

Section 5

Snapshot of Workplace Health, Safety and Hygiene Matters



After completing this section, the learner will be able to:



Describe health and safety related issues in a familiar work or learning environment in the context of the tools, equipment and associated documentation.



Demonstrate knowledge of personal and workplace health, safety and hygiene by following good health, safety and hygiene practices in the work or learning environment.



Snapshot of workplace health, safety and hygiene matters

Vocabulary

Look up explanations for the keywords below.

adaptor	appropriate	authorised	cable
chemicals	defective	dilution	disorder
electrical	faulty	first aid	ignited
laceration	ligaments	maintaining	manufacturer
musculoskeletal	obstruction	personal protective equipment (PPE)	posture
spillage	surface	trailing	ventilated

Abbreviation

WMSDs = Work-related musculoskeletal disorders



Snapshot of workplace health, safety and hygiene practices

In this section of the manual, several matters related to workplace health, safety and hygiene will be examined.

- ✓ Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- ✓ First aid
- ✓ Safety signs
- ✓ Slips, trips and falls
- ✓ Chemicals
- ✓ Burns and scalds
- ✓ Cuts and lacerations
- ✓ Electrical safety
- ✓ WMSDs (Work-related musculoskeletal disorders)
- ✓ Hospitality and catering sector

Personal protective equipment (PPE)



PPE must be worn whenever there is a chance of injury that cannot be controlled in any other way. Eye protection such as goggles will prevent splashes in eyes. Other forms of PPE include safety shoes with steel toecaps to protect against foot injuries, hard hats to prevent head injuries or earmuffs to prevent long-term hearing damage in noisy areas.

More advice on personal protective equipment can be found on www.hsa.ie.

First aid



It is essential to have first aid provision in the workplace. This ensures that any accident can be promptly dealt with. All employees should be aware of the location of the first aid box. There should be a list of first aid personnel on the wall or staff notice board.

More advice about first aid can be found on www.hsa.ie.

Safety signs


Safety signs must be used whenever a hazard or danger cannot be avoided or reduced.

What is a signboard?

A signboard is a sign that provides information. It uses a combination of shape, colour and symbols but does not use text.

Safety signboards should not contain text. This is because it is important that the symbols or pictograms on a signboard are understood, independent of language ability.

The system for signs and signboards is based on the familiar 'traffic light' colours:

	Red for prohibition
	Yellow for caution
	Green for positive action

A fourth colour, blue, is used for mandatory signs and to convey information such as the location of a telephone.

Signboards have standard shapes.

Examples of Prohibition Signs



Examples of Mandatory Signs



Examples of Warning Signs



Slips, trips and falls



Slips and trips are common workplace accidents. According to the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 'Slips, trips and falls are **the largest cause of accidents** in all sectors [...] they have been identified as the main causes of accidents that result in more than 3 days absence from work.'

Common causes of slips and trips include wet and greasy floors or electrical cables. Falls can happen on a level or from a height. They may involve falling against a fixed object or falling into the path of a moving vehicle.

This table lists some common causes of slips and trips.

Slip hazards	Trip hazards
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Spills and splashes of liquids and solids which are not cleaned up immediately✓ Wet floors due to wet weather✓ Unsuitable footwear✓ Loose mats on polished floors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Loose and worn mats/carpets✓ Uneven surfaces✓ Changes in surface level – ramps, steps, stairs✓ Trailing cables across walking areas✓ Items and materials left lying about

Preventing slips and trips

Some guidelines for preventing slips and trips include the following.

- ✓ Always follow safety instructions and safe systems of work
- ✓ Always wear the correct safety footwear as directed by your employer
- ✓ Clean up spillages immediately
- ✓ Put away deliveries immediately
- ✓ Do not leave obstructions lying around
- ✓ Ensure wet floor signs are used
- ✓ Report all defective flooring to your manager


You will find advice about slips, trips and falls at www.hsa.ie.



Chemicals

Chemicals can cause ill health or injury if they are used incorrectly. Only use chemicals for which you have been trained. Safety data sheets are always provided with chemicals purchased – always read these before you use any chemical.

Always follow the “do’s” and “don’ts” shown below when handling chemicals.

