



News from the nest



Welcome to News from the nest, the official newsletter of Eagle Partnerships, providers of Training, Recruitment, Health & Safety and HR services to all organisations regardless of size or industry sector. The aim of this quarterly newsletter is to provide you with information and hints and tips that may be of use in the solution of people issues.



Will you be ready to comply? Disability Discrimination

On 1 October 2004 the final part of the goods, facilities and service provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) will come into force. In many cases, this will mean that adjustments have to be made to existing premises if the existing facilities make access difficult for a disabled person, whether they are a customer or an employee.

Definition

Service Provider: anyone who provides services to the public, in all sectors of the economy, even if the service is provided free of charge.

Present Requirements

At present, a service provider has to take reasonable steps to:

- Change a practice, policy or procedure which makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of their service
- Provide an auxiliary aid or service if it would enable or make it easier for disabled people to use the service
- Provide a reasonable alternative method of making the services available to disabled people where a physical feature makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of the service

There is a duty to plan and be proactive rather than reactive to the needs of disabled people.

Future Requirements

As from 1st October 2004, if a physical feature makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use a service, the service provider will have to take reasonable steps to:

- Remove the feature
- Alter the feature so that it no longer presents a problem
- Provide a reasonable means of avoiding it
- Provide a reasonable alternative method of making the services available

If you provide a service to the public then it would be advisable to plan ahead to make sure you comply with the new requirements. If you are thinking of making alterations to your premises, make sure these meet the requirements of disabled customers.

You will need to take into account a range of disabilities including sight or hearing difficulties as well as physical and mobility impairments, learning disabilities and mental illness. Ask the following questions: Can people with a disability:

- Locate and identify the premises?
- Get in and out of the premises?
- Find out where they need to go once inside the building?
- Move around within the premises?
- Communicate with staff?
- Access goods and services?
- Access customer toilets?

Staff training should include your policy towards disabled people and outline their legal rights. It should include disability awareness training.



Health and Safety Basics

As an employer, with more than 5 employees, you are legally obliged to have a Health and Safety Policy which has been developed in consultation with your staff, names competent people to carry out the set procedures, and details what to do in an emergency.

- Every year there are 350 fatalities to employees and members of the public
- Organisations are fined an average of £32,700 per death
- There are 29 million working days lost annually due to Health and Safety related accidents and ill health
- There are 27,000 major accidents annually
- The average cost to business of a major injury is £19,000
- 84% of all prosecutions brought by Health and Safety Executive result in convictions
- The average fine per prosecution is £12,194

Health and Safety Definitions:

Hazard: Something with the potential to cause harm.

Risk: The likelihood of some harm being realised from the hazard.

In the last newsletter we looked at the 5 steps to a safer work place, we now look at them in more detail.

Step 1 - Search for hazards

Walk around the workplace and look at what could reasonably be deemed to be a hazard. Confer with your employees or representatives and ask them what they think. Select a member of staff from each department to help you in the assessment.

Step 2 - Assess who might be harmed

Think about individuals who are classed as more vulnerable e.g. young workers,

expectant mothers, new mothers and those who are not familiar with your workplace for example cleaners, visitors, maintenance workers and contractors.

Step 3 - Evaluate the risks

Evaluate each hazard and how likely it is that it could cause harm - is the risk high, medium or low. Aim to minimise all risks by taking the necessary precautions.

Compiling a list of actions that need to be carried out in order to minimise the risk could you help you prioritise your actions.

Step 4 - Record your findings

You must record and retain those records for any significant findings from your assessment if you have five or more employees. This means writing down the important hazards and conclusions.

You must also communicate your findings to your employees. You need to be able to demonstrate that:

- A sufficient assessment was made
- You investigated who might be affected
- You took action and dealt with all the obvious significant hazards
- The safeguards are reasonable and the remaining risk is low

It is not necessary to duplicate identified hazards and precautions already recorded in other documents where your Health & Safety policy is set out.

Step 5 - Reconsider your assessment

As circumstances change or new machines, substances are brought on board; the risk of this addition must be assessed and documented if necessary.

For further information on any of the services that Eagle Partnerships provide please contact us at: -

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