

# Home Employment Health & Safety Guide

*For employers and personal care assistants*



**Mark Bates Ltd**

THE HOME OF PREMIER CARE

## Notes

# INTRODUCTION

We are very pleased that you have chosen Premier Care Home Employment insurance to provide you with the legal cover you require as a direct employer of someone to assist you in your home. As part of our service to you we have developed this health and safety booklet to raise awareness of and address health and safety issues which may be present or arise in the home.

Please note that this booklet is only intended as a guide to health and safety and any relevant government legislation should be referred to for more detailed information.

The most important issue concerning health and safety is that you and anyone you employ in your home feel safe and comfortable, both with each other as well as within the home environment; so if anything threatens to undermine that, it should be dealt with immediately with either the help of your family, the employing agency or the social services department.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

### Employer Obligations

- Provide and maintain equipment and safe systems of work.
- Control hazardous substances.
- Provide a safe and healthy workplace and welfare facilities.
- Provide a health and safety policy statement when employing 5 or more employees.

### Employee Obligations

- Co-operation with your health and safety rules.
- To follow safe working practices.
- To report accidents and dangerous situations.
- To discuss any additional training needs that they require with you.
- To raise any concern about any health and safety that they may have.

### Visitor Obligations

This may include agency workers, social services workers and family members who are assisting with your care and health needs.

- They must be considerate when working and ensure that they do not put the health of others at any risk.

## Risk Assessments

- You are legally obliged to carry out risk assessments, even when you only employ 1 person.
- You must take action to control the risk of harm or injury in the workplace, both physical and mental.

See page 12 for further information and an example risk assessment.

## Facilities

Employees have a right to

- Access a toilet.
- Somewhere to wash.
- Clean drinking water.
- Be supplied with protective clothing (PPE) where appropriate.

## Consultation and Training

1. You must consult with employees about how to reduce the risk of harm in the workplace and provide training where necessary (free of charge).
2. Training can be done by any competent person. A competent person is classed as someone who can reduce the risk of harm and has the following attributes to do so
  - Skills in risk assessment.
  - Knowledge of reducing risk.
  - Experience of assessing risk.
3. You do not need to pay for external training so long as the person carrying out the training can meet this criteria. It is also good practice to keep a record of all training carried out for each employee.

## USING EQUIPMENT

It may be necessary for you to use a range of equipment in order for you to support your employer e.g. hoists, wheelchairs, specialised beds, household equipment etc. Ensure that if you are going to use any of these or other equipment that

- You have been fully trained to use the equipment.
- You feel totally confident to do so.
- The equipment has been checked to ensure it is in good working order.
- The equipment is correct for the purpose for which it is being used.

If you are an employee using any equipment such as a wheelchair to assist your employer, make sure you communicate with them while doing so.

## USING A WHEELCHAIR

When using a wheelchair to provide assistance with mobility you should ensure that

- The person you are assisting has fastened their lap belt.
- You leave enough room to move your feet.
- You keep both hands firmly on the handles when pushing the wheelchair.
- You use the weight of your body to push the wheelchair and do not strain your arms or shoulder.
- You keep your back straight when pushing the wheelchair.
- You do not tilt the wheelchair backwards or forwards.
- You aim to move steadily, avoid making sudden movements or turns and be aware of others around you.

Ensure that you have ramps in place to exit and enter your home?

**Ask Mark Bates Ltd about our excellent  
manual wheelchair insurance options!**

## GENERAL HYGIENE

In order to prevent the spread of illness/infection you should ensure

- You always wash your hands especially after sneezing, using the toilet and before and after preparing food, using either liquid soap or an alcohol hand wash.
- You wear disposable gloves when coming into contact with bodily fluids and dispose of them safely after use - do not reuse.
- You have all the immunisations you need.
- You cover any cuts and scratches immediately.
- That if any of you think you may have an infection you should inform the other.
- That if any of you have any additional safety measures that you would like to see in place you should inform each other.

