



GMB

LONDON
REGION

HEALTH AND SAFETY NEWSLETTER FOR FOOD FACTORY WORKERS



Your Rights on Health and Safety at work:

Do you know your employer has a legal duty to safeguard your health, safety and welfare whilst you are at work?

Employers who fail to meet their duty to protect health and safety can be prosecuted and fined. They also face compensation claims from GMB members who have been injured by their employers' negligence. GMB believes that avoiding accidents, injury and ill health is more important.

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UNIONLINE

YOUR TRADE UNION LAW FIRM
0300 333 0303
www.unionline.co.uk



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MANUAL HANDLING

Manual handling injuries account for 1-in-3 of all injury reports to HSE in the food and drink industries. The majority of these injuries are caused when lifting or lowering loads, although the carrying and pushing/pulling of loads are also significant injury contributors.

Around a half of manual handling injuries are back injuries, primarily affecting the lower back. Other common injuries are to the shoulders, frequently when lifting heavy or awkward objects above head height onto shelving or pallets.

Few of these are major accidents but they often have long term cumulative effects causing early retirement and major back problems later in life.

Mechanical lifting aids should be used where possible, and where this is not reasonably practicable, a risk assessment must be carried out if handling is likely to cause injury, and steps taken to prevent injury. This should include training staff in correct handling techniques. Heavy plant should not be handled during maintenance.

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

You could be exposed to a number of potentially hazardous substances including chemicals, gases, detergents, and dust. Some workers will be suffering non-allergic disease such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) but a large number of cases will be work-related asthma. Exposure to flour dust is the second largest cause of occupational asthma.

Work in confined spaces should be minimised, and in any case should only be carried out where safe systems of work are in place. An assessment of the risks to health as a result of exposure to any hazardous substance should be carried out for all substances brought in to the workplace, or arising from the work, and the risks prevented, by substitution with a less hazardous substance where possible. If risks cannot be controlled otherwise for example, through the use of engineering controls such as increased ventilation, then personal protective equipment (PPE) should be used as a last resort.

MACHINERY HAZARDS

Noise-induced hearing loss results from noisy machinery, including compressors, boilers and steam plant. In addition accidents occur where limbs are trapped in conveyors, and labelling, palletising, bottling machinery can also result in injuries.

Noise should always be controlled at source, by using silencers on compressed air exhausts or quiet nozzles, for example, rather than issuing workers with ear defenders. Personal hearing protection should always be a last resort.

Machines should be regularly maintained and there should be a positive purchasing policy to ensure that the noise levels of new L machinery is acceptable before it is brought into the workplace.

Guarding should be checked, particularly at conveyors, bottling, canning, labelling and palletising machinery. There should be safe systems of work in place for clearing blockages, and maintenance operations, as well as routine maintenance and staff trained in these procedures, particularly with regard to the isolation of power.

TRANSPORT

Injuries occur as a result of falls from unsafe working platforms on fork lift trucks, collisions with vehicles, particularly when vehicles are reversing, and falls from lorries with top access. Loads can also fall from vehicles, causing injury.

Particular attention should be paid to the separation of pedestrians and vehicles and ensuring that reversing operations are minimised and safe procedures and aids are used where reversing has to be carried out. In addition, lorries should be modified to avoid the need for top access, or the access made safe. Lift truck drivers should be trained and their competence regularly assessed.

SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

Slips result mainly from wet surfaces. In addition workers can fall from vehicles, stairs, ladders and work platforms. Falls into vessels containing hot liquids are also a hazard.

Spills and leaks should be prevented, and where they do occur, there should be measures in place to ensure that they are contained and do not contaminate walkways and adjacent areas. Systems should be in place to ensure that spills are cleared up and floors dried immediately where possible. In addition, the slip resistance of new floors and those which are being re-laid and footwear should be considered.



THE LAW

Employers must:

- try to eliminate manual handling operations as a first option. If they cannot be avoided then a risk assessment should be carried out and suitable measures taken to prevent the risk of injury. These include the provision & information, instruction and training (Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992);
- assess all significant risks to health and safety in the workplace and put measures into place to prevent or control those risks (Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999);
- assess the risks to health and safety from exposure to hazardous substances and prevent or control exposure, with personal protective equipment being used only as a last resort (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002);
- take measures to prevent or control the risk & hearing damage where noise levels are such that there is a risk of hearing loss. This should be by means other than the provision of personal ear protection (Noise at Work Regulations 1989);
- ensure that work equipment is properly maintained and guarded and there are safe systems of work set up for maintenance (Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1992); and
- provide, free of charge, any protective equipment necessary to do the job safely (Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992).

KEY ACTION POINTS

GMB Safety Representatives should ensure that:

- manual handling is avoided where possible through the provision of lifting equipment or redesign of the workplace. If it has to be carried out, staff should be properly trained;
- traffic routes and vehicles are designed to minimise accidents;
- there are systems to ensure that spills and leaks are minimised, and cleared up promptly if they do occur

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED WITH GMB?

