



sterling 
quality where it matters

HEALTH AND SAFETY HANDBOOK

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PART ONE The Sterling Group - An Introduction

Since 1998, the Sterling Group has been at the forefront of contractor services and a market leader helping agencies work more efficiently and contractors maximise their income. Founded on compliance, trust and transparency, we work hard to make your job a little easier.

This booklet is designed as a guide to provide health, safety and welfare information for all contractors working through the Sterling Group. Part 1 outlines the health and safety management system applicable to all persons working through the Sterling Group. Part 2 highlights problem areas associated with the work you undertake and aims to raise awareness of the potential hazards likely to lead to accidents and/or ill health in the workplace.

The Sterling Group does not control the standards of health, safety and welfare where you undertake work assignments. This remains the responsibility of the host client to whom you are contracted. However, the Sterling Group acknowledges its obligations towards the safety of all affiliated contractors and endeavors to do everything so far as is reasonably practicable to ensure standards of health, safety and welfare is to an acceptable, legal standard.

The booklet is intended to supplement the host client's policies and procedures when undertaking work assignments and will ensure that you do not put yourself or others at unnecessary risk.

Finally, never be afraid to speak out or ask questions if you are unsure about any particular work activity. If in doubt contact the Sterling Group health and safety helpline on 01925 626237 where one of our dedicated advisors will aim to resolve all issues with you, your agency and/or the host client.

Policy Statement

The directors and employees of the Sterling Group recognise that health and safety is an integral part of business performance and is committed to continuous improvement in order to achieve and maintain the highest level of health and safety compliance.

To achieve this, the Sterling Group will ensure that:

- It communicates openly on all health and safety matters
- Its health and safety management system is accessible, appropriate and implemented
- Clear authority and responsibility for health and safety matters is defined and cascaded through the management structure
- The corporate approach to health and safety does not stifle innovation
- The health and safety function is supportive, creative and adaptable
- Risk assessments are used as a planning tool within the risk management process for all appropriate aspects of the business

The Sterling Group has an internal team of health and safety professionals who develop and maintain a health and safety management system enabling the organisation to achieve its corporate objectives whilst providing a support service throughout the business to assist with day to day health and safety risk management.

The Sterling Group is also committed to working with other key businesses within the recruitment industry sharing health and safety best practice and knowledge enabling us to be actively involved in the overall improvement of health and safety management and practice within our industry.

The policy will be kept up to date, particularly as the business changes in nature and size. To ensure this, the policy and the way in which it has operated will be reviewed every year.

Ian Black
Managing Director
Sterling Group

Health and Safety Responsibilities

You have a legal duty in respect of your own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by your work activities. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 you have a legal duty:

- To take reasonable care of your own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what you do or don't do
- To co-operate with your employer, agency and host client on health and safety matters
- Not to interfere with, or misuse anything provided for your health, safety or welfare

Every person regardless of their job can be prosecuted for failing to carry out these duties. Penalties include fines and in some circumstances up to two years imprisonment.

The Sterling Group also advocates the following good practice:

- Always read, and ensure you understand, the host client's policies and procedures including all risk assessments, method statements, permits-to-work and safe systems of work applicable to your assignment schedule. If in doubt request clarification from your host client representative or contact our dedicated health and safety helpline on 01925 626237
- Always comply with health and safety notices and signs - they are there for a reason
- Ensure you report all accidents and injuries - however minor they appear - in the host client's accident book and to the Sterling Group immediately
- Always keep your work space safe and tidy
- Only undertake work if you are competent and trained to do so
- Wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where required
- Report faulty damaged or defective equipment to your host client representative immediately and ensure it is taken out of use

- Maintain tools and equipment in good condition and ensure they are the right tools for the job
- Report any unsafe situations to your host client representative
- Keep fire escape routes and exits clear
- Only smoke in designated smoking areas
- Comply with all workplace speed limits and traffic controls
- Ensure you are familiar with fire safety procedures, i.e. assembly point, fire exits, fire extinguishers, fire marshals, fire alarm tests
- Do not involve yourself in horseplay or practical jokes and report such behaviour to your host client representative immediately

Upon Commencement of your Assignment

Upon arrival at the host client's office or site, you should report to the host client representative and await instructions for the safety induction. The host client is responsible for arranging this induction and under no circumstances should you commence the assignment until you have attended this session. The host client's induction will vary dependent on location and work type; however the following points should be covered:

- Policies, procedures, risk assessments and safe systems of work applicable to your work assignment
- Fire safety
- First aid
- Accident reporting
- Details of the health and safety representative(s)
- Information on specific hazards and risks
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Tools, equipment and machinery
- Welfare facilities

Accident Reporting Procedure

All accidents, incidents and near misses which involve people, property or equipment must be reported in line with the host client's reporting procedure and documented in the host client's accident book. It is also imperative that all such incidents are reported to the Sterling Group as soon as is practicable to facilitate an investigation and determine if you are eligible to claim from our personal accident insurance policy. In addition certain types of accidents, injury and ill-health have to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

To report a workplace accident or work-related injury / ill-health call the Sterling Group Health and Safety advice line on 01925 626237 or Customer Services on 01925 626200.

