

# Personal Safety at Work

Risk assessment, avoiding conflict and carrying out safer site visits and meetings

## RTPI Good Practice Note 3

### 1. Introduction

Planning is often concerned with the resolution of conflict. This can create tensions which may affect personal behaviour, it can engender an adversarial feeling of 'them and us', and as a result can create aggressive attitudes. Planners can also be required to work in physically challenging locations. These issues can create risks to personal safety.

Personal safety is a responsibility shared by the employer, the manager and the individual member of staff. This note is addressed to all RTPI members, in whatever capacity they act and wherever they work within the UK and Ireland, or internationally. RTPI members are encouraged to bring this good practice note to the attention of their employer should they believe it necessary to do so. It should also be noted that the issues are not restricted to people employed as planners, but will also be of relevance to any staff and volunteers who have contact with members of the public.

This Good Practice Note focuses on:

- risk assessment,
- training, and
- developing procedures.

In any particular situation, RTPI members should make a sensible judgement of risk based on their training, the advice they have been given, and the circumstances in which they find themselves.



**RTPI**

mediation of space · making of place

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## 2. Information for Employers

Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 states:

“It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees.”

Employers have a duty to ensure that their staff are able to carry out their duties safely. The safety and well being of members in the workplace, at meetings and during site visits is matter of concern to the RTPI. The law does not expect employers to eliminate all possible risks; but to be aware of them

and to have adequate systems in place that minimise them. In order to meet this requirement an employer will carry out a detailed risk assessment, ensure that staff are adequately trained and have in place procedures which are aimed at ensuring a safe working environment both in and away from the office.

Employers must ensure that they have appropriate and adequate insurance cover against any risk to their staff or volunteers i.e. Personal Accident Assault Policy and a General Personal Accident Policy covering all staff and (in the case of local authorities) elected members.

Safety issues should not provide grounds for discriminating unlawfully against anyone on the grounds of sex, race or age when appointing staff or allocating responsibilities.

Every organisation needs to follow Health and Safety legislation, and individuals to follow their employer's safety advice. This good practice note is intended to complement such information by providing a checklist of good practice that should be applied in individual circumstances.

Safety is not exclusively a planning issue. Some planners may be at risk because of the work they do, but they can also be at risk because of the circumstances in which they work, and for reasons that have nothing to do with the work itself. To this extent they are no more at risk than any other employee or volunteer that works with the public, whether in their own premises or elsewhere. Some kinds of risk, real or perceived, are faced by both sexes equally. Other kinds may affect women more than men, and men more than women, or members of one ethnic community or age group more than another.

Taking staff safety seriously has many benefits to the employer. If staff feel secure and know that they have the support of senior management they will be a happier workforce. Staff who are unsafe at work pose a risk to themselves, their colleagues and the public. Also staff who feel threatened or unsafe at work are more likely to take sick leave and under perform.

## 3. Developing a Safer Working Environment

### 3.1. Risk Assessment

Risk is normally defined as the relationship between the adverse or damaging consequences of an event – a 'hazard', and the likelihood of that event happening.

Carrying out a risk assessment is essential to ensuring a safe working environment both in and out of the office. The purpose of an assessment is to use available information to help you decide how serious a risk is and to suggest the prudent action that could be taken to eliminate or reduce the risk.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 (updated 1999) requires every organisation in the UK to undergo a proactive process of risk management. Organisations must assess risk, create safe systems of working, communicate these to their employees and monitor and review their systems on a regular basis.

Risk assessment techniques can be used by smaller teams within large organisations. Particularly where there are relatively small numbers of planners, the risks specific to planning need to be taken into account. Lone workers and sole practitioners can also use the method to ensure a safer working environment. The thought process involved should be adapted and used to assess each situation as it arises. This is termed a dynamic risk assessment.

The process is simple and easy to use. The Health and Safety Executive suggests the use of a five step assessment. These are as follows:

## Dynamic Risk Assessment

		Risk Assessment	Dynamic Risk Assessment
STEP ONE	Identify the hazards	Late night meeting in an isolated venue	You are alone at a meeting in an isolated venue which has over run, its now dark and public transport provision is unreliable
STEP TWO	Decide who might be harmed and how	Person attending the meeting may be in danger travelling home	You're concerned about how to get home safely
STEP THREE	Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions	Low risk can be avoided by getting a taxi from the venue	There is a risk which can be avoided by calling a taxi
STEP FOUR	Record your findings and implement them	Ensure all staff are aware that taxis should be used and the cost will be met by the employer	Call to let someone know that you're getting in a taxi
STEP FIVE	Review your assessment and update if necessary	In order to ensure confidence in the system an account should be set up with reputable taxi firm	Keep assessing the situation to make sure you are safe in the taxi. Remember the situation can change

A hazard is anything which has the potential to cause harm. This could include violent and aggressive members of the public; and also threats arising from situations such as site visits on contaminated land or dangerous buildings and travelling home after late night meetings. Risk is the chance, high or low, that somebody could be harmed by these and other hazards, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be.