Facilities are required to ensure that the above general hygiene practices can be maintained.

## SAFETY IN THE HOME

To maintain general safety around the house you should always

- Clean up spills immediately.
- Make sure cables do not trail across doorways or rooms.
- Put equipment back in a safe place after use.
- Use ladders to reach objects above head height.
- Ensure all carpet ends are fixed down.
- Check that all passage ways are clean and clutter free.
- Know where your first aid box is.
- Make sure you have an up to date first aid book.
- Ensure all emergency contact details are up to date.
- Be aware of any potential hazard both at the time and in the future.

## FIRE RISKS

To minimise the risk of fire in the home you should ensure

- Heaters are kept clear of flammable items.
- If you or your employee(s) smoke; cigarettes are put out before leaving a room.
- Ashtrays are emptied into a metal bin regularly.
- Smoke alarms are installed and kept in good working order.
- That you and everyone in the premises knows where the nearest fire escapes are, both downstairs and upstairs.
- Your smoke alarms are installed and in good working order.
- You have sufficient fire extinguishers and/or fire blankets.

## USING ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

To help reduce potential hazards when using electrical equipment you should make certain that

- You remember to turn off electrical equipment before cleaning it.
- You remember to take any safety precautions or wear protective clothing if instructions recommend it.
- You check sockets are safe and in good working order.
- You check wiring on the equipment is not damaged or frayed.
- The equipment is stored in a safe place.
- Any electrical equipment is well maintained and in good working order.

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

To avoid accidents or injury when you need to use hazardous materials you should

- Ensure you do not mix chemicals.
- Always follow the instructions on the bottle.
- Make sure that recommended precautions are adhered to.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after use.

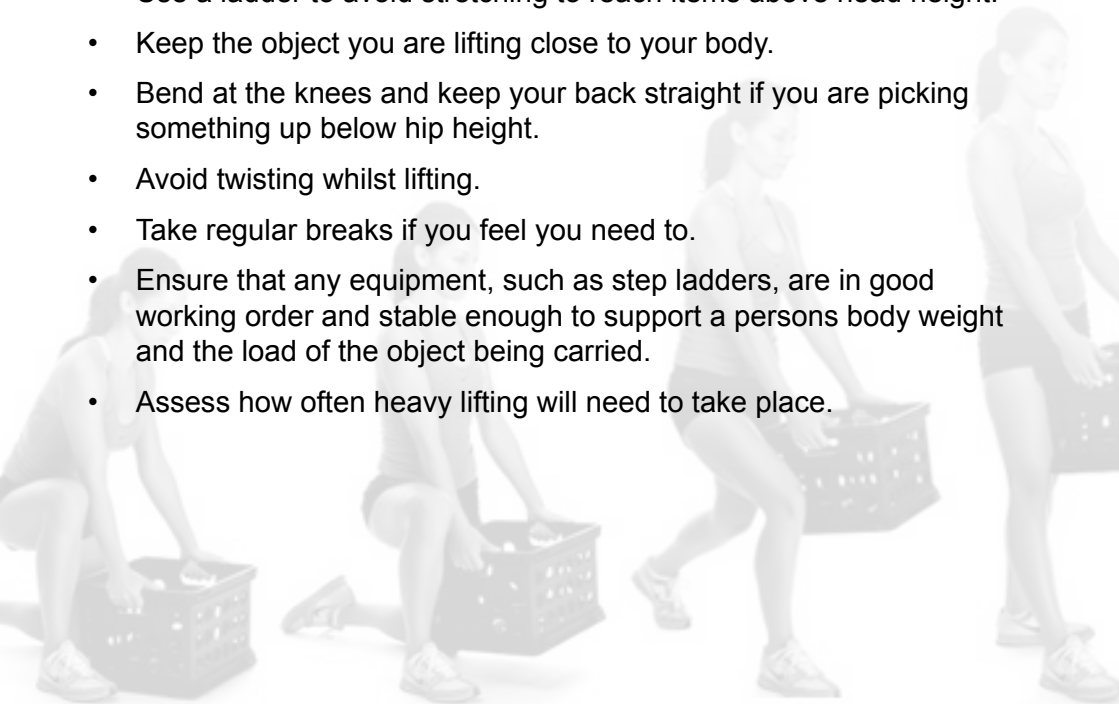
Are hazardous materials kept in a safe place?