Young Persons

This applies to any contractor under the age of 18. Please note there are extra regulations in place for ensuring the safety of young person's whilst at work in respect of training, supervision, working hours, rest periods and exclusion from certain work activities. Therefore all young person's are instructed to notify the host client representative upon commencement of their work assignment that they are under 18.

For further information call the Sterling Group Health and Safety advice line on 01925 626237

New and Expectant Mothers

If you are pregnant or returning to work after giving birth you must inform the host client representative immediately so that any risks to yourself, your new-born or unborn baby can be controlled effectively.

All risk assessments should identify all associated hazards and risks to women of child bearing age.

Risk Assessment

The process of a risk assessment is designed so that hazards associated with the work activity can be identified leading to the implementation of safety precautions prior to any work commencing; therefore reducing the likelihood of injury and ill-health. You should not undertake any work activity where there is a foreseeable and significant risk of injury until you have read and understood the risk assessment. If in doubt inform the host client representative or contact the Sterling Group Health and Safety advice line on 01925 626237.

PART TWO Asbestos

FACT! Every week at least 20 tradesmen die from an asbestos- related disease

FICTION! The survival rate for those with asbestos related disease is very high

General Information

Asbestos occurs naturally as a fibrous material and due to its insulating and fire protection properties was extensively mixed with other materials and used in buildings since the 1950's. If you work in buildings built before the year 2000, it's likely that some parts will contain asbestos. It can be found in many products including:

- Pipe insulation
- Sprayed coating found as fire protection on structural supports (columns and beams)
- Asbestos Insulating Board (AIB) ceiling, door and window panels
- Textured decorative coating such as Artex
- Vinyl (PVC) or thermoplastic floor tiles
- Electrical switchgear

Although the use of asbestos was banned many years ago, it still presents a real risk not only to tradesmen but contractors involved in refurbishment, demolition and minor construction work

DO

- Request to see an asbestos register if in any doubt about the presence of asbestos
- Presume any suspect material contains asbestos unless there is evidence to suggest it does not
- Treat asbestos with respect
- Inform your supervisor and stop work immediately if you think you have uncovered asbestos
- Seek advice if in doubt

DON'T

- Work with asbestos unless you have had training, the work is properly planned and assessed with the correct precautions in place
- Panic if you think you suspect asbestos is present - it's usually only a problem if it's disturbed
- Drill, saw, sand or disturb materials that contain asbestos
- Dispose of asbestos as normal waste (it can only be disposed where 'hazardous waste' is accepted)
- Remove asbestos lagging, spray coatings or insulation board - only licensed contractors should work on these

Confined Spaces

FACT! A number of people are killed or seriously injured in the UK each year in confined spaces

FICTION! It's easy to get out of a confined space if I get injured

General Information

A confined space is a place which is substantially enclosed (though not always entirely), and where serious injury can occur from hazardous substances or conditions within the space, such as a lack of oxygen.

Examples of confined spaces include:

- Storage tanks
- Silos
- Reaction vessels
- Enclosed drains
- Sewers
- Open-topped chambers
- Vats
- Combustion chambers in furnaces
- Ductwork
- Unventilated or poorly ventilated rooms

It is not possible to provide a comprehensive list of confined spaces because some places may become confined spaces when work is carried out, or during their construction, fabrication or subsequent modification.

DO

- Avoid working in any space of an enclosed nature
- Ensure there is adequate ventilation at all times
- Make sure there are appropriate emergency and rescue procedures before entering a confined space
- Follow all planned procedures including any permit-to-work

DON'T

- Enter a confined space until it has been gas tested and confirmed safe
- Enter a confined space unless you have been trained and are aware of the emergency procedure
- Enter a confined space unless authorised to do so
- Enter a confined space alone or without necessary protective equipment and clothing

Drugs and Alcohol

FACT! Drugs, alcohol and other substance misuse are everyone's concern. It damages health, causes absenteeism and reduced productivity

FICTION! I'm used to drinking lots of alcohol so it doesn't really affect how I work

General Information

Alcohol and drugs represent a serious risk to both people and property. Alcohol is known to affect judgement and physical coordination and does increase the risk of accidents. Under the Road Traffic Act 1998 and the Transport and Works Act 1992 drivers of road vehicles must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while driving, attempting to drive or when they are in charge of a vehicle. All rail, tram and other guided transport system contractors must not be unfit through alcohol or drugs while working on the system.

