this Framework.

Under Health and Safety legislation, employers have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of their employees. This applies regardless of where the work is being carried out, whether it is at the employer’s premises, a hub or shared workspace or at the employee’s home.

### 5.1 Remote Workstation Assessments

Managing workstation assessments, both in the office and at remote locations, remains the responsibility of the Department as the employer under both Irish and European law. The [Safety, Health and Welfare at Work \(General Application\) Regulations 2007](#), chapter 5, outlines the requirements for an “analysis of the workstation in order to evaluate the safety and health conditions”. [The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005](#), section 8, places a duty on employers to “ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees”, and section 19 states that every employer shall “identify the hazards in the place of work under his or her control”, and be in possession of a risk assessment.

In this regard, the Department will continue to consult with staff to ensure in as far as is reasonably practicable, that the employee's workstation and equipment are suitable for their work, to determine if there are any specific risks regarding working from home, and to provide any information, training or instruction required. To support this very significant change in our day-to-day working environment, the Department has additional supports:

**Information, Training, and soft supports:**

- [Blended Working home page on bob](#);
- [Remote Workstation Set up information & videos](#);
- [Display Screen Equipment Guide and Screen Breaks](#);
- [DSE Assessments & Visual Display Unit Tests](#).

**Office and ICT Equipment available for use at home:**

- Chairs/Footrests/desk;
- Monitors/Keyboards/mice/docking stations/headsets.

The Department, as part of the Blended Working application process, will arrange for formalised risk assessment, including an assessment of equipment and ergonomics, to be carried out for all applicants to Blended Working. The results of any such assessments completed will help to inform on any remaining appropriate protective and preventative measures following on from that risk assessment, including following up to ensure the necessary amendments have been made to mitigate any identified risks.

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 sets out the legal obligations of employers but also of employees. As an employee, you must follow the relevant statutory provisions as appropriate, which includes taking reasonable care to protect the safety, health and welfare of yourself and others. Key points employees must consider are:

- Safe access and egress;
- Adequate space requirements and clutter free areas;
- Noise;
- Free from distractions;
- Control over your own home workstation climate: Temperature, Humidity, Ventilation and Lighting.

The Department will ensure it complies with its obligations and will also bring the employee obligations to the attention of their employees as advised in the Department's [Blended Working Policy](#).

## 5.2 Communications

Forming part of the Department's Blended Working application process, the Department will communicate with all staff to inform, guide and assist all seeking to apply. This will serve to provide information to support all applicants in preparedness for a safe remote place of work.

Stage 1 of the health and safety aspects of the blended working application process includes the obligation by the applicant to ensure they have made the necessary arrangements for a suitable remote workstation setup as outlined in 5.1 above.

Stage 2 of the application process involves a virtual assessment of your remote workstation by a trained professional who will identify any final remaining issues. The system will include:

- Status of assessments;
- Actions Required by the Department or Applicant;
- Changes/improvements made.

### **Local & Line Manager Supports**

- Colleagues working remotely will be further supported by their line managers and systems to ensure continued connectivity through all media available (e.g., phone, email, Webex/Teams VC);
- Line Managers check in on the wellbeing of the individual and provide further assistance, training and/or supports where necessary;
- Colleagues are further reminded of work practices to observe whilst working remotely such as the need to switch off; including taking regular breaks and time management to help reduce stress and ensure maintenance of work-life balance;
- HR, H&S Unit, DETE Wellbeing Team, LDU, Disability Liaison Officer & CSEAS offer further support to line managers and colleagues as they navigate the challenges of remote/hybrid working during the winter 2022/23 flu season/COVID-19 variants.

This approach to onsite and Blended Working will continue to be reviewed and as external research, advice and best practice are available. Management of same is operated with a degree of local sectional flexibility to allow for individual circumstances whilst adhering to our Department's overall policy.