Are all hazardous materials in original bottles with instructions still legible?

## HEAVY LIFTING

To avoid injury or strained muscles when lifting heavy objects you should be sure to.

- Use a ladder to avoid stretching to reach items above head height.
- Keep the object you are lifting close to your body.
- Bend at the knees and keep your back straight if you are picking something up below hip height.
- Avoid twisting whilst lifting.
- Take regular breaks if you feel you need to.
- Ensure that any equipment, such as step ladders, are in good working order and stable enough to support a persons body weight and the load of the object being carried.
- Assess how often heavy lifting will need to take place.





## KITCHEN & FOOD PREPARATION

To maintain general hygiene and safety when in the kitchen or preparing food you should ensure.

- You keep work surfaces clean.
- Food containers are properly sealed.
- You do not eat food that is past its use by date.
- Cooked meats are stored separately and away from uncooked meats.
- Food is always covered properly i.e. cling film, tin foil or plastic containers.
- You keep all meats and fish covered and in the fridge.
- Hands are always washed before and after handling or eating food.
- You always wear oven gloves when handling hot pots and pans or when getting things from the oven.
- You always warn others in the house of hot pots, pans and dishes.
- You take extra care when using sharp objects like knives, scissors and other kitchen equipment, especially when washing up.
- Sharp objects are kept in a safe place and always picked up by the handle.
- If you break glass you sweep it up, taking care not to touch it and dispose of it safely.
- The temperature in your fridge/freezer is kept at a constant level in line with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- All the appliances in your kitchen are in good working order.
- That your kitchen work surfaces are kept clean at all times.

## HSE Health and Safety Poster

If you have 5 or more employees **you are legally obliged** to display the HSE Health and Safety poster somewhere in your home, in a visible and accessible place.

Alternatively you may provide each employee with a copy of the A5 handout version.

The official posters can be purchased from:

[www.HSE.gov.uk/pubns/book/lawposter.htm](http://www.HSE.gov.uk/pubns/book/lawposter.htm)



## Accident Book

You **must** keep an accident book in the workplace, which should be made available for employee's to complete whenever they have suffered an injury in the workplace.

A log should be made for minor injuries such as a sprain or pulled muscle, as well as more serious injuries.

A good accident book allows the employee to take a copy of the log and leave a copy with you. Ready-made accident log books can be purchased from the Health and Safety Executive:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/accident-book.htm>



# REPORTING AND MANAGING ACCIDENTS ONCE THEY HAVE HAPPENED

## Reporting

1. All employers must report incidents in the work place which includes fatalities, major injuries and dangerous occurrences, to the Health and Safety Executive.
2. **A major injury is** an injury which results in absence from work for more than 7 days or falls under the following list
  - Injuries caused by crushing.
  - Fractures (not including fingers or toes).
  - Loss of sight or hearing.
  - Loss of consciousness.
  - Amputations.
  - Injuries to non-workers who are taken to hospital from the scene must be reported within 24 hours.
3. **A dangerous occurrence is** something that is a near miss and could have resulted in one of the above incidents occurring.

You can report incidents to the HSE online at [HSE.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk) or via telephone on 0845 300 9923 and you must record the name of the person affected, the date, the time and the place of the incident, as well as details of the incident.

## Penalties

Health and Safety in the workplace is a legal obligation and failure to comply with it may result in an fine which is unlimited and/or up to two years imprisonment.

## First Aid

It is a good idea to have someone in the workplace who is trained in first aid.

You must provide first aid facilities. A first aid kit may include bandages, plasters, scissors, disposable gloves, finger dressings, sterile dressings, burns dressings etc.

