

Safety in the Workplace

Caredemy

Online Training Academy



Course Name:

Safety in the Workplace

Course Description:

This course will give an overview of the responsibilities employers and employees have to ensure facilities are safe for patients, visitors, and staff members. Falls will also be discussed.

Course Learning Objectives:

At the end of this course, the learner will be able to:

- Understand staff and organizational compliance with relevant national and local guidelines and regulations
- Describe how to minimize workplace risks
- Describe ways to reduce accidents, incidents, and negligence
- Understand how to ensure the safety of patients, visitors, and staff members

Course Requirements:

Participants must complete all learning modules and pass the multiple-choice course assessment.



Introduction

Health and safety in the workplace are about ensuring we all behave in a manner that avoids accidents and maintains the wellbeing of the people there. Accidents can have serious consequences on your health, family, finances, and social life. Health and safety means:

- Following correct procedures and guidelines
- Adopting correct attitudes
- Making good choices
- Being aware of risks
- Learning from mistakes

Human, Economic, and Legal Costs

When accidents happen, we measure the human, economic, and legal costs of the accident.

- Human: Pain, Injury, Quality of Life
- Economic: Loss of earnings, loss of a family member's earnings, legal fees, sick pay for employers, replacing staff for an organization, and legal fees and compensation for an organization
- Legal: High legal costs for yourself and the organization, imprisonment

Employer Obligations

Employers are responsible for those who work or visit the organization. Buildings, safety mechanisms such as smoke detectors or alarms, staff training, and policies and procedures that outline safe practices are all important.

Managers Responsibilities:

- Assessment and recording of health and safety risks
- Implement health and safety measures
- Train staff on health and safety policies
- Provide adequate facilities (first-aid, ventilation, temperature, lighting, sanitation, etc.)
- Ensure equipment maintenance and safety
- Take precautions against dangers (fire, electricity, noise, chemicals)
- Avoid hazardous moving and handling operations
- Provide protective clothing and equipment
- Report injuries, diseases, and dangerous incidents



Employee Obligations

Employees must:

- Correctly use personal protective equipment and equipment in accordance with training and procedures
- Take reasonable care of own health and safety
- Co-operate with employer on health and safety policies and procedures
- Do not interfere or misuse anything provided for health or safety

Open and Fair Culture

Organizations and staff develop a culture of health and safety to make workplaces as safe as possible. Becoming aware of how accidents can be prevented, how they are caused, and what we can learn from mistakes made is important.

People are often afraid of admitting when they have made a mistake. We should encourage each other instead to take responsibility for reporting or admitting unsafe practices by reinforcing an open and fair workplace culture. When people are treated fairly by managers and colleagues, they feel they can be more open about mistakes that are made. Reporting mistakes allows everyone to learn and begin to assess any risks so safeguards can be put into place.

Five Key Terms About Risk

1. Risk: Likelihood and extent of possible harm to yourself or others
2. Hazard: The risky act itself
3. Harm: The physical injury to yourself, others, or equipment resulting from an accident
4. Likelihood: How probable it is that a hazard will cause harm
5. Consequence: The seriousness of the outcome or harm caused by an accident

Five Steps of a Risk Assessment

Assessing risk is vital for making our workplaces safer.

1. Look for Hazards: Review work environment and begin identifying any obvious hazards
2. Decide Who Might Be Harmed: Take into account those who could be affected by potential hazards



3. Evaluate the Risks: Decide whether the risk of harm to those is high, medium, or low. Control or reduce risks whenever possible.
4. Record Your Findings: Record assessed risks and have a system to ensure records are updated
5. Review Assessment: Review risk assessments regularly and add to the assessment when completing the review

Look for Hazards

All workplaces have hazards. Look for:

- Overworked staff: those who work long hours and do not take enough breaks are at risk for stress-related illness
- Physical risk: Be aware of physical risks, such as a pile of boxes or an unsteady shelf
- Ergonomics: Be mindful of employee ergonomics, such as poor desk posture due to inadequate seating and desks.
- Environmental: Look for areas that could cause injury, such as spills or areas where it is easier to slip, trip, or fall due to slick or uneven surfaces.
- Chemical Hazards: Identify chemicals that are hazardous to health

Decide Who Might Be Harmed

Those who could be harmed might include:

- Clinical and non-clinical staff
- Clerical and support staff
- Patients and service users
- Visitors
- Yourself

You should also take needs into account, such as:

- Younger and older people
- Pregnant people
- Those with disabilities
- Those experiencing occupational stress
- Lone workers
- Those with unergonomic workstations

What We Do About Risks

Every part of our life has some aspect of risk. How we view these risks and the choices that we make affect our lives and the lives of others. We must decide



whether to reduce or avoid risks. When we cannot completely avoid risk, we should look for ways to minimize the potential for harm.

Health and social care workers have a duty of care towards service users, patients, colleagues, and the public. We must take individual responsibility to assess and minimize everyday risks to make it safer for everyone. Organizations have policies and procedures about risk management that may be accessible through manuals or online intranet or internet sites.

