



# The difference between life and death

According to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), about 60% of fatal injuries to workers occur in construction, transport and storage, agriculture, forestry and fishing. RoSPA claim that 70% of workplace accidents could be prevented if employers put proper safety control measures in place, writes Clive James, Training Manager at St John Ambulance

**A** workplace equipped to deal with accidents and illnesses at work is of paramount importance and the benefits are considerable. First aid saves lives, and using simple techniques and protocols could be the difference between life and death.

By law, all workplaces must comply with current Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 which requires workplaces to have adequate and appropriate

equipment, facilities and staff to enable first aid to be given at work. All workplaces need to abide by these regulations and, additionally, construction companies should check the rules of any regulating bodies or affiliations related to their industry.

On top of this, fire regulations require employers to carry out a fire safety risk assessment and put into operation appropriate measures to prevent fires and provide enough competent people to evacuate the building in the event of an emergency.

## “BY LAW, ALL WORKPLACES MUST COMPLY WITH CURRENT HEALTH AND SAFETY (FIRST AID) REGULATIONS 1981”

Depending on the size of the workplace and the number of people working there, members of staff trained as fire marshals need to be present in the building at all times. The larger the workplace the higher the number of fire marshals required. The same applies to trained first aiders. A risk assessment will determine how many first aiders are required.

The Health and Safety Executive provides further guidelines on risk assessment, but points to consider include the risks posed from working with hazardous substances, dangerous tools or dangerous machinery.

You should also check what your record of accidents and ill health are and think about the type of accidents and where they happened. It's also important to consider shift work, sites with several separate buildings, or whether the site is far from emergency medical services as well as public access, as there may need to be more staff trained in first aid.

First aid is easy to learn but could be the difference between life and death. Courses such as the St John Ambulance four-day First Aid at Work (HSE approved) course cover the practical skills needed by a first aider in the modern workplace.

This gives staff the confidence and knowledge to deal with first aid emergencies including resuscitation, sudden illnesses, injuries and training in using a first aid kit and reporting systems.

First aiders can also be trained to use Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), which can be used to shock



the heart in the event of a cardiac arrest.

There is also a Risk Assessment course offered, which is designed to give staff the skills to assess risks within their workplace and in addition, following successful completion of a work based assessment, staff will gain a

British Safety Council Level 2 certificate in risk assessment.

A Moving and Handling Principles course covers the basics of manual handling in the workplace, including risk assessment, legislation and base positions.

For information about St John Ambulance and its range

**“FIRST AIDERS CAN ALSO BE TRAINED TO USE AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS”**

of first aid courses for the workplace, visit [www.sja.org.uk](http://www.sja.org.uk) or call 08700 10 49 50.

More details on the Health and Safety Executive's guidelines can be found on its website: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

## A STEP in the right direction

A free online tool to help building control officers, designers, architects and local authority planners take steps to reduce slip and trip accidents has been launched by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The slips and trips e-learning package, known as STEP, contains information pitched at three different levels: introductory, intermediate and advanced. Building control officers should find the advanced level especially useful, particularly the sections on flooring and design.

Nearly 11,000 workers suffered serious injury as a result of a slip or trip last year. Many of these accidents occur on floors that have been poorly specified at the design stage, especially in areas in buildings that are likely to be wet or otherwise contaminated, such as kitchens and entrances.

STEP provides slips and trips guidance through interactive learning. It's an effective way of learning about slips and trip accidents, how they are caused, why preventing them is

important and how to tackle them. The package includes quizzes, videos, animations, case studies and interactive sequences to enhance the learning experience.

It includes a general course suitable for different industries and four other courses specifically designed for food manufacturing, hospitality and catering, education and the health services. Anyone can use STEP – workers, supervisors, managers, safety representatives, small businesses, health and safety professionals, health and safety trainers as well as architects, designers, building control officers, planners and so on. The key is selecting which level is most appropriate for you:

Introductory (up to 20 minutes to complete) – a short, snappy course which provides key information in an easy to understand, interactive format.

Intermediate (1 hour) – contains several short lessons on key topics including footwear, flooring and assessing slip and trip risk. This level does not have to be completed in one



*The STEP tool is part of HSE's Shattered Lives campaign*

session; you can dip in and out. It includes cascade materials suitable for group training sessions.

Advanced – includes detailed lessons, several of a technical nature e.g. classification of flooring, test methods. If fully completed will provide in depth knowledge. Alternatively you can dip in and out to learn about specific topics.

You can use STEP free of charge on the slips and trips pages on HSE's website, or buy it on DVD from HSE Books for £5.00 plus VAT. The tool is part of HSE's Shattered Lives campaign which aims to reduce numbers of slips, trips and falls in the workplace. Find out more at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)