It is important that all staff are included in the process of risk assessment, as one person's perspective or experience of hazards and risks may be very different from that of a colleague. It is also imperative to have staff co-operation in the development of strategies as they are much more likely to be used if staff feel that they have some ownership over them.

Risk assessment has two important elements, a collective (employer) focus and also a personal (employee) focus. It is essential to remember that an individual must be responsible for their own personal safety as well as an employer having a duty to minimise the risks they are exposed to.

The risk assessment process should be the first step in any review of staff safety as it is from this process that training needs and system revisions should be identified.

The risk assessment should be reviewed regularly taking into account changing staff circumstances, the development of new hazards or solutions, and address any failures of the current system.

### **3.2. Training**

The training needs of existing staff should be assessed through a risk assessment process and training provided to meet those needs. Such training should be given in office time. It is every bit as important to provide training for all staff that come into contact with the public e.g. reception staff, as well as those who make site visits or attend external meetings with the public or clients. Employers should consider whether all new staff require personal safety and awareness training as part of standard induction procedures.

The focus of training should include interpersonal skills to help staff assess situations and respond in such a way as to minimise the likelihood of violence. Training should involve more than the provision of information. It should cover a variety of potential scenarios as well as topics like; handling difficult customers and clients, recognising body language, development of communication skills and managing meetings. Courses should be made available to staff, and members are encouraged to ask their employer if they believe they require such training. A library of relevant literature should also be developed and staff encouraged to use this to refresh their skills on a regular basis. This information could also be web based which would enable remote workers to utilise it.

### **3.3. Developing Procedures**

The development of procedures to ensure safety in the workplace is a matter of concern for all RTPI members wherever and for whoever they work.

Safety awareness should be a primary concern when visiting sites or attending meetings away from the workplace. Violence can take a number of forms, physical or verbal, actual or threatened, although such incidents are the exception rather than the rule. Other hazards can be wide ranging some expected and planned for whilst others will be totally unexpected. Good common sense and regularly updated procedures can minimise risk considerably.

Employers should ensure that proper systems are in place for the protection of their staff. Managers are responsible for ensuring that these systems are properly operated and kept up to date. Individual employees at all levels have a responsibility to themselves, their colleagues and their employer to do all they can to ensure their own and their colleagues' safety.

The use of modern technology in the workplace has increased significantly with the use of electronic diaries and mobile phones etc. and whilst in the main this can be very helpful in ensuring a safer working environment, an over reliance on such technology should be avoided. For example do not assume that a text or voice message has been received. Wherever possible staff should actually speak to one another.

## No 4. Information for Individuals

The following is advice on what to do before, during and after a meeting, site visit or external event. It is based on good practice and is intended not to be an exhaustive list, but the basis for drawing up sensible protocol relating to staff safety.

### 4.1 Before Leaving the Office:

- RTPI members are required to ensure that in their dealings with all those they come into contact with, their behaviour and the way they operate within the planning system is honest, fair, even handed, considerate and helpful. 'Customer care' in such matters as written notices, letters, counter service, telephone manner, time management of a busy workload, etc. all help to ensure harmonious relations. The use of jargon should be avoided as this may actually increase aggression;
- When meeting someone for the first time, arrange the first meeting at your workplace. If this is not possible then ask for a telephone number and ring back to confirm the arrangement. Make sure you know as much as possible about the identity of the person you are going to see, always check the credentials of the person you will be meeting, the place where the meeting will take place and all the arrangements prior to leaving. If your workplace keeps a record of incidents (see below) ensure that you check this before making any arrangements;
- Make sure that you have recorded legibly the names of the individuals to be visited, the venue(s) of the meeting, the estimated time at which you will return to the office and ensure colleagues have your mobile telephone number. If you are going straight home after a site visit ensure that there is a procedure in place to inform another member of staff that you have returned home safely;