## Appendix 1 Department contact information

<b>Name</b>	<b>Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE)</b>
<b>Address</b>	<p><b><u>Core Department buildings /headquarters:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23 Kildare Street, Dublin 2</li> <li>• Block C, Earlsfort Centre, Lower Hatch Street, Dublin 2</li> <li>• 59 Dawson St, Dublin 2</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Offices of the Department:</u></b></p> <p><b><i>Companies Registration Office (CRO)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bloom House, Gloucester Place Lower, Dublin 1</li> <li>• O'Brien Road, Carlow</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Registrar of Friendly Societies</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bloom House, Gloucester Place Lower, Dublin 1</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Register of Beneficial Owners (RBO)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• O'Brien Road, Carlow</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Workplace Relations Commission (WRC)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lansdowne House, Lansdowne Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4</li> <li>• Elysian Building, Eglinton Street, Cork.</li> <li>• Clare Technology Park, Gort Road, Ennis, Co Clare</li> <li>• Marino House, Finisklin Business Park, Sligo</li> <li>• O'Brien Road, Carlow</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Labour Court</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lansdowne House, Lansdowne Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Intellectual Property Office of Ireland</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government Buildings, Hebron Road, Kilkenny</li> </ul>
<b>Department Email</b>	healthandsafetynotifications@enterprise.gov.ie
<b>Website address</b>	www.enterprise.gov.ie

## Appendix 2 Forms and Records

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### Form 2.1 Health and Safety Induction

New entrants and their managers receive a Health and Safety Guidance Form covering the roles of Managers & Employees under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 in their Start Pack when they begin in the Department. This form can also be found on [the Department's intranet bob here.](#)

### Form 2.2 PPE Register

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT REGISTER			
Employee Name	PPE ACQUIRED	DATE PPE RECEIVED	DATE OF PPE REVIEW

This register will be updated by the H&S Unit and stored on the Unit's electronic directory.

### Form 2.3 Permit to Work

All External Contractors & OPW staff coming onsite to work on our building are required to complete a Permit to Work which can be found on [the Department's intranet bob here.](#)

### Form 2.4 National Incident Report Forms

#### FORM 2.4 NATIONAL INCIDENT REPORT FORMS

[National Incident Report Form - IR1](#)

[Dangerous Occurrence Report](#)

### Form 2.5 Risk Assessments

**FORM 2.5 RISK ASSESSMENTS** - This register will be updated by the H&S Unit. Where a hazard is of risk to employees the register will be displayed [on the Department's intranet bob here.](#) Where the hazard/risk is to an individual the register will be stored electronically in the unit's directory and held by the employee and manager.

A Risk Assessment is defined as the identification, evaluation, and estimation of the levels of risks involved in a situation, their comparison against benchmarks or standards, and determination of an acceptable level of risk. The H&S Unit and/or the services of a competent person will carry out risk assessments where applicable.

Note: the list below is not exhaustive

- Task Specific (e.g., Manual Handling, Chemical use, etc.)
- Site Specific (e.g., Electricity, Gas, machinery, access/egress, canteen)
- Environmental (Dust, Noise, Vibration etc.)
- Pregnant, Post Natal & Breast Feeding
- Disability (a limitation in any of the following: Mobility, Sensory (vision and hearing), Understanding, Dexterity and health conditions such as heart problems, epilepsy or asthma etc.)
  - Including Personal Emergency Evacuation Procedures (PEEP)
- Young Persons at Work
- Night Work and Shift Work
- Driving for Work
- Display Screen Equipment (DSE/VDU) Assessment
- Covid-19
- Beekeeping
- Legionella

# Appendix 3 Emergency Contact Information

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## 3.1 Emergency Evacuation Plan

Each building occupied by the Department has its own specific Emergency Evacuation Plan to be followed by staff in the event of an evacuation. The Plans contain emergency contact details for fire services, the Gardai, ESB etc.

Emergency Evacuation Plans for all DETE buildings are available on [our Department's intranet](#) [bob here](#).

## 3.2 – Department Safety Representatives as of December 2022

Jennifer McGrath (Kildare St)

John Cunniffe (Earlsfort building)

Deirdre Mooney (59 Dawson St)

Barry Donoghue / Mary Giblin (CRO, Bloom House)

Sinead Gilligan (WRC, Lansdowne House)

Jacqui O'Sullivan, Damien McDonnell (WRC, Carlow)

Caroline Ryan-Kinsella / Maeve Meaney (CRO, Carlow)

Claire O'Reilly/ Brigid Phelan (IPOI, Kilkenny)

Sharon Atkins (WRC, Cork)

Michael Coleman (WRC, Sligo)