DO

- Report all persons you suspect of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs at work to management
- Request help and support if you have a problem with alcohol or drugs

DON'T

- Consume alcohol or drugs before or during driving
- Consume alcohol or drugs before using machinery, electrical equipment or work at height
- Consume alcohol or drugs before or during work activities

Excavations and Buried Services

FACT! Every year people are killed or seriously injured when working in excavations

FICTION! Anyone is allowed to work in an excavation

General Information

The major cause of accidents during excavation work is the inadvertent striking of buried power lines. Many of these incidents involve the construction, maintenance of, or alterations to buildings. Therefore excavation work has to be properly planned, managed and supervised to prevent accidents.

DO

- Make sure a competent person extensively CAT scans the site and marks all known cables/pipes
- Observe service drawings with caution and always hand dig to establish locations
- Check with utilities for information prior to digging
- Ensure edge protection is placed around the perimeter of the excavation
- Keep spoil heaps back to at least the depth of the excavation
- Always use stop blocks when vehicles are reversing towards an excavation
- Ensure you have a permit to dig issued by site management
- Always wear a hard hat and safety boots during excavation work

DON'T

- Enter excavations which are not supported and have no ladder access
- Enter excavations unless they have been inspected daily by a competent person
- Work alone in an excavation
- Enter an excavation without authority or without suitable instruction and training

Electricity

FACT! Electricity kills and injures people. Around 1,000 electrical accidents at work are reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) each year and about 25 people die of their injuries

FICTION! I can't see it, smell it, hear it, feel it, taste it - therefore electricity can't hurt me

General Information

Many deaths and injuries arise from:

- Use of poorly maintained electrical equipment
- Work near overhead power lines
- Contact with underground power cables during excavation work
- Mains electricity supplies (230 volts)
- Use of unsuitable electrical equipment in flammable and explosive atmospheres

In addition fires started by poor electrical installations and faulty electrical appliances cause many more deaths and injuries. The risk of injury from electricity is strongly linked to where and how it is used. The risks are greatest in harsh conditions, for example:

- In wet surroundings - unsuitable equipment can easily become live and can make surroundings live
- Outdoors - equipment may not only become wet but may be at greater risk of damage
- In cramped spaces with a lot of earthed metalwork, such as inside a tank or bin - if an electrical fault developed it could be very difficult to avoid a shock

Some items of equipment can also involve greater risk than others. Extension leads are particularly liable to damage - to their plugs, sockets, electrical connections and to the cable itself. Other flexible leads, particularly those connected to equipment which is moved a great deal, can suffer from similar problems.

DO

- Ensure electrical equipment is suitable for its working environment
- Visually inspect electrical equipment for signs of wear and tear
- Report all damaged and faulty electrical equipment and installations to management immediately and label 'Do Not Use'

- Ensure electrical equipment is safe when supplied and maintained in a safe condition
- Ensure fixed electrical machines have a clearly identified emergency stop button and/or power cut off switch
- Ensure all portable electrical appliances have been maintained and are safe to use - this is usually by way of an in-date Portable Appliance Test (PAT) sticker
- Avoid using electrical equipment in flammable and /or explosive atmospheres
- Limit the supply voltage to the lowest needed, such as 110 volts centre-tapped-earth supply
- Ensure if equipment operates at 230 volts or higher a Residual Current Device (RCD) is provided
- Make sure you are at a safe working distance when working near overhead cables
- Remember when working on electrified and tramways that some use electrified rails rather than overhead cables

DON'T

- Use any faulty, defective or damaged electrical equipment until it has been made safe by a competent person
- Carry out electrical work unless you have been trained and are competent to do so

Equipment

- FACT!** Work equipment is defined as any equipment which is used at work
- FICTION!** There is no point to carrying out a visual inspection before using equipment

General Information

All equipment provided for use at work must be:

- Suitable for its intended use
- Safe for use and maintained in a safe condition
- Used only by persons who have received adequate information, instruction and training
- Accompanied by suitable safety measures, e.g. protective devices, markings and warnings

DO

- Ensure the equipment is suitable for use and for the purpose and conditions in which it is used
- Ensure all equipment used has been maintained to a safe standard
- Report all defective and damaged equipment to management immediately
- Ensure all dangerous parts of moving equipment/machinery are suitably guarded
- Ensure you read and understand the risk assessment and safe system of work for the equipment you operate
- Ensure you wear the correct PPE when operating equipment/machinery

DON'T

- Operate equipment/machinery unless you are competent to do so
- Override guarding used to prevent access to dangerous parts

Fire Safety

FACT! Each year thousands of contractors suffer major injuries caused by the uncontrolled ignition of flammable chemicals and other materials they work with

FICTION! Fire can only spread by coming into direct contact with other combustible materials

General Information

For a fire to start or an explosion to occur, fuel (i.e. a flammable substance), air (oxygen) and a source of ignition are all required. Controlling or eliminating any one of these can prevent fires.