- It is good practice to assign someone with responsibility to check the appointments diary at the end of the day. If your appointments are recorded in your diary, then you must ensure that your diary is left in an accessible place and not locked away, or better still is available on a shared electronic system;
- During the winter, arrange site visits during mornings so that the site meeting cannot extend into dusk or darkness. If you do have to attend an evening meeting then, where possible arrange to go there and back with a colleague. With this scenario it may best to use an independent meeting point and then proceed together to the venue;
- Before attending a site visit it is advisable to spend some time undertaking a dynamic risk assessment which involves thinking about what potential hazards you may face, what risks these pose and how you will deal with them. Possible questions include:
  - Is the structure unsound?
  - Is there the potential to come into contact with hazardous materials?
  - Will there be a requirement to ascend scaffolding or ladders?
  - Will there be any unsafe vegetation on the site?
  - Is there a possibility of animal attack?
  - Are the occupants of the site likely to be hostile?
  - Are there issues of bio-security relating to the site e.g. the possibility of getting or passing an infection to an animal?

You should get into a habit of carrying out a risk assessment on all occasions; and this skill should also be utilised whilst on site. If at anytime you feel that the risk to your own personal safety or others around you is too great then the visit, meeting or exhibition should be abandoned. If carried out before leaving the office it will also give you an opportunity to make sure that you have all the relevant equipment;

- Think carefully how you are going to handle a potentially difficult meeting beforehand in order to reduce the likelihood of conflict. You should ask yourself if you are the best person to deal with the situation. The assistance of a colleague is often helpful, particularly if the second member of staff can solve a problem which you cannot;
- When going to a meeting or site visit which you think may be confrontational or hazardous, discuss it with your manager before leaving the office;
- The use of appropriate equipment and clothing will reduce the risk of personal accidents and injuries. Forms of dress are worth considering, as well as appropriate wet weather clothing for personal protection. Disposable coveralls for inspecting derelict buildings may be available from your employer. Be aware of the effect which your style of dress may have on others. Think about whether it is appropriate to wear a formal suit in each situation. Women are also advised to avoid dressing in what may be perceived as a sexually provocative way, while on the other hand men should avoid combative or military style dress;
- Before leaving the office on a site visit you should check that you have all the equipment that you need, that it works and you know how to use it effectively. The following is a suggested list of basic equipment required for most activities carried out of the office environment (this list can of course be added to):
  - Mobile telephone,
  - Personal alarm (see below for more details),
  - Safety shoes/boots,
  - Hard hat,
  - High visibility jacket,
  - First aid pack,
  - Torch,
  - Always carry an identity card on all visits outside the office.

There is no definitive list of equipment as professional roles vary, but many planning officers will be expected in the course of their duties to visit building sites, derelict buildings and waste land. When thinking about what hazards you may face on your site visit or external meeting think about what equipment you will require to minimise the risks. This list will need to be tailored depending on how you will travel to the site. Obviously it is unrealistic to travel on public transport carrying all of the above equipment.

It is strongly recommended that you carry a personal alarm and make sure that it is loud enough, (at least 115 decibels) and that you know how it works. Use the alarm as a weapon to frighten the aggressor. Don't rely on it to summon help as like car alarms, they are generally ignored. At 115 decibels the noise is equivalent to a jet taking off, and can give the aggressor a physical shock. Hold the alarm as close as you can to the aggressor's ear. The aggressor will almost certainly recoil, giving you a chance to escape. For this reason alarms can still be effective in remote areas where there may be no-one else within earshot.

The use of mobile telephones should be standard, ideally provided by the employer. It is useful to have a coded message of perhaps four or five words that alerts the office that the caller is in trouble.

- There is a need to think carefully about how you will travel to and from the venue, including if travelling by car, where to park or if using public transport the frequency of the service;
- If you have any concerns about visiting a particular site then arrange for a colleague to accompany you. The presence of a colleague can also help if you believe that the other people at the site might make allegations against you. Again, it may be best to use an independent meeting point and then proceed together to the venue;
- No members of staff should be required or asked to attend what is expected to be a particularly hazardous visit or meeting on their own. Legitimate concerns for both staff and employer would include, for example, matters of gender and race, as well as issues specific to the task or venue.