### 3.3 Responsible Persons Task Register

NO.	TASKS (NON-EXHAUSTIVE)	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
<b>Health and Safety Unit (John Maher PO, Frank Mooney AP, Gary Phipps HEO)</b>		
	<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
1.	Ensuring the safety statement, including risk assessments, is up to date, accessible and available to all	H&S Unit
2.	Ensuring H&S records incl. H&S training are maintained	H&S Unit
3.	Ensuring H&S forms and registers are collected and filled out as required	H&S Unit
4.	Ensuring accidents are reported and remedial measures implemented to prevent re-occurrence	H&S Unit staff in conjunction with local In-house H&S personnel
5.	Ensuring risk assessments are carried out and updated as necessary	H&S Unit staff in conjunction with local Line Managers
6.	Ensuring the upkeep and maintenance of welfare facilities	H&S Unit staff Accommodation Unit staff
7.	Ensuring the upkeep and maintenance of the premises and co-ordination of contractors' activities including showing escape routes, assembly point etc. and checking contractor's planned work activities	Accommodation Unit staff. H&S Unit staff. Local In-house H&S personnel
8.	Managing and co-ordinating work activities to ensure staff safety	Line Managers in conjunction with H&S Unit staff
9.	Ensuring the upkeep of the first-aid box and ordering of first-aid supplies	First Aiders in conjunction with H&S Unit staff
10.	Ensuring young persons' risk assessments are carried out when necessary	Line Managers in conjunction with HR Unit, H&S Unit staff or external competent person
11.	Ensuring pregnancy-at-work risk assessments are carried out when necessary	Line Managers in conjunction with HR Unit and H&S Unit staff



12.	Managing provision of emergency equipment and co-ordinating procedures, including provision of fire extinguishers, fire drills, evacuation planning etc.	H&S Unit staff in conjunction with Service Officers and Local In-house H&S personnel
13.	Disability Liaison Officer	Cian MacHale, HR Unit
14.	Lead Worker Representative	As displayed in each location

# Appendix 4 Safety Data Sheets/Reports for Hazardous Substances.

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Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for products are available online or the from manufacturer to inform of the hazards of the chemical being used and the measures that need to be taken to protect your health and that of employees. Each SDS consists of 16 obligatory sections. Each section contains specific information relating to the chemical for which the SDS is prepared. An SDS for each hazardous chemical received from a supplier must be available and accessible.

The following serves as an aid in helping to understand what information you should be aware of and what information you need to consider when completing a risk assessment for the chemicals being used.

**Section 1** contains contact details of the person/company responsible for supplying the chemical as well as the emergency telephone number to contact in case of an emergency.

**Section 2** gives details on the hazards of the chemical. This will help you assess the risk and what harm it can do to your health, the health of your employees and the environment.

**Section 3** If the chemical you are using is a preparation (mixture), this section will give you information on the hazards of each of the individual substances in the preparation.

**Section 4** details the first aid measures you need to take in case of an accident while using the chemical.

**Section 5** gives specific information on fighting a fire caused by the chemical.

**Section 6** details what actions need to be taken if there is an accidental release of the chemical, such as what protective equipment to wear and how to clean up the spill.

**Section 7** contains details on how to handle and store the chemical safely. The information in this section should be used to help you put in place safe procedures for working with chemicals.

**Section 8** gives you details of the steps you need to take to reduce exposure and of the personal protective equipment you need to wear when working with the chemical to protect yourself.

**Sections 9, 11 and 12** provide detailed information on the physical/chemical, toxicological and ecological properties of the chemical.

**Section 10** contains details of any hazardous reactions that may occur if the chemical is used under certain conditions.

**Section 13** explains how the chemical should be disposed of correctly.

**Section 14** contains information relating to the transportation of the chemical.

**Section 15** contains the details of the classification of the chemical as given on the label.

**Section 16** gives any other information relevant to the chemical, e.g., training advice.

The Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is something that is requested for each product used, mostly cleaning products. Each of these is specific to the product but contains the same information as listed here. We have provided each of the cleaner's rooms with a folder of these for the products they use along with a quick guide for hazards and handling. Further advice can be sought from the Department's Health and Safety Unit

# Appendix 5. Background Information & FAQs regarding Safety Statement and Risk Assessments

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## 1. Who needs to read the risk assessments and safety statement?

