

CORPORATE SAFETY COMMITTEE - 23RD OCTOBER 2003

SUBJECT: CONSULTATION ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY (FIRST AID) REGULATIONS 1981

REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members, Management and Trade Union Safety Representatives of a Health and Safety Executives (HSE) first ever review of the effectiveness of the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981.
- 1.2 The Review by the HSE follows a research report which concludes that although the current Regulations covering first aid are fundamentally effective, some employers are confused about specific requirements of the Regulations.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 According to the findings of the research report, there is also need to revise the ACOP and guidance on the Regulations in order to make the employers responsibilities more clearer. For example, the research document found that although the first aid regulations only require employers to provide first aid to their workers, an increase in a number of public areas, such as shopping centres, has led to confusion about whether employers also have a legal duty to provide first aid to members of the public.
- 2.2 Confusion is also found on the amount of first aid provision required by an employer. Employers must carry out a risk assessment to identify the level of facilities and personnel that is appropriate for their workplace. Does an employer provide an appointed person or a first aider? or what should be contained in the first aid kit.
- 2.3 The research document suggest ways of changing the training that must be given to workplace first aiders.
- 2.4 At present first aiders must complete an initial 24 hour first aid training course, and attend 12 hours of refresher training every three years.
- 2.5 The findings of the research states that stakeholders would like to see:-
 - Shorter first aid courses - small firms find it difficult to release employees for 24 hours to attend the initial first aid course.
 - More frequent refresher training - the current three years between the initial training course and refresher course was considered too long, and
 - Increase the numbers of 'basic first aiders' who are trained in emergency first aid.
- 2.6 Therefore the document proposes introducing an updated first aid training system that clearly distinguishes the roles of appointed persons and first aiders.

3. HSE ROLE

- 3.1 The document suggest the HSE in future play no part in approving providers of first aid training. Instead, an independent body appointed from within the first aid training industry would monitor the activities of training providers.

4. FIRST AID KITS

- 4.1 Lastly the document looks at how the HSE can make its existing guidance on the contents of workplace first aid kits clearer. This could be carried out by either replacing the list of suggested contents with expanded guidance or amend the ACOP to specify a mandatory basic contents list of first aid kits.

5. Members of the Committee will be informed if these changes come about.

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