## 4.2. During the Meeting or Site Visit

- Keep your wits about you at all times and be aware of the situation you are in. Keep assessing the circumstances and if at anytime you do not feel comfortable then abandon the visit or meeting. Keep in mind the dynamic risk assessment process;
- On entering a building or premises make sure you know how to get out in a hurry. If you are in a room, don't block the other person's line of exit, but also make sure that your own is not blocked. Let the other person go into the room first and make sure you have a clear line of escape. If you feel at risk do not enter the room. If the situation turns violent and you need to get out of the room then do not turn your back, but move gradually backwards towards the exit;
- When a meeting is taking place on a building site or in open conditions try not to position yourself close to scaffolding or foundation trenches, and try to avoid climbing ladders onto scaffolding. If it does not look safe then abandon the visit and return at a later date with appropriate equipment or assistance;
- Do not try to deal with someone who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Make another appointment. Take a sensible approach if alcohol is produced during the course of a meeting;
- Be aware of your body language. Don't adopt a confrontational or aggressive posture. For example turn sideways to look at the site under discussion;
- You should stay calm if somebody is starting to get angry: body language, voice and response can help to defuse a situation. Take a deep breath, keep your voice on an even keel and try to help;
- Listen carefully, even to abuse and agree where possible. Try to keep relaxed. If standing don't become rooted to one spot. Move about occasionally;
- Never reply in kind to abuse, rudeness or threats;
- You should offer an angry person a range of options from which to choose, in that way they will find it difficult to stay angry. You should never be aggressive back - this is how anger can escalate into violence;

- If necessary, consider postponing the meeting to cool the atmosphere. Report all cases of aggression and violence, actual or threatened, to your employer;
- You should never touch anyone who is angry;
- In extreme circumstances you should ensure your own safety by foregoing any attempt to restrain the aggressor physically. Physical restraint must be used only as a last resort in situations where other responses have failed or are inappropriate;
- Only the minimum force required to contain the situation must be used (this is a legal requirement which is designed to prevent cases of an assault arising where the aggressor becomes the victim);
- If the other person produces a weapon of any kind or threatens to use violence, leave at once. Don't try to talk anyone into putting down a weapon. Producing a weapon or threatening violence are both breaches of the peace and should be reported to the police as well as to your employer.

### **4.3. Once you've Finished**

- If you stay out longer than intended, then the office should be informed immediately. Contact your colleagues to let them know the situation and provide a new estimated time of arrival at work. There should be someone in the office with access to the appointments diary they will be aware if you have not returned or reported in. That person should make contact with you to ascertain the reason for your delay;
- If a colleague fails to return to the office then try to make contact. If this is unsuccessful then at least two members of staff, including the line manager if available, should go to the location indicated in the appointments diary;
- All staff should be aware of the importance of reporting incidents that occur during site visits, no matter how trivial they appear at the time. It is strongly recommended that all offices have clear reporting procedures for all cases of violence or aggression towards staff or volunteers. This gives employers a better idea of the extent and nature of the problems, and of the measures

that need to be taken. It will also help employers review the safety measures already in place and to ensure they are effective and appropriate. All staff should be made aware of these measures and feel that they have the full commitment and support of senior management when it comes to ensuring staff safety;

- Many workplaces keep a file containing all these reports readily available so that staff can refer to this before making appointments. RTPI members should check with those responsible that all such files, reports and details adhere in full to legal regulations (e.g. data protection, privacy, human rights etc);
- It is also good practice to record complaints made by the public or a client in respect of an employees manner or behaviour. For example, the personal service of an enforcement notice to a member of the public could generate a complaint of abuse etc, simply as an act of revenge, and there may well be properties which should not be visited unaccompanied. These measures should be regarded as common sense and if the procedure does not currently exist, members should insist on it being put into immediate effect. Such a system should easily fit in with the complaint management systems maintained by local planning authorities.

## **No 5. Attending Exhibitions**

In some cases holding an exhibition may be a better way to reduce conflict than holding a public meeting. However, there are important issues relating to safety that need to be considered.

When making arrangements for exhibitions ensure that the location does not create potential problems for the duty staff or those attending the event. For example, caravans and small village halls can create access problems, so wherever possible ensure that there are easy escape routes for the duty officer(s). All staff at the exhibition should be made familiar with the arrangements and exits before commencing their duty. If at all possible ensure

that two staff members are on duty at all times. In vulnerable locations mobile telephones and personal safety alarms should be taken and, if possible, some form of 'panic' button provided.

Again it is important to consider how staff will travel to and from the venue including where to park if travelling by car. It is good practice for employers to ensure that employees can get home safely. This may include arranging transport from the venue to home or by ensuring that a safe parking place is available close to the venue.

It is important to be aware that there is a risk of being confronted by members of the public at or outside the venue and it would therefore be sensible to think about this before leaving the venue. If at any point you are concerned for your safety, consider leaving the venue with a colleague or another person, or call for assistance from inside the venue.

