

Your health and safety responsibilities as an employer:

- Assess risks to employees, hub members/users, partners and any other people who could be affected by activities in your space
- Implement effective management, monitoring and review of your workspace, by taking preventive and protective measures to ensure risk to hub users and employees is at a minimum
- Have written health and safety policy documents available to all, this is a legal requirement if you employ five or more people
- Ensure your employees have access to health and safety advice
- Inform and discuss with employees risks at work and current preventive and protective measures you've put in place

Risk assessments:

Work hubs are generally low risk buildings, however, it's still an environment where people come and go and therefore you need to take steps to manage and reduce risk to employees and your space users. You can use <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/office.htm> to help you put together a risk assessment for an office environment or conduct one yourself.

Consider:

- Health and safety risks in your workplace - what could cause harm? Chemicals/equipment/wires etc
- How you can take measures to reduce and/or eliminate risk? E.g walkways are clear/bulky items stored correctly/ chemicals are stored out of the reach of users/appliances are PAT tested for communal use/display appropriate warning signs/have well designed workstations for members and staff to prevent physical injury or repetitive strain disorders etc

Fire safety:

As the manager of a work hub, there are certain things you must do by law to meet the 'Fire Safety Order' which is enforced by Law.

If you own a building or are an employer you must carry out a fire safety risk assessment and keep it up to date. You can contact your local Fire and Rescue Service, who will advise you regarding fire safety. Based on the findings of your risk assessment and F&RS advice, you need to ensure that adequate and appropriate fire safety measures and equipment are in place to minimise the risk of injury/loss of life in the event of a fire at your workspace.

Part of your risk assessment should identify what could cause a fire to start, for example sources of ignition, flammable substances, and hub users/staff who may be at risk, as well as how you can protect members/employees/general public if there is a fire.

Points to consider:

- Keeping sources of ignition and flammable substances away from each-other
- Avoid accidental fires by ensuring your equipment cannot cause fires if something is knocked over or left on

- Good housekeeping and common sense is an important part of fire safety, for example avoiding build-up of rubbish or cardboard recycling that could fuel and accelerate the spread of an accidental fire
- How will you warn hub users if a fire starts?
- Have the correct fire-fighting equipment situated in easy reach for extinguishing a small fire
- Keep fire exits and escape routes clearly marked and clear at all times
- If you're an employer your staff should receive appropriate training on evacuating the premises in the event of a fire
- Review and make any required changes to your fire risk assessment regularly - if you are unsure of any detail contact your local Fire and Rescue Service

You may have to store substances, or products such as cleaning chemicals in your workspace - any number of domestic chemicals and commercial substances can cause harm to employees and possibly other people who use your workspace. Any substances on your premises need to be clearly labelled and easily recognisable as harmful, if they can cause any risk to a persons health or to the building itself. In order to carry out risks assessments on chemicals its best to practice 'Control of Substances Hazardous to Health' or COSHH.

Any chemicals you have on site must be accompanied by a data sheet which identifies hazards to health and the environment. Including:

Hazardous ingredients

Physical appearance or 'state' for example Aerosol/colourless etc

How it is hazardous - for example irritating to the eyes or causes burns to skin on contact

First aid measures

Fire fighting measures

Handling and storage - its stability and reactivity

Many products come with their own COSHH data sheets which can be downloaded from the suppliers/makers website - or you can perform a risk assessment on the product yourself.

You need to have information readily available to your employees or those who handle chemicals and train them in identifying what certain symbols and classifications mean. You must also provide protective personal equipment for those using these chemicals to prevent injury.

Your duty of care and industry specific regulations:

The UKs Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (SIC) is a number system used to classify business sectors. It provides a framework for the "collection, tabulation, presentation and analysis of data and its use promotes uniformity". SIC information is needed for waste infrastructure. It is also required for providing data to the European Commission.

Research any waste you may produce from the business and assess and identify your SIC number. Put in place practices for responsible waste management. <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk> can help you do this.