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Your guide to managing risks as a manufacturer

Brought to you by Sentinel Corporate Risk and Insurance Services Limited, together with Aviva, this risk management bulletin contains helpful advice for manufacturers – to help protect you and your business.

You'll find information on common risks to your business, including employee health issues, hot works and electrical faults. Plus, if you're keen for more tips and guidance on a particular topic, you'll find links in each section to further, more detailed information.

We'll help you see how prepared your business is for the types of challenges your industry produces, and what further steps are needed to guard against potential losses.



Change management

All businesses go through change. It's essential that businesses are sufficiently flexible to keep up with changes in customer requirements, equipment, best practice and other innovations.

However, a business is at its most vulnerable during periods of change, with the risk of accidents, incidents, fire and property damage increasing in the lag between implementing a great idea and revising the risk management systems that result from it.

Having a proactive change management system is essential to ensuring that all risks arising from a proposed change are considered before that change is introduced.

[Your guide to managing change](#)





Noise and vibration

Regular exposure to vibration can cause a variety of injuries to the hands and arms, including the potential for long-term and even permanent damage.

Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome comes from the use of hand-held power tools and causes painful and disabling disorders of the blood vessels, nerves and joints. Serious and disabling, nearly two million people are at risk from this preventable condition.

Meanwhile, some 17,000 people in the UK suffer deafness, ringing in the ears or other ear conditions caused by excessive noise at work.

Aviva's preferred supplier, [Bureau Veritas](#), can provide assistance with an assessment of your workplace noise and vibration exposure, helping you to pro-actively manage and control your environment and protect yourselves from prosecution.

[Health and Safety Executive guidance on noise at work](#)

[Health and Safety Executive guidance on vibration at work](#)

[How Bureau Veritas can help](#)



Permits to work

A permit to work system is an integral part of a safe system of work, not just permission to carry out a dangerous job. Issue of a permit only makes the job safer if those planning, supervising and carrying out the work understand the nature of the risks and the role of the permit.

The purpose of a permit is to ensure that control measures are considered before any work begins and are available throughout.

A permit to work system will be required where the risk assessment for the task identifies certain key activities that must be undertaken to ensure the whole job can be completed safely. Such activities include hot works, work in confined spaces or at heights, fumigation operations and more.

[Creating your permit to work systems](#)





Thermography

Electrical faults are the biggest cause of fires for manufacturers. Fixed wiring, portable appliances and machinery all need to be regularly inspected to avoid overheating or insulation failure which, if left unchecked, could cause a fire.

To help prevent such incidents, all Aviva property risk consultants carry thermal imaging cameras for property surveys.

We also work with a leading supplier to give you the opportunity to protect your business against electrical faults by offering preferential prices on thermographic cameras for Aviva customers.

[A guide to thermographic surveys](#)

Slips and trips

Slips and trips are the most common cause of injuries at work,* but they're often easily prevented.

It's important to do everything you can to reduce the risks to your employees and customers, and the best place to start is by understanding what the main causes are. For example:

- **uneven floor surfaces**
- **unsuitable floor coverings**
- **wet floors**
- **changes in floor levels**
- **trailing cables**
- **poor lighting**
- **poor housekeeping.**

Our guide below gives you more information about these issues and how to prevent them. Plus there's a checklist which can be tailored to your business to form the basis of your slips and trips risk assessment.

[How to prevent slips, trips and falls](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg225.pdf)

* <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg225.pdf>





Local exhaust ventilation

Under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations employers are required to undertake an assessment of the risk caused by exposure to hazardous substances and to put in place the necessary controls to prevent the risk of ill health.

Some examples of the types of contaminants commonly found in the workplace include:

- **welding fumes**
- **solvents**
- **isocyanates, epoxy and other resin vapours and mists**
- **diesel exhaust fumes**
- **silica dust**
- **wood and other dusts.**

Aviva's preferred supplier, [Bureau Veritas](#), can provide assistance with workplace assessment of local exhaust ventilation to safeguard the wellbeing of your employees and comply with COSHH legislation.

[HSE guide to local exhaust ventilation](#)

[How Bureau Veritas can help](#)



Hot works

Hot work operations present a particular concern because they are one of the few occasions on which a naked flame is intentionally introduced into the workplace.

Common hot work processes include:

- **soldering**
- **welding**
- **cutting**
- **brazing**
- **grinding and drilling (where combustible materials are present).**

Failure to manage hot work appropriately is an all too frequent cause of fire, giving rise to both significant property damage and the risk of fatal injuries.