## **No 6. Planning Enforcement**

Enforcement action is only taken against people or organisations who have refused to comply with a local planning authority's requirements, often after all other avenues have been exhausted. It is therefore a potential cause of aggression against local authority officers, whether verbal or physical. Although these precautions are particularly relevant to enforcement action, they can also be applied to a wide range of circumstances.

If you have any reason to fear a serious confrontation, a senior officer should contact the local police beforehand to seek advice or, in extreme circumstances, request a presence. If the police are present, do not enter the premises or the site until clearance has been obtained. The police will need to be briefed about the history of the case. It should not be assumed that they will have an understanding of the planning process.

In cases involving demolition or other extreme action, it is likely that you will be dealing with someone whose attitude and actions will be unreasonable. It will be necessary to proceed with great caution, and with as much consideration as possible to the person against whom the enforcement action is to be taken.

When facing unusual or severe enforcement action, consider the likelihood of press publicity and discuss this with your line manager and the person within your organisation responsible for press and public relations issues. Traditionally many local authorities have been reluctant to give any publicity to what is often perceived as a negative action, and have discouraged staff from providing anything other than basic information. However, it is worth bearing in mind that when properly briefed, the media can be a useful ally when communicating to the public. Positive press reporting can not only help in getting the message across that those who break the rules will have to pay, it can educate the public and promote a wider understanding of the planning system.

The RTPI has also published an Enforcement Handbook which provides further information specifically for planning enforcement officers. It is available from the RTPI website [www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk)

## **No 7. Threats at Home**

There are very exceptional cases where people have been subjected to threats at their home arising from their official duties. In these cases you should liaise closely with the local authorities' or firm's solicitors. Employers should be ready to inform the police or to seek appropriate civil or criminal remedies when members of staff and their families are threatened as a result of carrying out official duties.



## No 8. After an Incident

Aggression can give rise to a wide range of emotions and everybody responds differently. Feelings of anxiety, fear, panic or despair can continue for a long time after an incident. Sometimes a reaction to an incident can be delayed. This is not unusual. Those who have been subject to aggression may need external support or counselling.

Colleagues may be able to offer support and may have ideas on how work practices can be changed to prevent such a thing happening again. Staff should be encouraged to tell supervisors, managers or employers about situations where they feel there are current or potential problems. A review of practice, and the issuing of guidelines may be necessary. All incidents should be recorded.

Taking care of yourself and your colleagues is the basis of all good work practice and helps to improve the service offered to clients. Taking aggression seriously is the first step to creating a safer working environment. Any work situation that makes staff uneasy should be addressed by supervisors, managers and employers, and solutions sought.

## No 9. Sources of Further Information

### **For more information please visit:**

The RTPI provides free additional guidance to members on health and safety risk assessment and health and safety management. For more information please contact [piwp@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:piwp@rtpi.org.uk)

### **Health and Safety Executive [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)**

The Health and Safety Commission is responsible for health and safety regulation in Great Britain. The Health and Safety Executive and local government are the enforcing agencies who work in support of the Commission. The website contains masses of useful information of which the following is relevant to this document:

- Health and Safety Regulation: A Short Guide  
[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hsc13.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hsc13.pdf)
- Work Related Violence: Lone Workers Case Study Summary of Key Points  
[www.hse.gov.uk/violence/hslcasestudies/environment.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/hslcasestudies/environment.htm)
- Violence to Persons at Work: Guidance for Enforcement Officers  
[www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/88-1.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/88-1.htm)
- Working Alone in Safety: Controlling the Risks of Solitary Work  
[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf)
- Violence at Work: A Guide for Employers  
[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg69.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg69.pdf)
- Risk Assessment: Five Steps to Risk Assessment  
[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf)

## **Workplace Health Connect [www.workplacehealthconnect.co.uk](http://www.workplacehealthconnect.co.uk)**

Tel: 0845 609 6006

Is a free, no obligation service set up in partnership with the Health and Safety Executive providing practical advice on workplace health and safety.

## **The Suzy Lamplugh Trust [www.suzylamplugh.org](http://www.suzylamplugh.org)**

Is a useful source of information relating to personal safety, including the following documents which are available to purchase from the website:

- Guidance for Employers
- Guidance for Employees
- Lone Working Booklet

## Legislative Framework

### **Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974**

Employers have a legal duty under this Act to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees.