If there is a special risk in your home, additional items of first aid must be provided. For example, if hazardous substances are frequently used, an appropriate eyewash would need to be provided.

## SMOKING

Where you are employing people to care for you in the home you are exempt from the work place smoking bans that exist in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. With this in mind here are some commonly asked questions:

### **I don't smoke, do I have to allow employees to smoke in my home?**

You are not under any obligation to allow employees to smoke in or around your property. If you choose to, you can designate a smoking area that suits your needs, such as in the garden or on the driveway.

### **Myself and my family smoke in the home. I also employ a PA who smokes, do I have to allow them to smoke in the home?**

Just because you smoke does not mean that you have to allow your employees to.

Less smoking in the home is a good way to reduce the hazard of trapped smoke which could cause injury to non-smoking employees. Not allowing PA's to smoke inside also prevents them from wasting working time. You could allow employees to smoke during designated rest breaks to combat this problem.

If you chose to allow employees to smoke indoors ensure that you have thoroughly considered the risk to non-smoking employees or otherwise vulnerable employees such as those with health conditions or pregnant ladies.

### **I smoke, can I ask my PA's to help me smoke as part of their duties?**

Yes you can. It is important to highlight this duty when the employee is recruited and put it in their job description.

You must **always** carry out a risk assessment and make sure to have taken pro-active steps to **avoid** or reduce the risk to employee health (see Page 15). Reasonable steps would be to only smoke outside, provide employees with a mask and gloves or to keep your smoking to a minimum where possible.

**Always** reconsider the employee's obligations if they develop a poor health condition or become pregnant.

**My PA has previously been happy with my smoking in the home and has now become pregnant; can they refuse to work in this environment or refuse to help me smoke?**

You must risk assess the situation. If it is clear that there is a risk of injury to the PA then you cannot force them to work in the environment or help you to smoke. If however you have provided adequate means of reducing the risk, such as no smoking indoors and sufficient protective clothing to prevent them from risk of injury then no, they cannot refuse to carry out their duties.

**I don't smoke and have a PA who is a smoker. I am particularly sensitive to the smell of smoke on the PA when they are providing personal care; can I ask that they don't smoke before coming to work?**

Yes you can. It is recommended that you employ people who are either non-smokers or are very well aware of your rules at the point of recruitment. It is sensible to ensure you have an employee handbook in place that sets out the rule in your work place and defines a breach of these rules as misconduct, which will allow you to take disciplinary proceedings against the PA should it be necessary.

**How do I set out the rules about smoking before or during working time so everyone is aware of them?**

Whatever the rules are about smoking, it is sensible to highlight them at the point of recruitment. It is also recommended that you have an employee handbook in place, which is made available to all employees so they are fully aware of the rules.

Please contact MSL on the legal helpline for further support on implementing special rules;

**Helpline: 0161 603 2167**

## Risk Assessments

- Risk assessments are a key step to ensuring an employee can operate safely.
- A risk assessment recognises hazards in the work place which risk causing harm or injury to employees.
- Once a hazard is highlighted, you must take action to control the risk and prevent the risk of future injury. Carrying out a risk assessment gives you the opportunity to recognise the hazard and take the appropriate action to nullify the risk.

Special attention should be paid to the following

- The home environment.
- Any specialised equipment being used.
- Disabled employees.
- Pregnant employees.
- Lone workers.
- Night workers.
- Visitors.

## What Is A Hazard?

A hazard is anything that can cause harm to someone and can include

- Something causing slips or trips.
- Manual handling equipment and the use of equipment such as hoists.
- A hazardous chemical or medicine (check labels).
- An otherwise normal feature of the job that becomes a hazard because of someone's condition e.g. a pregnant or disabled employee.

## What Is A Risk

A risk is the chance or likelihood of harm.

## What Should I Do To Control a Hazard

The risk assessor will need to go through each one of these in turn, where the first is not possible then move on to the next one.

