

19 Young Persons

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Introduction

19.1.1 Introducing young people to the world of work can help them understand the work environment, understand the safety implications to themselves and those around them, help them choose future careers or prepare them for employment. When employing a young person under the age of 18, whether for work or work experience, employers have the same responsibilities for their health, safety and welfare as they do for any other employees. The Management of Health and Safety Regulations requires special attention to identifying and controlling health and safety risks to young persons in the workplace¹ (below the age of 18, including work experience students, cadets², etc.) taking into account their lack of physical or mental maturity and lack of experience. The following definitions apply:

- A young person is anyone under 18 years of age;
- A child is a category of young person defined as not having yet reached the official age at which they may leave school, just before or after their 16th birthday (this is often referred to as the minimum school leaving age (MSLA))³.

19.1.2 The mental and social skills demanded by the majority of jobs are no different for young persons than adults; however, the perception of risk and self confidence tends to increase with age and mental maturity. Young persons may be more easily distracted, take part in horse-play; they are often more susceptible to peer-pressure in order to “fit in” and under the perception that they need to prove themselves, which may increase the likelihood of “cutting corners” or suffering from stress.

19.1.3 Many of the risks to young persons should be covered by existing risk assessments and control measures should already be in place; however, these may need to be reviewed to identify any additional measures/changes to ensure their protection e.g. induction, instruction, supervision, site familiarisation, and the use of any protective equipment that might be needed.

¹ Those employed by or undertaking work (including work experience students) on behalf of the MOD or its contractors.

² JSP 814 has primacy over this Chapter for (Policy & Regulations) MOD-Sponsored Cadet Forces

³ The oldest pupils of compulsory school age are those born in September and may be as old as 16 years and 10 months in year 11 before they leave school on the last Friday in June.

19.1.4 Working hours⁴ are not governed by health and safety law. Young people and children have different employment rights from adult workers and are subject to protections in relation to the hours they can work. More information can be found on the [gov.uk website](http://gov.uk)

Roles and Responsibilities

Commanding Officer/Head of Establishment (CO/HoE)

19.2.1 The CO/HoE should ensure that all risk assessments adequately consider young persons for all areas where they may be reasonably expected to visit.

19.2.2 Where visiting young persons are invited onto MOD premises to use MOD facilities (e.g. cadet forces, school, use of a range or assault course), the CO/HoE is to ensure that the activity is managed/supervised by suitable numbers of competent personnel who will take on the supervisory role for the use of those facilities.

Managers

19.2.3 When employing a child, the key findings of the risk assessments and the control measures that will be in place before they start work should be provided to the person/organisation arranging the placement; it is the responsibility of the person/organisation arranging the placement to provide this information to the child's parents or guardians. Managers should be aware that under no circumstances should any child be allowed to undertake work or activities that:

- is beyond their physical or psychological capacity;
- exposes them to substances that are in any way harmful to human health, are toxic or carcinogenic, or cause heritable genetic damage or harm to the unborn child;
- exposes them to radiation;
- involves a risk of accidents which they are unlikely to recognise because of their lack of experience or training or sufficient attention to safety; involves a risk to their health from extremes of temperature, noise or vibration.

19.2.4 A young person over the MSLA (not a child) is not permitted to undertake such work unless it is necessary for their training and carried out under supervision by a competent person and providing the risks are reduced to the lowest level so far as is reasonably practicable.

19.2.5 Before young person's start work, the manager should review all risk assessments (JSP 375, Part 2, Volume 1, Chapters 08, 10, 11 & 12 and JSP 426 for fire risk assessments) of the work environment, materials and activities to identify any additional control measures/changes required. Consideration is to be given to the hazards and risks to all young persons who are involved in the activity/task or who may be affected by it and the communication and enforcement of the required control

⁴There are also some special provisions for young people in the Working Time (Amendment) Regulations 2002 and the Working Time (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 to give all workers above the minimum school leaving age rights and protections in respect of their hours of work, night work, rest from work and paid annual leave.

measures. The manager should check that any information, instruction and training provided, and that the consequences of not following any rules/procedures has been explained and has been fully understood by the young person(s).