DO

- Raise the alarm if you witness a fire
- Leave the building / site via the nearest exit route and go to the designated assembly point upon hearing the fire alarm
- Remove and dispose of waste / rubbish appropriately
- Ensure good standards of housekeeping
- Minimise the use of flammable substances
- Store flammable substances away from sources of ignition and in a secure area
- Read and understand all safe systems of work when using flammable substances
- Regularly inspect all electrical equipment used
- Familiarise yourself with all escape routes and locations of fire fighting equipment

DON'T

- Overload electrical equipment
- Operate damaged / faulty electrical equipment
- Block air vents on equipment
- Smoke in unauthorised areas
- Use lifts in the event of an evacuation

First Aid

FACT! First aid will prevent injuries from getting worse

FICTION! There is no need for first aid if it's a minor injury

General Information

People at work can suffer injury or sudden illness at work; therefore it is important that first aid arrangements are in place to ensure prompt medical attention is administered when required. The first aid function is to preserve life and minimise the consequence of any serious injury and to treat minor injuries that do not require further medical attention.

DO

- Ensure you aware of all first aiders, first aid facilities and first aid equipment at your workplace
- See a first aider, even for minor cuts and grazes
- Make sure you know how to find a first aid point

DON'T

- Administer first aid unless you are competent and trained to do so
- Administer any medication to any person whilst at work

Hazardous Substances

FACT! Using hazardous substances without safety precautions can put peoples health at risk

FICTION! It's not important to label containers which have chemicals stored in them

General Information

Exposure to hazardous substances has to be controlled to prevent ill-health. Hazardous substances can be inhaled, injected, ingested and/or absorbed into the body. The effect on the body from exposure to hazardous substances can either be acute (relatively large doses with a rapid onset of symptoms) or chronic (repeated smaller doses with a slower onset of symptoms).

DO

- Ensure you have read and understood all relevant risk assessments and method statements when working with hazardous substances
- Ensure good personal hygiene at all times i.e. always wash your hands after handling hazardous substances
- Handle, store and transport hazardous substances in an appropriate manner
- Wear the correct PPE
- Only work with hazardous substances within the agreed exposure limits
- Only dispose of hazardous substances in the appropriate way

DON'T

- Work with hazardous substances unless there is a safe system of work
- Work with hazardous substances if you are pregnant or have a pre-existing medical condition
- Work with hazardous substances unless you have been provided with PPE

Hot Works

FACT! Each year over a 1,000 work related accidents involving hot works are reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Around 300 of these accidents will be classified as major injuries such as fractures and amputations

FICTION! There's no training required to undertake hot works

General Information

Hot work comprises work activities that involve the application or generation of heat during their execution. Such activities include cutting, grinding, welding, brazing, soldering and the use of blow-lamps. Hot work, in the main, is associated with the application of heat either directly to, or adjacent to plant, tanks, vessels, pipes etc, that contain or have contained any explosive, flammable or toxic substance. Most hot work should therefore be covered by a permit-to-work and should be planned, controlled and monitored by a competent person.

DO

- Ensure you are familiar with the fire procedures
- Ensure all plant, equipment or substances classed as 'hot' are suitably labelled and persons not involved in the hot work activities are protected
- Wear appropriate PPE when undertaking any hot work
- Ensure you read and understand the safe system of work and applicable risk assessments before you commence any hot work
- Ensure all necessary physical barriers and signage is made available to protect and warn others of the hot work activity
- Ensure local ventilation is adequate and maintained
- Remove waste regularly
- Ensure all flammable materials are stored correctly
- Inspect all equipment prior to use and ensure flashback arrestors, pressure regulators, non return valves, hoses and valves are all working correctly
- Report all damaged / faulty equipment to the host client representative immediately

DON'T

- Engage in any hot work unless you are trained and competent to do so
- Roll or drop gas cannisters
- Weld vessels / tanks that have contained flammable materials until all traces and residues have been completely removed
- Use a naked flame to detect a gas leak
- Smoke in the vicinity of flammable substances
- Look directly at light generated by welding without adequate face and eye protection
- Eat, drink or smoke when handling welding equipment which may be flammable or toxic
- Remove or override any safety devices fitted to equipment

Lead

FACT! Lead is generally not absorbed through the skin but more commonly by inhaling dust, fumes and vapour or ingesting particles

FICTION! Washing my hands will eliminate exposure to lead

General Information

When lead and lead compounds are processed, worked or recovered from scrap or waste they can create lead dust, fume or vapour. This can be absorbed by your body through breathing or swallowing. Exposure to lead can lead to a range of medical problems.