The risk assessments and safety statement should be brought to the attention of all DETE staff and others in our various locations and Offices that may be exposed to any risks covered by the safety statement. New employees particularly must be made aware of the safety statement. Other people attending onsite may also be exposed to a specific risk and all the relevant contents of the statement should be brought to their attention. These people for example, could include:

- Outside contractors carrying out cleaning, maintenance or building work, or where part of the operations has been sub-contracted to another;
- Temporary workers who are not aware of your work;
- Delivery people that conduct activities on our premises; and,
- Any others who provide a service or attend onsite in the Department locations or its Offices.

## 2. Does a copy of the safety statement need to be given to every employee?

No, but the safety statement must be accessible to all employees. The Safety Statement can be located on the [H&S pages on bob](#). More importantly, the sections of the safety statement relevant to employees must be brought to their attention, with specific regard to the hazards, risks and prevention measures concerning their role. Our Safety Statement is made available through the H&S pages on bob and provided by HR with induction packs to all new entrants. All line managers should ensure that staff reporting to them are made aware of and familiarise themselves with this. Similarly, all staff have a responsibility to ensure they follow all H&S procedures advised (e.g., Fire Drills, Accident reporting etc.)

## 3. How often should our safety statement be reviewed?

Our safety statement must always be relevant. Therefore, it is reviewed at least annually, or more frequently if:

- our staff are exposed to new hazards or risks, for example the introduction of new work practices or installations/changes to the offices;
- there is reason to believe that the information it contains is no longer adequate, for example changes to health and safety arrangements and resources, or a review of policy following an incident.

#### **4. Is there a legal requirement to display our Safety Statement?**

No. There is no absolute legal requirement to display our safety statement in the workplace. However, it must be accessible to all staff, and should be brought to their attention for the information and procedures it contains. As part of our Health and Safety Management System (HSMS), communication plays a key role. In this regard, it is constantly reviewed and kept up to date and relevant to the current circumstances, being available on [the Department's intranet bob here](#).

#### **5. Does the safety statement need to be approved by any external agency?**

No, but it is our responsibility to ensure it is fit for the Department and its Offices. The HSA does not preapprove safety statements, but an Authority inspector may review our safety statement during an inspection of the workplace should this occur. If the inspector finds that it is inadequate, they can direct us to revise it and update within 30 days.

#### **6. What about our shared locations?**

In shared locations (e.g., Kilkenny, Ennis etc.) we must co-operate with co-tenants in relation to safety and health. Everyone present at that location should be made aware of any risks they might face and what precautions they should take. The need for the various risk-control methods will vary according to the needs of each location. This may require a collaborative approach with other tenants and/ or landlords especially in the case of overall oversight and management of shared equipment or services such as emergency exits/ firefighting equipment etc. In this regard, it may be advisable to explore the possibility of a cross-body local House Committee.

#### **7. Why update the safety statement?**

There are several potential reasons including:

- Recommended/Instructed by the Health and Safety Authority;
- Name Change of the department since last volume (e.g., DBEI to DETE);
- New Policies or working methods introduced;
- New Hazards identified, and risks assessed.

#### **8. Does the safety representative or safety committee have a legal responsibility to ensure safety and health in my workplace?**

No. Under the 2005 Act a safety representative has functions but not duties (other than those that apply to employees generally). This means that a safety representative who accepts a

management proposal to deal with a safety and health issue could not be held legally accountable for putting the proposal into effect.

### **9. Are we exempt from carrying out a risk assessment and preparing a safety statement?**

Risk Assessments and safety statements must always be completed for our places of work. However, if this relates to a location where we have three or fewer staff, a Code of Practice related to the work activity and safety statement prepared by the Office, is sufficient to ensure compliancy (for example – Adjudication hearings in regional locations where there may be no other colleagues onsite). In this regard, a Code of Practice/ Safe Work Procedure should be developed. H&S Unit can assist and advise in this regard.

### **10. What is the role of the Health and Safety Unit?**

It is the responsibility of H&S on behalf of the employer to

- Oversee safe workplace environmental issues such as noise/vibration/radiation;
- Conduct/ assist with preparation of Risk Assessments;
- Apply Principles of Prevention (Schedule 3);
- Manage and conduct work activities to ensure the safety and health of employees and others affected;
- Prevent improper conduct likely to put an employee's safety and health at risk;
- Provide a safe place of work, which is adequately designed and maintained;
- Provide safe means of access and egress;
- Provide safe plant, equipment and machinery;
- Provide safe systems of work, e.g., operating procedures;
- Prevent risk to health from any article or substance (e.g., machinery, equipment and chemical substances);
- Provide appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision for all our employees to carry out their duties;
- Provide suitable protective clothing and equipment where hazards cannot be eliminated;
- Prepare and revise emergency plans and designate staff to take on emergency duties;
- Provide and maintain welfare facilities;
- Provide, where necessary, a competent person to advise and assist in securing the safety, health and welfare of employees (a competent person must have the necessary qualifications as well as sufficient training, experience, and knowledge appropriate to the nature of the work to be undertaken).