Using chemicals	
Do	Do not
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Read the label and follow the manufacturer’s instructions✓ Wear appropriate protective clothing such as gloves, face mask or goggles✓ Use cleaning chemicals in well-ventilated areas✓ Use the correct dilution rates✓ When diluting, always add the chemical to the water, not the water to the chemical✓ Correctly label chemical containers, for example spray bottles✓ Wash your skin or eyes with plenty of water if accidentally splashed with cleaning chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ Mix chemicals✗ Use food containers or drinking vessels or bottles to store chemicals✗ Return unused chemicals to the bulk container✗ Use chemicals you are not trained and authorised to use 

More advice about using chemicals can be found at www.hsa.ie.

Burns and scalds



Sources of burns and scalds can include catering equipment such as ovens, steamers and ranges. Hot water stills, boilers and urns can also cause injury. Other sources can include chemicals, hot equipment such as irons, naked flames, ignited fuel and fireworks.

Cuts and lacerations



If you use or handle knives or any sharp implements as part of your job then you must follow the following safety instructions.

- ✓ Do not pick up needles or other sharp objects without gloves and tongs
- ✓ Keep all cutting instruments sharp
- ✓ Do not attempt to pick up broken glass with your bare hands - always use a dust pan and brush
- ✓ Carry sharp implements at your side with the point down and blade away from you
- ✓ Never attempt to catch sharp instruments if they are falling – let them fall before picking them up
- ✓ Lay knives flat on a table or in the drawer

Electrical safety

Electrical equipment includes anything from computers and fridges to electrical hand tools and moving machinery. Working with electricity can be dangerous. Injuries or fatalities can occur in many ways, including contact with any live electrical equipment (*for example, welding, catering or timber-cutting*).

Always follow these “do’s” and “don’ts” shown below when dealing with electricity.

Do	Do not
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Turn off equipment when not in use✓ Turn off equipment before opening, dismantling, maintaining or cleaning the equipment✓ Turn off equipment when a fault, such as overheating, is evident or suspected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ Allow cables to trail in water✗ Use electrical equipment with wet hands✗ Use electrical equipment in wet conditions✗ Pull a machine by its flex✗ Overload power circuits by using several pieces of equipment plugged into one socket by an adaptor✗ Leave machines unattended and switched on✗ Use a machine if it has faulty or damaged cable or plug

You will find advice about electrical equipment at www.hsa.ie and www.esb.ie/main/home/index.jsp.

WRMD (*Work-related musculoskeletal disorders*)



Musculoskeletal disorders is the technical term for any pain or injury that affects muscles, ligaments, joints or nerves. They can be caused by poor ergonomics seen in Section 4 of this manual, **Ergonomics made Simple**.

Typical causes of musculoskeletal disorders are:

- ✓ Lifting, carrying, pulling, twisting and bending
- ✓ Poor posture
- ✓ Excessive heat or cold
- ✓ Vibration
- ✓ Repetitive work

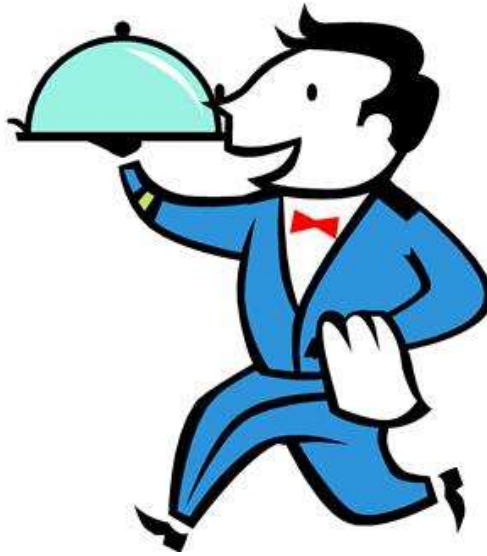
WRMDs (Work-related musculoskeletal disorders) are the most common form of work-related injury. They may be caused by an accident or by long-term exposure to low-intensity repetitive tasks, by the work or by the environment in which the work takes place.