DO

- Ensure you have been provided with information regarding the levels of lead present and necessary control measures to be taken
- Ensure you wear adequate and suitable Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- If required, ensure you have the appropriate type of respiratory protective equipment and that it fits properly and you have been trained in its use
- Use washing, changing and eating facilities free from the presence of lead and maintain a high level of personal hygiene
- Familiarise yourself with the possible symptoms associated with exposure to lead based materials and report signs of ill-health to the host client representative
- Ensure adequate ventilation is available if dust, fumes and vapours are generated and report all defective or faulty ventilation immediately
- Inform the host client representative if you are a woman of child-bearing age
- Wet the work area where possible or use a vacuum (which must have an adequate filter) to catch debris reducing the exposure to dust particles
- Take extra precautions when using power tools on lead based materials

DON'T

- Undertake work activities involving lead unless you have received the appropriate training, information and instruction
- Take clothes or PPE home which could be contaminated with lead
- Eat, drink or smoke in the presence of lead

Lifting and Cranes

FACT! Lifting equipment used to carry people should be examined more frequently than lifting equipment used to carry materials

FICTION! Lifting attachments such as shackles and hooks do not have to be examined

General Information

Lifting equipment is anything that lifts and lowers a load and includes the attachments for fixing or anchoring lifting equipment. Lifting equipment ranges from a simple pulley and rope to an overhead travelling crane, mobile crane and tower crane.

DO

- Perform pre-user checks before operating lifting equipment and attachments
- Ensure lifting equipment and all attachments are tested, inspected and thoroughly examined at pre-determined intervals
- Report all defective or faulty equipment and attachments to the host client representative
- Ensure you wear appropriate PPE when undertaking lifting activities
- Ensure you use the lifting equipment and attachments within their Safe Working Load (SWL) capacity
- Use competent slingers and banksman and maintain a clear line of communication either verbally or physically where required
- Only use lifting equipment specifically for the purposes it was designed
- Take extra care when working near overhead power lines
- Ensure the ground or terrain is suitable to operate lifting equipment
- Ensure all lifting activities have been properly planned and request to see the risk assessment and method statements prior to commencing the work
- Ensure named appointed person, slinger/signalers and crane operators are named in the lifting plan
- Ensure wind speeds are monitored

DON'T

- Operate, erect or dismantle lifting equipment unless you are competent to do so
- Operate lifting equipment that you suspect to be faulty or dangerous
- Presume lifting equipment and attachments are safe

- Operate lifting equipment and attachments beyond their capabilities
- Operate lifting equipment where vision is restricted or people are working below
- Carry persons unless the equipment is specifically designed or adapted to do so
- Stand under a lifting operation
- Use mobile cranes where outriggers are not fully extended
- Use any lifting equipment which is not marked with the SWL

Machinery

FACT! Guards are fitted to machinery to protect exposure to the dangerous parts

FICTION! It is safe to bypass the guards, as long as I know what I'm doing

General Information

Power driven grinding and cutting equipment are dangerous items of machinery. Such machinery has gears, chain drives, V-belt drives, fans and revolving shafts and spindles. Therefore all dangerous parts of machinery should be guarded to prevent exposure and reduce risk

DO

- Perform pre-user checks before operating machinery
- Report all defective and faulty machinery to the host client representative and ensure it is taken out of service
- Ensure you wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when operating machinery
- Use jibs or push sticks when necessary and ensure any lock out procedures are followed
- Ensure all guarding is in place prior to operating machinery
- Only use machinery specifically for the purpose it was designed
- Isolate and lock off machinery if maintenance to the machine is being carried out
- Tie hair back to prevent it becoming entangled into the moving parts of machinery

DON'T

- Operate machinery unless you are competent to do so and are aware of the host client's health and safety procedures
- Operate machinery that you suspect to be faulty or dangerous

- Over-ride guards and/or protective devices
- Wear loose clothes and jewellery when operating machinery

Manual Handling

FACT! Although most people may be aware of correct lifting techniques, manual handling injuries remain one of the leading causes of work related injuries in the UK

FICTION! Everybody knows how to carry items, it's commonsense

General Information

Manual handling means the lifting or lowering of a load and includes lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying and moving. It's always best to avoid manual handling, however if it cannot be avoided always make sure the activity is assessed by considering the hazards involved with the actual load, the individual, the task and the working environment.