19.2.6 The manager should ensure that a formal plan for the activity/work placement of young persons is put in place before they start work. The plan should include the risk assessment, the provision of information, instruction, training and supervision, (and by whom); this may require increased levels of supervision and/or the assigning of a mentor. Annex A of this chapter has been written to help young persons understand the risks to their health and safety in the work environment. This can be given to the young person as part of their induction, it does not replace it.

19.2.7 Young persons may be eager to please their superiors and lack the confidence to ask for explanation or clarity of instructions when not fully understood. Try to look at the workplace from a young person's viewpoint. What dangers will they recognise? It is also important to recognise the need for young persons to feel confident in raising any questions or concerns they might have when providing training. A useful point of reference for managers is [HSE INDG364](#) (The Right Start – Work Experience for Young People; Health and Safety Basics for Employers).

19.2.8 When young persons are new to the workplace, they are likely to encounter unfamiliar risks from the work they carry out, and from the working environment. In assessing risks to young person(s) managers should take the following specific factors into account:

- physical maturity (e.g. strength, size);
- mental maturity; risk perception/taking, distraction, horse-play, peer pressure, stress;
- lack of experience;
- additional health and safety training;
- increased supervision;
- suitability of safety equipment (PPE etc.).

19.2.9 Particular consideration should be given to activities that involve lifting or moving heavy loads; operating machinery which requires physical strength to operate the controls with ease; or periods of sustained effort and/or attention. Young persons will often still be physically developing in respect of growth and physical strength. The human skeleton will not be fully fused in young persons who are still physically developing and will be more prone to injury.

All Personnel

19.2.10 All personnel (including temporary or work experience, cadets) have a duty to take care of their own health and safety, and that of others who may be affected by their actions. All personnel must comply with all information, listening carefully to instruction and training provided and following the instructions given. Personnel are not to engage or participate in any type of unsafe behaviour or acts e.g. horse-play.

19.2.11 Personnel must inform their manager or supervisor of any physical or medical condition that could affect their ability to undertake an activity safely.

19.2.12 If personnel have any concerns about their health and safety, they should raise them with their supervisor/manager or organiser and report any accidents or illness which they think may be work related.

Retention of Records

19.3.1 Risk assessments and associated documents should be retained in accordance with the requirements of JSP 375, Part 2, Volume 1, Chapter 39 - Retention of Records.

Related Documents

19.4.1 The following documents should be consulted in conjunction with this chapter:

JSP 375, Part 2, Volume 1:

- Chapter 02 - Office & General Workplace Safety;
- Chapter 05 - First Aid;
- Chapter 08 - Risk Assessment;
- Chapter 10 - Manual Handling;
- Chapter 11 - Management of Hazardous Substances;
- Chapter 12 - Display Screen Equipment;
- Chapter 39 - Retention of Records.

Other MOD Publications:

- JSP 313 - Combined Cadet Force Manual;
- JSP 482 - MOD Explosives Regulations;
- JSP 426 - MOD Fire Safety Manual
- JSP 535 - Cadet Training Safety Precautions;
- JSP 814 - Policy and Regulations for MOD Sponsored Cadet Organisations;
- PR 20- Casual Employment (Including Broader Banded and NSOG Grades, Local Employment Partnerships and Work Experience).

Legislation and Guidance:

- [Legislation.Gov.uk - Working Time \(Amendment\) Regulations;](#)
- [Legislation. Gov.uk - Working Time \(Amendment\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2003;](#)
- [HSE – ACOP - L24 – Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations;](#)
- [HSE – INDG244 – Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare – Short Guide for Managers;](#)
- [HSE INDG364 – The Right Start – Work Experience for Young People: Health and Safety Basics for Employers;](#)
- [HSE – Young People at Work \(work experience\) Work Experience Organisers;](#)
- [HSE – INDG345 - Health and Safety Training \(A Brief Guide\);](#)
- [Gov.uk – Employment Restrictions on child employment.](#)

Looking Out For Workplace Hazards – Advice For Young Persons

19.A.1 It is hoped that your experience here will be a positive one and help you understand the work environment, guide you in your choice of future careers or prepare you for employment. This experience should give you an appreciation of risk and an understanding of how to deal with it; this can be one of the biggest benefits offered by a work placement.