In cases of long-term injuries, the injury builds up over time, often without the worker's knowledge. Though symptoms develop over a long time, they can become very severe and may force sufferers to change job or to stop working. Overuse of muscles on the hands, wrists, thumbs, arms or shoulders repeatedly, often causes injury to these muscles.

The computer keyboard and mouse are often blamed for WRMDs. However, this may not be the only reason. The human body was not designed to sit hunched over a desk. Poorly positioned and organised workstations add to the problem. The longer someone puts a strain on muscles by sitting incorrectly without taking a break, the more likely the body will suffer the consequences.

A good rule of thumb to reduce risk of developing musculoskeletal disorders is 'keep changing what you are doing'.

Hospitality and catering sector



The hospitality and catering sector covers people working in commercial kitchens, hotels, restaurants, cafes, fast food outlets, pubs and clubs. It also includes those working as contract caterers to other industries.

Why bother with housekeeping?

Food housekeeping in the hospitality and catering sector is very important in relation to preventing injury and accidents.

Poor housekeeping habits result in employee injuries, ever-increasing insurance costs and legal issues. It can be a cause of accidents, such as the following.

- Tripping over loose objects on floors, stairs and platforms
- Being hit by falling objects
- Slipping on greasy, wet or dirty surfaces
- Striking against projection, poorly stacked items or misplaced material
- Cutting, puncturing or tearing the skin of hands or other parts of the body on broken glass or sharp items
- Fire/explosions or asphyxiation from the incorrect storage of gas cylinders and kegs
- Burns from hot plates, pans and splashes from hot oils or liquids

In order to avoid these hazards, a workplace must maintain good housekeeping standards throughout the working day. Although this requires a great deal of management and planning, the benefits more than justify the effort.

Activity



Read this description of an accident, told by Susan. Susan works as a commis chef in a hotel kitchen. Underline the four sentences that contain relevant information that should be included in the incident report. (Accident records/incident reports are covered in Section 3, **Fire Safety and Incident Reports.**)

Accident account



I was walking towards the dessert fridge. Ben was walking towards me, carrying a fish kettle and a colander. All of a sudden his legs went from underneath him. He landed hard on his left arm. I told him that I thought it was broken, but fortunately it was not.

I was quite worried about him. I did not see exactly what he slipped on, but the floor tiles seemed to be wet in places. It was definitely not his fault – he was being careful. I suspect that someone had spilt some milk or something and forgot to leave the 'wet floor sign' out after cleaning it up. Either that or some oil or fat had got on the floor. The head chef told him to go to hospital to get it checked out. I expect he'll have a lot of bruises.

Incident report					
Name:		Address:			
Occupation:		Date of Birth:			
Sex:		Date/time of accident:			
Describe the type of work the person was doing at the time of the accident:					
Describe the environment where the accident took place:					
Describe what happen at the time of the accident:					
Describe the injuries incurred:					
Outline the immediate aid given to the injured person:					
Outline the consequences:					
Fatal:		Ambulance / doctor called:		Hospitalisation:	
Period of absence from work:					
Details of notifier:					
Type / name of business:					
Today's date					

Activity



Poor housekeeping can be a cause of accidents in the pub and club sector. List the injuries caused by poor housekeeping in this sector.



Poor house keeping	Injuries
Loose tiles and uneven surfaces	Trips and falls
Broken glass	Cuts and lacerations



Snapshot of workplace health, safety and hygiene matters - Worksheet 1 – Quiz

1. Is your workplace a dangerous place for slips, trips and falls?

2. What can cause them?

3. How can you control these hazards?

4. When knives are not in use where and how should they be stored?

5. When cleaning up a breakage, why do you place the broken pieces in a box (or other solid container) rather than directly into a plastic bin bag?

6. If you have a needle stick injury which of the following should you do? Tick the correct statement.

- Panic
- Seek medical help
- Keep calm
- Just wipe it on your uniform and finish your shift
- Squeeze the area gently to encourage blood flow
- Pick the needle up with your hands and take it to the nearest sharps bin
- Wash under running water
- Only report when you next see your manager
- Dry and cover

7. Mincers or meat slicers are examples of potentially dangerous machines. With your colleagues, find out what protects users from the sharp and (*sometimes*) moving parts of these machines. List your findings here.