DO

- Lift and carry items in accordance with any specific training
- Assess the weight, shape and stability of the load and where necessary split a heavy load into smaller lighter loads
- Make use of lifting aids and always the lift
- Always seek assistance for heavy awkward loads and lifts
- Ensure you wear appropriate PPE
- Where possible, frequently used loads at waist height
- Use proper lifting technique e.g. bending at the knees and keeping the back region straight
- Make sure the host client representative is aware you have a pre-existing back problem

DON'T

- Lift if you have pre-existing back problems
- Bend, twist or stretch unnecessarily when carrying or lifting
- Carry or lift a load beyond your capability
- Use defective or faulty lifting aids
- Store heavy items above head height

Noise

FACT! Hearing damage can occur if exposed to loud noise over a short period of time or constant exposure to a quieter noise over a long period of time

FICTION! As long as I am not exposed to very loud noise levels my hearing will not be damaged

General Information

Noise damages the nerve cells that respond to sound in the inner ear, or cochlea. These cells work in a complex way, to give us the ability to discriminate between sounds of different pitch. So when damaged it doesn't just mean that you can't hear quiet sounds - it has more subtle effects on the clarity of hearing. This is why the law sets (A) an absolute maximum level of sound that must not be exceeded, and (B) a "dose" limit that depends on the duration as well as the level of the noise. It's not just noisy work in factories or building sites that can put peoples hearing at risk. Recent reports on noise exposure at work highlight how a wide range of work, including "new" industries such as call centres and the entertainment industry, can give excessive (and, if not properly dealt with, illegal) noise exposure.

DO

- Ensure you wear appropriate hearing protection when exposed to noise and when instructed to do so
- Familiarise yourself with noise surveys, loud noise areas and hearing protection zones
- Report all symptoms of hearing damage to the host client representative and to the Sterling Group
- Comply with all the host client's policies and procedures pertaining to the control of noise
- Report all damaged hearing protection to the host client representative

DON'T

- Remove hearing protection during processes where it is mandatory to wear the protection

Office Safety and Working with Visual Display Units

- FACT!** Working with visual display units can cause ill-health
FICTION! The risks in an office environment are too low to worry about

General Information

Office environments are generally less dangerous than other workplaces; however care still must be taken to avoid injury and ill-health. If working in an office then the chances are that you will be operating a Visual Display Unit (VDU) and will be classed as a display screen equipment user. Therefore to prevent work related upper limb disorders (WRULDs), visual problems and fatigue you need to ensure your workstation is set up correctly and that your posture whilst working at your workstation is comfortable. If you use display screen equipment as a significant part of your job and you have not received information and training on workstation set-up and/or you detect any symptoms related to the use of display screen equipment report this to the host client representative immediately, alternatively contact the Sterling Group.

DO

- Adapt your workstation and computer to maintain a comfortable posture
- Avoid screen reflections by adjusting the position of your screen, altering local lighting levels or adjusting blinds
- Take frequent breaks away from the screen e.g. filing, photocopying, telephone work etc
- Adjust your chair accordingly to provide optimum support for your back and legs
- Plan activities to break up repetitive tasks
- Keep your workstation clean and tidy

DON'T

- Adapt your posture to suit your workstation
- Remain seated and in the same position for excessively long periods
- Place cables across walkways
- Allow waste to build up or store items under your workstation

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- FACT!** Although PPE is provided free of charge, you are responsible for maintaining it in a safe condition and reporting any loss or damage
- FICTION!** I don't need to wear PPE because I'm not a direct employee of the host client

General Information

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is worn usually as a last resort to prevent injury and ill-health. PPE must be provided free of charge if required to protect you against process hazards. PPE includes ear protection, eye protection, skin protection, protective clothing, respiratory protection

DO

- Ensure you wear suitable PPE when instructed to do so
- Inform the host client's representative if you require PPE
- Maintain and store PPE in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations
- Ensure you have received information, instruction and training on PPE which you are required to wear
- Report all lost and damaged PPE to the host client representative

DON'T

- Wear PPE or other peoples equipment if it does not offer effective protection
- Neglect or misuse your PPE

FACT! Overhead line equipment operates on 25,000 volts AC and has the ability to arc or jump onto nearby conductive materials.

FICTION! Overhead line equipment is safe as long as I do not touch it

General Information

Railways are dangerous places to work therefore if there's a safety issue, don't keep it to yourself. Take action straight away if you see someone acting in a way which is a danger to themselves or the railway. Whatever the problem, if safety is at risk, don't ignore it. The industry has a procedure called 'worksafe' - this gives you the right to refuse to work until any safety concern you have is properly dealt with. It's there for your protection, so if necessary, don't be afraid to use it.