An employer's responsibility under HSW Act s,2 extend to protecting staff from violence.

**[www.healthandsafety.co.uk/haswa.htm](http://www.healthandsafety.co.uk/haswa.htm)**

### **The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**

The regulations require employers to assess risks to employees and make arrangements for their health and safety by effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review. Where appropriate, employers must assess the risks of violence to employees and, if necessary, put in place control measures to protect them. This includes the requirement for employers to carry out risk assessments, make arrangements to implement necessary measures, appoint competent people and arrange for appropriate information and training.

**[www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1999/19993242.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1999/19993242.htm)**

## **The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)**

Employers must notify their enforcing authority (HSE or LA) of any accident at work to an employee resulting in death, major injury or incapacity from normal work for three or more days. This includes any act of non-consensual physical violence committed against a person at work.

[www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1995/Uksi\\_19953163\\_en\\_1.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1995/Uksi_19953163_en_1.htm)

## **Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996**

These regulations require employers to inform and consult employees on matters relating to their health and safety. Employee representatives may make representations to their employer on matters affecting the health and safety of those they represent.

[www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1996/Uksi\\_19961513\\_en\\_1.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1996/Uksi_19961513_en_1.htm)

## **Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Race Relations Act 1976**

Both these Acts deal in part with verbal abuse in specific contexts and are enforced by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) respectively. CRE and EOC only pursue cases of abuse between employees. CRE and EOC, along with the DRC will form the new Commission for Equalities and Human Rights (CEHR) which will come into being in October 2007.

[www.pfc.org.uk/node/297](http://www.pfc.org.uk/node/297) - Sex Discrimination Act

[www.cre.gov.uk/legal/rra.html](http://www.cre.gov.uk/legal/rra.html) - Race Relations Act

## **Employers' Common Law Duties**

An employers duties under common law and employment law can be summarised as a duty to take reasonable care to:

- lay down a safe system of work
- provide safe premises and/or place of work; and
- provide safe plant and equipment

This has been interpreted as including a duty to protect staff from violent attack from the public.

## **Public Order Act 1986 (PO Act)**

This Act is enforced by the police and covers threats and abuse as well as physical assault. There could be some interplay between the PO Act and the HSW Act where cases of violence occur. However police action under the PO Act will be directed against the perpetrator of the violence whereas the HSE's and Local Authorities' activities will be directed towards assessing whether the employer complied with their general duties under the HSW Act. The PO Act also only applies after an offence has been committed and cannot be used to require preventative measures beforehand.

## Regulations of Relevance to Hazardous Site Visits

### **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002**

Requires employers to assess the risks from hazardous substances and take appropriate precautions.

[www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2002/20022677.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2002/20022677.htm)

### **Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002**

Requires employers and the self employed to carry out a risk assessment or work activities involving dangerous substances.

[www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2002/20022776.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2002/20022776.htm)

### **Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994**

Covers safe systems of work on construction sites.

[www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1994/Uksi\\_19943140\\_en\\_1.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1994/Uksi_19943140_en_1.htm)

### **Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992**

Requires employers to provide appropriate protective clothing and equipment for their employees.

[www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1992/Uksi\\_19922966\\_en\\_1.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1992/Uksi_19922966_en_1.htm)

### **Noise at Work Regulations 1989**

Requires employers to take action to protect employees from hearing damage.

[www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1989/Uksi\\_19891790\\_en\\_1.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1989/Uksi_19891790_en_1.htm)

**YOU'RE LEAVING THE BUILDING  
TO GO TO A MEETING, SITE VISIT  
OR EXTERNAL EVENT. HAVE YOU....**

- 1. Carried out a risk assessment?**
- 2. Checked the details of the meeting/site visit/event?**
- 3. Got all the necessary equipment and checked it is working?**
- 4. Told someone where you are, when you'll be back and made arrangements for what to do if your plans change?**
- 5. Thought about how you will travel to/from the venue, including where to park?**
- 6. Read through RTPI GPN3 recently to familiarise yourself with up to date guidance?**

**REMEMBER YOUR SAFETY  
IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY  
LOOK AFTER YOURSELF**



The principles contained in this guidance note are relevant to chartered town planners working in all parts of the UK.

Planners in the Workplace is a broad initiative providing services designed to support planners in their roles and to help them develop as planners, as managers and as leaders in the workplace. For more information on this initiative, please email: [piwp@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:piwp@rtpi.org.uk)

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Comments on all RTPI Good Practice Notes can be sent to [practice@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:practice@rtpi.org.uk)

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