JOIN GMB AND BECOME A MEMBER

The more members there are, the more say you have as a worker.

You can join online at www.gmb.org.uk/join or contact our Chelmsford Office on 01245 345165.

DO YOU WANT TO BE A GMB REPRESENTATIVE IN YOUR WORKPLACE?

Ideally every workplace should have a trained GMB rep. If you don't have a rep in your workplace and you would like to find out information about paid time off for training to become a rep, please contact Michael Ainsley at michael.ainsley@gmb.org.uk

JOIN ONLINE
www.gmb.org.uk/join



DIGNITY AND RESPECT AT WORK

You have a right to be treated the same as everyone else in your workplace. But if you are not treated the same what can you do about it? GMB Workplace Organisers are trained to negotiate equal treatment at work and to organise their workplace so that collective action can keep GMB members safe from unequal treatment. Employers have a duty of care to you so if you think you are being unfairly treated, constantly picked on, humiliated, physically or verbally abused, regularly threatened with dismissal or unfairly passed over for promotion then GMB members can be supported with their complaint. You cannot be discriminated against because of Gender, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Pregnancy, Race, Ethnic Background, Nationality, Age or Religion. If you are bullied and harassed in your place of work, do not suffer in silence. Report it to your management team and your GMB representative who are there to help you.

If you are a GMB member and have suffered unequal treatment within your workplace or have had an injury at Work and believe it was not your fault please call our GMB Unionline solicitors for advice and guidance on: 0300 333 0303

DO NOT BE AFRAID TO SPEAK OUT WHEN IT COMES TO HEALTH AND SAFETY IN YOUR PLACE OF WORK

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GMB—EXPERTS IN THE WORLD OF WORK

It can be as simple as a new manager, or a new way of working that causes you a problem at work. Guard against that day by joining GMB now. GMB membership covers you wherever you work. Only GMB members get GMB help. **IF YOU WORK YOU NEED GMB@WORK**

Join now at www.gmb.org.uk/join or fill in the form below

then simply write FREEPOST GMB LONDON REGION on an envelope and post it to us—you don't need a stamp or any other address details. If you have any questions contact GMB London: email london.membership@gmb.org.uk or visit our website www.gmblondon.org.uk

FOR GMB USE ONLY	Section <input type="text"/>	Branch number <input type="text"/>	Membership number <input type="text"/>	Date of joining <input type="text"/>
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GMB membership application form PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

1 TELL US ABOUT YOU

Surname <input type="text"/>	First name <input type="text"/>	Title Mrs/Miss/Ms/Mr <input type="text"/>	Date of birth <input type="text"/>
Home address <input type="text"/>	Home phone number <input type="text"/>	Mobile number <input type="text"/>	Email <input type="text"/>
We ask for your ethnic origins as part of our equal opportunities policy of improving services to all members Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/> / Black African <input type="checkbox"/> / Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> / Black British <input type="checkbox"/> / Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> / Indian <input type="checkbox"/> / Irish <input type="checkbox"/> / Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> / White <input type="checkbox"/> / Other: <input type="text"/>			Tick here if you do not wish to contribute to the GMB collective affiliation to the Labour Party <input type="checkbox"/>
National Insurance number <input type="text"/>	I agree to abide by GMB rules Signed <input type="text"/>	Date <input type="text"/>	

2 TELL US ABOUT YOUR JOB

Employer <input type="text"/>	Your job <input type="text"/>
Address where you work <input type="text"/>	How many hours a week do you work? <input type="text"/> Pay number <input type="text"/>
I authorise my employer to pass my bank details on to GMB to activate my union membership – Signed <input type="text"/>	I give my employer permission to notify GMB of any future change of address <input type="text"/>
	Pay date <input type="text"/>

CHOOSE EITHER 3 AUTHORISATION OF DEDUCTION OF YOUR UNION CONTRIBUTIONS FROM YOUR PAY

Section 68, Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidated) Act 1992 as amended

I authorise my employer to deduct from my pay each week/month the sum of

£ or other amounts as may be fixed by GMB from time to time.

- Please start the deductions immediately and pay the amounts to GMB. Cash
- I note that this agreement may be cancelled by one month's notice in writing.
- I give permission to my employer to notify GMB of any future change of address.

Signed Date

OR 4 INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY TO PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT



Please fill in the form below and send to: GMB, John Cope House, 152 Brent St, Hendon, London NW4 2DP

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society branch

To the Manager of <input type="text"/>	Bank/Building Society <input type="text"/>
Address <input type="text"/>	
	Postcode <input type="text"/>

Name(s) of account holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Bank/Building Society Sort Code

Banks or Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account

Service User Number

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society: Please pay GMB Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with GMB and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s) Date

For GMB official use only. This is not part of the instruction to your Bank/Building Society. If your A/C number is not available fill in your address below.

Reference number (GMB use only)