1. **Eliminate or avoid the hazard** - Can the hazard be removed from the workplace all together?
2. **Substitution** - Can you provide a safer alternative to the hazard?
3. **Control the risk at the source** - Can you reduce the employee's exposure to the risk? e.g. Make sure there are no tripping hazards in the house, particularly in small or tight areas, keep your kitchen clean and tidy to avoid slipping, only use electrical equipment that is safe and in good condition.
4. **Safe working procedures** - Is it possible to change the working procedure so less stress is put on employees e.g. using a hoist rather than manually lifting.
5. **Training and instruction** - Make employees aware of the hazards and risks involved in the work.
6. **Personal Protective equipment (PPE)** - As a last resort, are you able to provide employees with clothing to reduce the risk of injury?

## Record Keeping

1. If you have 5 or more employees then you must keep a written record of your risk assessments.
2. A risk assessment should be carried out every time there is a change in the work place, such as a new hazard is introduced or the vulnerability level of an employee changes.
3. It is highly recommended to keep a written record of risk assessments carried out for vulnerable people e.g. pregnant or disabled employees.
4. For pregnant employees, a regular risk assessment should be carried out throughout her pregnancy and also upon her return to work. If she is breast feeding her baby then further risk assessments may be required.



# RISK ASSESSMENTS

## Who Can Do A Risk Assessment

1. You are required to ensure that the person carrying out any risk assessments is competent to do so. This does not however mean they need to have a qualification to do so.
2. To be a competent person the assessor must have
  - The knowledge of how to carry out a risk assessment.
  - The relevant skills to complete the risk assessment.
  - Experience in assessing risk.
3. If the person carrying out the risk assessment fits all of the above criteria, then they are competent to assess the risk for others and also train others to avoid the risk, where appropriate.

## EXAMPLE RISK ASSESSMENTS

### Risk Assessment Forms

On the following page, you will be provided with an example risk assessment form and an example of how to complete the risk assessment form.

This is to help you understand the information which you are likely to include in your own risk assessments.



# HOW YOU CAN COMPLETE THE RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing about the risk posed?	Do you need to do anything else to manage the risk?	Action taken by whom?	Action will be taken by when?	Date action completed.
Slips and trips	Staff and visitors may be injured if they trip over objects or slip on spillages.	We carry out general good housekeeping. All areas are well lit, including the stairs. There are no trailing leads or cables. Staff keep work areas clear, e.g. no boxes left in walkways, deliveries stored immediately, offices cleaned each evening.	Better housekeeping is needed in the kitchen (i.e. spills). Communicate the need for better care from all staff.	All staff, supervisor is to monitor.	02/02/2015	04/02/2015
Use of the wheelchair	Staff and chair users - through not using the break correctly, failing to navigate obstacles sensibly and carefully select the route to avoid steep hills and unnecessary difficulties.	All staff are shown how to use and handle the chair when they start employment. Safe methods of using the chair are explained, such as when and how to use the break.	Yearly service of the chair required to make sure it is functioning correctly. Brief re-cap given to employee's after servicing.	Employer	15/04/2015	
Gas cooker faulty switch	Anyone in the household, if the gas is left on without being lit.	Staff are trained to use the cooker upon commencing employment. Staff check the gas is off when they finish using the equipment and check again prior to leaving the premises at the end of the shift.	Repair needs to be carried out. Until then equipment must not be used.	Employer	Immediately	
Faulty fire alarm on the landing	NB Kitchen alarm still functions sufficiently well to alert someone, even if sleeping.	Fire alarms placed in the kitchen and landing. Tested every month for battery life and functionality.	Replacement fire alarm for the landing.	Employer	29/04/2015	

# RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing about the risk posed?	Do you need to do anything else to manage the risk?	Action taken by whom?	Action will be taken by when?	Date action completed.

**The employer**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**The employee(s)**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Mark Bates Ltd

THE HOME OF PREMIER CARE

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