In order to ensure that your business is adequately protected and that you do not put employees, contractors or visitors at risk, it is essential that you follow appropriate hot work procedures, such as those laid out below.

[Precautions for hot work operations](#)





Skin problems

Work-related skin problems are very common and can be caused or aggravated by contact with chemicals, but also through having wet hands for long periods. Dermatitis, urticaria and skin cancer are some conditions that could result.

Steps you and your employees should take include:

- **avoiding direct contact between unprotected hands and substances, products and wet work, wherever this is sensible and practical**
- **protecting skin where it's not possible to avoid contact, through the provision of suitable protective equipment, such as gloves and welfare facilities (washing, drying and skin care facilities)**
- **checking hands regularly for any signs of itchy, dry or red skin.**

The earlier that health issues are recognised and treated, the more likely it is that the sufferer will make a full recovery.

[Managing skin exposure risks at work](#)



Control of combustible waste

Every year there are significant numbers of fires in buildings or on sites, in which combustible waste materials are involved.

Most of these fires can be prevented by introducing robust controls and effective management standards regarding the storage and disposal of these materials.

The main hazards are:

- **malicious ignition by vandals or arsonists**
- **ignition by carelessly discarded smoking materials or by heat, sparks or fireworks**
- **spontaneous combustion of oil-contaminated waste and other, similar materials.**

The presence of combustible waste will also increase the likelihood of spread between buildings, vehicles and neighbouring premises. Ensuring there are adequate controls in place for combustible waste is essential in controlling fire risk and must be considered as part of your fire risk assessment.

[Control and management of combustible waste materials](#)





AOPDs

Light curtains and light beam safety devices, otherwise known as active opto-electronic devices (AOPD), are used to protect equipment where the restrictions of physical guarding are unsuitable for the task.

While they can be extremely effective and versatile, like all safety devices it is essential that they be correctly specified, installed, used, maintained, inspected and tested.

Aviva's preferred supplier, [Bureau Veritas](#), can provide assistance with a workplace assessment of any such safety devices you might have.

[Correct care of light curtains and light beam devices](#)

[Bureau Veritas mechanical and statutory inspection service](#)



Safe use of knives

Cuts are the second most common form of injury in industry. Those involving knives are usually to the non-knife hand and fingers but can lead to injuries on the upper arm and torso.

Knife injuries are most commonly a result of:

- **not holding the knife correctly**
- **not carrying the knife correctly**
- **using the wrong sort of knife**
- **using a knife for the wrong sort of job**
- **applying too much pressure to the knife.**

Use of a knife should be covered by a suitable risk assessment and those using the knives should have appropriate training. If employees are regularly using knives at work you should consider providing them with a suitable close-fitting anti-cut (Kevlar type) glove.

[How to reduce hand knife injuries](#)



A large industrial welding robot arm is shown in the process of welding a metal plate. The robot is equipped with multiple torches, each emitting a bright orange and yellow flame. Sparks are flying from the points of contact between the torches and the metal. The robot is connected to a complex network of blue and orange hoses and cables. The background is a dark industrial setting.

Equipment isolation

With the increasing use of robots and other highly automated equipment, there is a risk that, particularly during cleaning and maintenance operations, the equipment may be accidentally restarted, creating a risk of injury to the operators or others in the vicinity.

It is essential to ensure that dangerous equipment is properly shut off and not able to be restarted until all necessary safety controls are back in operation.

Failures during the isolation and reinstatement of process plant are one of the main causes of incidents and major accidents. High standards of isolation and rigorous management control are required for plant isolation and reinstatement, particularly in major hazard industries.

[The safe isolation of plant and equipment](#)



Business continuity

All companies need to ensure that they have suitable contingency plans in place, but this can be particularly true for manufacturers where business-as-usual is likely to be dependent on custom-built plant and premises.

If a manufacturer loses supply of a raw material, can't get parts for a piece of equipment that is central to the business, or has a major fire, not only will they suffer an interruption to production, but they may also lose customers to competitors.

Recovering from an interruption event can take years and rests entirely on the business being prepared in three core areas:

- **insuring their property for the correct sums**
- **a sufficient business interruption indemnity period and sum insured**
- **a robust business continuity plan that guides the organisation through the process of disaster response.**

The steps of business continuity planning





To find out more, please give us a call on 01772 789455
or reply at enquiries@sentinelrisk.co.uk

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