19.A.2 As a young person starting work, you may be more at risk than your older colleagues. New to the job and the workplace, you can lack experience of the job and the health and safety risks that can be present. You have the right to safe and healthy work, including the necessary training and supervision and the right to ask questions and report things that look unsafe to you. If you are under 18 years old the law bans you from doing certain hazardous jobs because of your inexperience and possible immaturity.

19.A.3 If you have an accident or damage your health you may have to live with the consequences for the rest of your life. Something tragic could happen to you on your first day at work, although most tragedies can be prevented. The causes of accidents and ill health can include unsafe equipment, stressful conditions, fast –paced working, lack of training and supervision, procedures and controls. This Annex is designed to cover the hazards you may encounter in a workplace.

How to work safely

- Don't perform any task until you have been properly trained;
- If you feel that you have been getting too much information, too fast, ask your supervisor to slow down and repeat the instructions;
- Don't leave the work area unless you've been told to do so. Other areas may have special hazards you don't know about e.g. slippery floors, or chemical usage;
- If you are unsure of something, ask someone first. A supervisor or co-worker might help you prevent an accident from happening;
- Don't hesitate to ask for more training;
- Wear the proper personal protective equipment for the task e.g. safety shoes, hard hat or gloves. Be sure that you know when to wear protective gear, where to find it and how to use it and how to care for it;
- Find out what to do in an emergency situation, whether it is a fire alarm or other situation;
- Report any accidents to your supervisor immediately. Also report them to your worker safety representative, if there is one;
- Don't indulge in horse-play⁵. Don't initiate it. Don't get pressured into participating in it;
- Don't ignore early signs of problems, such as headaches, aches and pains, dizziness, itchy skin or irritated eyes, nose or throat. If there is a doctor or other

⁵ Horseplay is rough or boisterous play or pranks that occur at the workplace. Horseplay can be activities such as joking that includes physical contact, playing around, racing, grabbing, foolish vehicle operation, social pressure to participate in unsafe acts, harassment, and unauthorized contests. Playing jokes and having fun with your coworkers may break up the day and make work more interesting, but it can lead to serious injuries and sometimes be deadly.

occupational health staff, inform them. And if you visit your family doctor with a complaint, tell them what you do;

- Follow the advice and instructions you have been given, this includes taking the proper breaks, adjusting your chair or workstation etc.

Some things to ask your supervisor

- What are the hazards and risks of my job?
- Will I receive safety training and when?
- What steps do I need to take to protect myself, is there any safety gear I should wear?
- What should I do in an emergency?
- To whom do I report an accident, health problems or if I notice something wrong?
- What do I do if I get hurt? How do I get first aid?

What should I look out for?

- Slips and trips – the most common cause of accidents are untidy workplaces, spills on the floor, trailing cables or damaged floors;
- Machines and equipment – many accidents are caused by poor maintenance, lack of safety guards, lack of training, electrical faults that can cause burns, fires or kill; trying to fix a machine without stopping and disconnecting it from a power supply;
- Lifting loads - that are heavy or unstable; lifting in an awkward way;
- Repetitive, fast work, especially in awkward postures and with insufficient rest periods – can cause aches, pains and damage to muscles and joints; (musculoskeletal disorders) e.g. assembly work, using computer keyboards or the mouse;
- Noise – noise levels that are too high can damage your hearing, although you will probably not be aware of it. The damage can never be repaired. Other physical hazards to be aware of include vibration from operating tools or equipment;
- Chemicals – including common cleaning fluids, paints and dust. Substances found at work may cause allergic skin rashes, asthma, cancers;
- Transport hazards – where people and vehicles work in close proximity e.g. warehouses/loading bays with fork lift trucks operating;
- Stress – may stem from how your job is organised, heavy workloads, unclear responsibilities, lack of confidence to speak to a supervisor;
- Work environment – discomfort from heat or cold, poor lighting etc.

19.A.4 Work is not a game and you have responsibilities to look after your health and safety and ensure that your acts or omissions do not harm others. Follow the instructions and your experience should be a happy and safe one.