DO

- Only go on or near the line if absolutely necessary
- Ensure you wear appropriate PPE as stipulated by the host client or site controller
- Always ensure you have your Sentinel track safety card with you at all times
- Ensure you understand all relevant safety information from the controller of site safety (COSS)
- Use 'authorised walking routes' if available or walk in a position of safety facing oncoming trains
- Be alert for the presence of trains and ensure you know the speed and direction of travel on open lines
- Acknowledge any warnings from train drivers, site wardens and lookouts
- Be aware of signal and sign post markings in case you need to report your location in an emergency
- Use only approved insulated equipment and tools when working near live overhead lines or a conductor rails

DON'T

- Don't consume alcohol or drugs prior to working on the railway
- Carry a mobile phone if you are not permitted to do so as part of your duties
- Distract the site warden or lookout or anyone else who you may place at risk

- Participate in horseplay especially on or near the track
- Ignore or abuse safety signs

Safety Induction

FACT! No two sites are the same, the hazards and associated risks are likely to differ from site to site

FICTION! I have worked in this trade for years so I know all the risks

General Information

Safety induction training is a vital tool for running a safe workplace. All staff and contractors must be made aware of the hazards and risks. You should not undertake work activities until you have attended a safety induction.

DO

- Report to the host client representative upon arrival to work
- Read risk assessments, safe systems of work and familiarise yourself with the host client's health and safety policies and procedures
- Request copies of risk assessments, safe systems of work and procedures if these have not been provided
- Act in accordance with all health and safety information, instruction and training provided by the host client
- Listen carefully to toolbox talks and ensure you understand the information provided
- Ensure you are familiar with the workplace layout and persons responsible for health and safety arrangements
- Ask questions if you are unsure about anything work related

DON'T

- Sign any documents unless you fully understand and agree with the information provided

Safety Signs

FACT! Safety signs act as a reminder and help to familiarise contractors, visitors and members of the public with specific safety procedures

FICTION! Safety signs are only used to highlight obvious hazards

General Information

There are five types of safety sign which you should be aware of:

- Safety Condition Sign - Green with a white symbol displays emergency and first aid information
- Warning Sign - Yellow with a black symbol advises of danger and proceed with caution
- Mandatory Sign - Blue with white symbol demonstrates what you must do
- Prohibition Sign - White with red diagonal line and black symbol demonstrates what you cannot do
- Fire Equipment Sign - Red with white symbol identifies location of fire fighting equipment

DO

- Ensure you wear the necessary PPE as highlighted by safety signs
- Familiarise yourself with different safety signs and always comply with what they display
- Report signs that have been damaged

DON'T

- Ignore or interfere with signs erected in the interests of health and safety
- Remove any safety sign or notice

Slips, Trips and Falls

FACT! Thousands of people each year are required to take time off work due to slips, trips and falls whilst at work

FICTION! Slips and trips can only happen if people don't pay attention to where they are going

General Information

Approximately one third of all major injuries are due to slips, trips and falls. The cause of these accidents are due to poor standards of housekeeping, trailing cables, sub-standard floor conditions, changes in floor level, slippery floors and wearing the incorrect footwear.

DO

- Regularly remove waste
- Keep your workspace tidy
- Keep stairways clear and free from obstructions
- Immediately clean up any spillage
- Wear appropriate footwear
- When walking up/down stairways always use the handrails
- Report any damaged flooring / carpets

DON'T

- Trail cables across walkways
- Block access routes and walkways with materials
- Carry items where your vision is restricted - always seek assistance

Traffic Management and Roadworks

FACT! The behaviour of drivers or operators is not always easy to predict. Remember work vehicles may not always be able to see you

FICTION! Vehicles are easy to see and therefore avoid

General Information

Contractors are killed every year by moving vehicles and vehicles overturning. Many more are seriously injured in this way. The risks can be reduced if the use of vehicles and mobile plant is properly managed.

