

HEALTH & SAFETY, FIRST AID AND RISK ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Health and Safety laws apply to all businesses, and as an employer, or a self-employed person, you are obviously responsible for health and safety connected to your business.

The laws are there to protect you, any employees, and the public from workplace dangers. They are not something to be nervous about, as the approach needed to meet their requirements is proportionate to both business size and business activity. Therefore, for most small, low-risk businesses, like photography related ones, the steps you need to take are straightforward practical measures that protect everyone connected to your business from harm, at the same time protecting the future success and growth of your business.

Where a business has fewer than five employees there is no actual need to have a written Risk Assessment or Health and Safety policy. These things have however to be considered, so even if you have less or no employees you may find it of benefit to write a simple one, as it helps focus your thought processes on these important issues and it prove be of use in the future.

Creating a Risk Assessment is simply about considering any risks in your workplace (from trip hazards to potential fires) and identifying sensible measures to control or minimise them. The law does not expect you to remove all risks, simply to put in place reasonable measures to control them.

The Health and Safety Executive has created online risk assessment tools to help small businesses complete their risk assessment quickly. They also have a selection of example risk assessments - the shop example being the nearest to a Photography Studio. You can find these things here –

[Risk assessment: Template and examples - HSE](#)

The Health and Safety Executive also provides a Health and Safety policy template, along with an example to give you an idea of what to include when writing yours. You can find these things here –

[Prepare a health and safety policy: How to write your policy - HSE](#)

Completing the above is a relatively simple process that isn't too time consuming and following it is normally enough for a small business to comply with any legal requirements.

However, please note that for a Health and Safety policy to be valid and effective it must be signed and dated by the most senior person in the business/company, and it is the duty of that person to ensure that aims, responsibilities, and arrangements contained within it are carried out...and obviously, your policy will only be effective if you and any staff follow it and review it regularly.

As well as the above, under Health and Safety law, you must have first-aid arrangements in your workplace whether you have employees or not. As a minimum, you must have a suitably stocked first-aid box, an appointed person to take charge of first-aid arrangements (that could be you) and information for any employees giving details of first-aid arrangements.

IF YOU DO HAVE EMPLOYEES

You must consult with them on health and safety so they can raise concerns and influence decisions on the management of these measures, and you must provide clear instructions and adequate training for them.

The policy should be made easily available and communicated to them all. It is good practice to display a Health and Safety policy in an easily accessible public area so that anyone connected with the business in any way can easily see the commitment the business has made to uphold standards of Health and Safety.

It is also good practice to evidence delivery of your policy to employees, as well as their acceptance via a Company Handbook or signed document that accompanies an employee's Contract of Employment. If the policy is revised or altered at any time, it goes without saying that the revisions and alterations must be communicated effectively to employees at the earliest opportunity.

Also, it is a legal requirement to display the Health and Safety law poster where any employees can easily read it, or alternatively, provide each worker with a copy of the equivalent pocket card. It outlines British Health and Safety laws and includes a straightforward list that tells workers what they and their employers need to do. You can get copies of the poster and pocket card from HSE Books via this link –

[Health and safety law poster, free leaflet and pocket card \(hse.gov.uk\)](#).

As an employer you must also report and keep a record of certain injuries, incidents and cases of work-related disease. Those you must report and record are listed here on the HSE website –

[Reportable incidents - RIDDOR - HSE](#)

The above contains some of the key points of public sector information published by the Health and Safety Executive and licensed under the Open Government Licence. The full details are here for you to consider in more detail – [HSE: Information about health and safety at work](#)

Sometimes HSE links will change. If you notice that any of the above links do not work, please advise us via an email to info@photoquild.co.uk. Last updated 25/03/2022

CORONAVIRUS / COVID 19 RISK ASSESSMENTS

Since 2020, any Risk Assessment you undertake now needs to consider what reasonable steps you need to take to protect yourself, employees, clients and others from Coronavirus (or COVID-19).

Obviously, your Risk Assessment should reflect the latest public health regulations and guidelines for the nation you are in. Here are the links to the latest UK and Ireland guidance on working safely –

[England](#) / [Scotland](#) / [Wales](#) / [Northern Ireland](#) / [Ireland](#)

As every business has different premises and ways of operation your Coronavirus (COVID-19) Risk Assessment cannot be generic, but as part of your Risk Assessment, you need to:

1. identify what work activity or situations might cause transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)
2. think about who could be at risk – this could include yourself and your staff, customers, contractors and delivery drivers
3. decide how likely it is that someone could be exposed
4. identify the controls needed to reduce the risk

Example: 1. Direct contact when payment is made – 2. Customer and myself – 3. Possible – 4. Payment via online means

Example: 1. People together in a confined space – 2. Customer, other attendees and myself – 3. Relatively High – 4. Introduce pre-attendance guide and hold online pre-visit meeting to minimise time together, open windows to ensure good ventilation, wear masks and maintain social distancing where practicable

Example: 1. Virus contact from surfaces – 2. Customer, other attendees and myself – 3. Possible – 4. Use anti-bacterial wipes on surfaces between customers and utilise disposable cups when providing drinks for clients and visitors

The Health and Safety Executive has produced guidance including practical measures to help you continue working safely and manage the risks associated with running your business at this time.. You may find the below links of use -

[Adequate ventilation](#) / [Sufficient cleaning](#) / [Good hand hygiene](#)

IF YOU DO HAVE EMPLOYEES

If you do have staff you should ensure you consider the risk to groups of workers who are particularly vulnerable to Coronavirus (COVID-19)...and do not forget that it is a legal requirement to consult with your workforce on health and safety matters to help reduce risks.

As with any business-related Risk Assessment whilst there is a need to undertake one, if you have fewer than five employees you don't have to write anything down – However it might help if you do, especially as it can be utilised to reassure potential clients about the fact you are considering their personal safety. If you do complete a written Covid Related Risk Assessment as described above, you are welcome to use the website statement below.

WEBSITE 'SAFETY PLAN' STATEMENT

If you have completed a Coronavirus (COVID-19) related Risk Assessment as outlined above you are welcome to utilise the below statement on your website, blogs or in other business-related content.

“Our priority is always to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone that we come into contact with. We are proud to say that we have completed the Risk Assessment processes outlined by the **Guild of Photographers** and have a **Safety Plan** in place. We also continue to monitor and improve our practices daily, making every effort and taking every precaution to keep everyone safe.”

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