Snapshot of workplace health, safety and hygiene matters - Worksheet 2 – Vocabulary

1. Fill in the missing words in the sentences below using the words in the box.

musculoskeletal disorder	disconnected	repetitive	pain
off	muscles	common	injury
builds	exposure	burn	accident

1. Electricity can _____. Before cleaning a piece of electrical equipment you must turn _____ the equipment and ensure the power supply is _____.
2. _____ is the technical term for any _____ or _____ that affects muscles, ligaments, _____ or nerves. This is the most _____ form of work-related injury.
3. They may be caused by an _____ or by long-term _____ to low-intensity _____ tasks. In this case, the injury _____ up over time, often without the worker's knowledge.



Snapshot of workplace health, safety and hygiene matters - Worksheet 3 – Word search

Find the 10 words listed in this word search.

s t m q v l a d l d g v g s
a b x l c i i e p j j o l x
w h h a l g i s h t h i d e
n t t c s a y i w n p v r v
p r k i i m v r v o r r p i
o a s r w e b o r i y m t t
s i l t g n h h q t k b e c
t l y c u t m t b u i l t e
u i v e v s i u w l t g l f
r n k l m m q a d i a v t e
e g t e j h f u q d i j f d
d e t a l i t n e v b f i a
l z v h x z i t y a z d o b
q q h l s l a c i m e h c f

chemicals
electrical
trailing
ventilated
ligaments
dilution
authorised
defective
posture

Activity



Complete the following about your workplace.

1. List the types of PPE that you must wear in your workplace.

2. In the table below, list three activities that you undertake at work where PPE must be worn, and what that PPE includes.

Activity	PPE that must be worn

3. List the names of the First Aid Staff in your workplace along with their contact details.

First Aid Staff	Contact details

4. Where is the First Aid box kept?

5. List the names of the First Aiders in your workplace.

Activity



What would you do if your PPE did not fit, was damaged, dirty, or uncomfortable?
Tick one box.

- Don't wear any PPE
- Report to your line manager immediately – do not start or
continue work
- Borrow your colleague's PPE
- Just use it anyway

Activity



1. List three slip/trip hazards that may occur in your work environment and state the correct procedure for removing these hazards.

Hazard	Procedure

2. What type of footwear do you think is suitable to be worn in your workplace?

Activity



Go to the webpage on slips, trips and falls at <http://www.hsa.ie>.

This webpage contains advice regarding slips, trips and falls for the various sectors i.e. healthcare, retail, catering. In pairs, download the relevant risk assessment documentation suited to your work environment.

Activity



Name three hazardous chemicals that you work with and list the safety points that you must be aware of when using these chemicals.

Chemical	Safety points
a.	
b.	
c.	

Activity



In this table list potential sources of burns and scalds in your workplace and state how they can be prevented. The first entry has been completed as an example.

Hazard	Control measures
Chemical burns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Store chemicals upright with the correct lids on✓ Always check the label and only use chemicals you are trained to use✓ Always wear and use the correct PPE

Activity



Complete the following about cut and laceration hazards in your workplace.

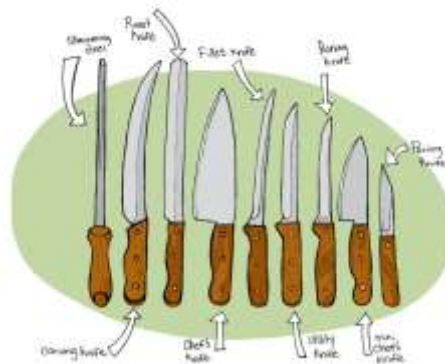
1. List potential sources cut and laceration in your workplace in the table below (*left column*). In the right column state how these can be prevented.

Hazard	Control measures

2. How should you carry knives?

3. When knives are not in use, where and how should they be stored?

4. If knives are not sharp they can still be hazardous. Please explain



Activity



Complete the following about WRMDs.

1. Explain what the term WRMD means.

2. List four typical causes of musculoskeletal disorders.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

3. Overuse of which muscles can cause long-term damage? Identify at least two muscles.

4. State a good rule of thumb to reduce the risk of developing musculoskeletal disorders.