DO

- Ensure you wear appropriate PPE
- Ensure vehicles and pedestrians are separated by a physical barrier where reasonably practicable
- Operate vehicles in accordance with information and training
- Only operate vehicles if competent to do so
- Never cross a carriageway unless this is essential and it is safe to do so
- Ensure that signs, barriers and lighting are adequate and positioned as per any traffic plan
- Keep the work area tidy and avoid trailing cables across pedestrian routes where possible
- Take extra care when working near overhead power lines and underground services
- Take extra care when operating vehicles near pedestrian zones
- Inspect vehicles prior to use and report any defects to the host client representative
- Ensure temporary structures such as scaffolds are protected from vehicles
- Take precautions, such as stop blocks, where vehicles tip materials into excavations
- Ensure you have good 360° visibility when operating mobile plant
- Only load and unload in designated areas

DON'T

- Operate machinery unless you are competent to do so and are aware of the host client's health and safety procedures
- Operate machinery that you suspect to be faulty or dangerous

- Let anyone ride on vehicles or mobile plant except where a seat or other safe riding position has been provided
- Drain or fill tanks when the engine is running or in a confined space

Vibration

FACT! Recognising the early symptoms of hand arm vibration syndrome is key to prevent further deterioration

FICTION! If I have symptoms of hand arm vibration syndrome there is nothing I can do

General Information

Many jobs involve the use of hand held power tools such as pneumatic breakers and disc grinders. The vibration from such equipment can affect the fingers, hands and arms and in the long term do permanent damage. Parts of the fingers go white and numb and there is a loss of touch, therefore all vibrating equipment should be identified, assessed and controlled to prevent Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS)

DO

- Ensure you wear appropriate PPE
- Ensure tools and equipment are regularly maintained to reduce vibration levels
- Always undertake visual checks of equipment and tools prior to use
- Ensure all cutting accessories are kept sharp
- Take adequate breaks from operating vibrating tools
- Wear gloves if operating vibrating tools in cold weather
- Familiarise yourself with the symptoms HAVS and report all symptoms immediately to the host client representative
- Always try to use low vibration tools
- Avoid gripping tools hard and with excessive force than is necessary

DON'T

- Use damaged / faulty tools, or tools not for the purpose they were designed for
- Continue to work with vibrating tools if you feel a tingling and numbness sensation in your fingers

Violence at Work

FACT! In cases where there has been 3 consecutive days off work due to work-related violence a report has to be filed to the Health and Safety Executive

FICTION! I will lose my job if I report an incidence of work related violence

General Information

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines work-related violence as 'any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work'. This can include verbal abuse or threats as well as physical attacks

DO

- Report any incidents of violence to the host client representative
- Report all instances of violence in the host client's accident book and contact the Sterling Group immediately

DON'T

- Retaliate to violence
- Participate in horseplay that may deemed to be aggressive

Welfare

FACT! Good personal hygiene can significantly reduce the potential for ill-health, including skin conditions, ingestion of toxic substances and exposure to biological agents

FICTION! Construction sites are not required to have welfare facilities

General Information

Welfare is the foundation of good hygiene and facilities will generally include toilets, washrooms with hot and cold running water, drinking water, rest areas and designated outdoor smoking areas. They may also include shower and changing facilities. These facilities should be kept clean and tidy and not used for the storage of plant and materials.

DO

- Wash hands before eating
- Report unclean and unhygienic welfare facilities to the host client representative and/or the Sterling Group

DON'T

- Smoke in welfare facilities
- Flush paper towels down the toilet

Work at Height

FACT! Fall arrest systems will not prevent you from falling, but will prevent the impact from falling

FICTION! Ladders and stepladders can no longer be used

General Information

Falls from height cause most accidental deaths in the construction industry and yet most accidents involving falls could be prevented if the correct equipment had been provided and properly used.

DO

- Ensure you wear appropriate PPE
- Ensure you wear suitable fall arrest equipment
- Ensure access equipment is suitable and maintained
- Erect access equipment only on stable level ground
- When using ladders for access, place them at approximately 75° angle - one unit out for every four units up and ensure they are secured.
- Where possible maintain three points of contact with a ladder when climbing or descending and place tools in a shoulder bag or belt
- Only use ladders as a last resort and only for short duration work and always consider safer alternatives such as scaffolding and Mobile Elevated Work Platforms (MEWPs)
- Ensure access equipment such as scaffolding or a mobile access towers are regularly inspected by a competent person and after it has been erected

- Stop unauthorised access to scaffolds by removing the access ladder at ground level
- Ensure the condition or fragility of a roof is known before commencing roof work, if this is not possible treat as fragile.

DON'T

- Use defective or inadequate access equipment
- Use, erect or dismantle access equipment unless you are competent to do so
- Work near an unprotected open edge
- Work at height during adverse weather conditions
- Throw or drop items from height - always use enclosed rubbish chutes or hoists
- Use ladders with missing or damaged rungs or warped/buckled stiles
- Remove boards, handrails or ties to gain access to scaffolding
- Overload platforms or distribute the weight unevenly

If you have any concerns or require additional information on any health and safety matter please contact the Sterling Group Health and Safety Team

By email: healthandsafety@thesterlinggroup.co.uk

Call: 01925 626237



Main Tel: 01925 626 200

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