- Report accidents and Dangerous occurrences – SCA, HSA & HR;
- Prepare and keep relevant Safety Statements.

### **11. What is the role of the Health and Safety Committees?**

Each House (building) under the remit of DETE has its own in-house H&S Committee. The committee is made up of some (or all) of the following:

- Evacuation Officer;
- Safety Representative;
- Management Representative;
- Service Officer;
- Committee members.

Their function is to:

- Discuss and resolve any issues raised to the Safety rep by employees;
- Manage the provision of health and safety personnel within their building;
- Request training be provided by the H&S Unit where identified;
- Assist local managers in reporting incidents, accidents, near misses.

### **12. It says that as a manager I have 'X' responsibilities for the management of Health and Safety for my staff, is this not taken care of via the H&S Unit?**

Whether manager or employee, we all have a role to play regarding H&S in our workplace. The employees' commitment to safety and health is influenced by their perception of your commitment to safety and health. Visible and active support, strong leadership and commitment from all managers are essential for successful safety and health management. Line Managers are the frontline management in the implementation of health and safety policies throughout the Department's buildings and offices. They have a key responsibility to:

- Ensure that all activities carried out in their area of responsibility are undertaken safely and without risk to health;
- Ensure that all members of their staff are competent to carry out their duties safely;
- Take a direct interest in health and safety and work closely with the Health & Safety Officer to ensure compliance with all statutory requirements;
- Ensure, where protective clothing or equipment are provided to staff, that they are used and worn by all affected staff;
- Ensure safe systems of work in their area of responsibility are followed;

- Ensure that all equipment in their area of responsibility is properly maintained and safe to use;
- Ensure that access and egress routes within their area of responsibility are always kept free of obstruction. Arrange for unwanted material e.g., old/broken furniture, obsolete ICT consoles, crates/boxes containing old files or personal belongings etc. to be removed from offices with the assistance of local Service Officers and Business Services Unit or local facilities management teams of the Offices, as /where required;
- Ensure that all accidents to staff, visitors and contractors are reported, recorded and, where necessary, investigated. This is done in conjunction with the local Safety Representative and H&S Unit;
- Regularly 'walk-through' their area of responsibility to ensure a good level of hygiene and housekeeping is maintained and work areas are free from hazards;
- Regularly review this Safety Statement to ensure it remains current to their activities i.e., request H&S Unit to undertake a risk assessment of any new activities, if necessary.
- In line with any prevailing health guidelines, managers may be the first line in response to any issues arising in relation to COVID-19/Influenza/Respiratory viruses or other infection control measures that may be advised. Further details of 'Manager-Employee Guidance on H&S responsibilities can be found on [the Department's intranet bob here](#).

**13. As a manager I do not feel sufficiently trained to be responsible to hold these responsibilities for the H&S of my staff – how do I get up to speed; what supports are in place?**

H&S Unit trained 57 colleagues in the Core buildings with similar training organised in the offices in various Health and Safety roles in 2022. Training can be provided in the following:

- Fire Marshal;
- First Aid Responder / Cardiac First Responder;
- Manual Handling;
- Evacuation Chair;
- Safety Representation;
- Safety Committee;
- H&S Unit can provide further information and guidance to staff and managers by contacting [healthandsafetynotifications@enterprise.gov.ie](mailto:healthandsafetynotifications@enterprise.gov.ie)



**14. Can the H&S Unit enforce the resolution of their audits/risk assessments findings?**

All audits and risk assessments will have recommendations that aim to remove or reduce risk from any hazard through Elimination, Substitution, Isolation, Administration, or the Issue of Personal Protective Equipment. H&S unit with the assistance of local management and relevant stakeholders (e.g., Business Service Unit) will enforce the necessary recommendations on a case-by-case basis.



For more information contact:

[healthandsafetynotifications@enterprise.gov.ie](mailto:healthandsafetynotifications@enterprise.gov.ie)