Everyday Risks

Risk assessment principles are applied to different areas of work and activities. These 10 are most likely to cause harm in the health and social care setting:

1. Hazardous Substances
2. Manual Handling
3. Stress
4. Bullying
5. Violence
6. Infection Control
7. Sharps
8. Ergonomics
9. Working Alone
10. Display Screen Equipment

Accident Prevention

Knowing what or when to report is not always obvious. Small mistakes or oversights could lead to serious injuries. Reporting those mistakes or oversights means a problem can be properly managed. Reporting incidents is not about blaming others, it is about raising awareness for unsafe practices or hazards that could lead to an injury.

What is an Incident?

Incidents include:

- No harm: a system or procedure failed but no harm occurred
- Near miss: there was potential for something to occur, but it did not on this occasion
- Damage to equipment: an occurrence when equipment is damaged due to misuse, being dropped, falling, or other causes
- Injury to people: an occurrence resulting in physical or emotional injury



How Do We Report Incidents?

Each organization will have its own reporting system and procedures for staff to follow. You should:

- Visit your local policies and procedures section
- Speak to your supervisor
- Warn others who may be affected
- Make the area safe (if it has just taken place)
- Fill out an incident/accident reporting form

You must report all incidents as it is everyone's responsibility. After you complete a report, the form is collated and analyzed by a central quality, risk or management team who decides if any actions should be taken or if an investigation should occur. Reports can also be used to identify trends.

Whistleblowing

Because we do not live in a perfect world, it is sometimes necessary to report people who are putting others at risk of harm. Organizations have whistleblowing policies that ensure the 'whistleblower' is protected from retaliation, which may include offering complete anonymity.

Caring for Your Health

It is important to take care of your own health to protect the health of those around you, including patients. This includes making sure you are up to date on your immunizations. If you are feeling unwell, infections that you carry can have serious consequences for vulnerable patients. This includes having a cough or cold, the flu, diarrhea and vomiting. Chicken pox, shingles, and cold sores (herpes simplex) can also be harmful to vulnerable patients.

Bloodborne Viruses

Some of the activities you perform at work will carry the risk of exposure to bloodborne viruses such as Hepatitis B or the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Exposure can be from:

- Being cut, pricked, or scratched by something sharp
- A splash of blood to the face
- Blood coming into contact with a wound on your skin
- Being bitten

You can reduce your risk by:



- Wearing personal protective equipment
- Keeping cuts and scratches covered with a waterproof bandage
- Getting vaccinated against Hepatitis B
- Disposing of sharps and used personal protective equipment properly

Prevent the Spread

You are likely fit to work if you have:

- Sneezing or runny nose (common cold or hay fever)
- A small cut on your hand that can be covered with a waterproof bandage

You can prevent the spread of the common cold by:

- Washing your hands frequently
- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you sneeze or cough
- Avoiding contact with vulnerable patients or the immunocompromised

You should stay home if:

- You have a sudden high temperature
- You have diarrhea or vomiting

Guidelines for Personal Safety

The following are guidelines that can help protect your own health and safety while working as a caregiver:

1. **Protect Your Face and Hands:** Prioritize hand hygiene and consider wearing gloves when necessary.
2. **Guard Your Lungs:** If the client has a contagious infection, utilize a face mask or respirator.
3. **Prevent Falls:** Opt for non-slip footwear or clogs to reduce the risk of slipping.
4. **Avoid Back Injuries:** Employ safe lifting techniques to prevent strain.
5. **Report Sexual Harassment:** Promptly report any instances of sexual harassment from clients, co-workers, or managers.
6. **Handle Emotional Abuse:** Seek assistance if a senior displays aggressive behavior, especially those with Alzheimer's disease or similar conditions.
7. **Beware of Chemical Hazards:** Familiarize yourself with the ingredients in cleaning products, detergents, and medications to handle them safely.
8. **Exercise Caution with Oxygen:** Follow precautions outlined in the care plan when seniors use oxygen tanks, and never smoke near them.



9. Exercise Caution in the Kitchen: Be extra cautious when cooking in a senior's kitchen, utilizing timers and knowing the location of fire extinguishers.
10. Be Mindful of Community Safety: Stay vigilant about safety precautions in the senior's neighborhood, especially during nighttime visits.
11. Ensure Pet Safety: Understand the unique needs of any pets in the home and address any concerns with your Care Manager.
12. Handle Fire Emergencies: Adhere to emergency procedures outlined in the care plan and call 911 for medical emergencies, fires, or severe weather threats.
13. Seek Guidance: Reach out to your office if you have questions or uncertainties about handling emergency situations.
14. Maintain Medical Equipment: Clean and maintain reusable medical equipment as per manufacturer's instructions to prevent transmission of infectious agents.

Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls

Slips, trips, and falls rank as the third leading cause of accidental death, behind poisoning and motor vehicle accidents. Protect yourself and your future well-being by avoiding falls while on the job. Common injury sites in the workplace include:

- Knee
- Ankle
- Foot
- Back
- Shoulder
- Hip
- Head

Understanding the Causes of Workplace Injuries

Slip: Loss of balance due to insufficient friction or traction between feet or footwear and walking surface.

Trip: Lower leg collides with an object, causing the upper body to continue moving and resulting in loss of balance.

Fall: Occurs when off-center of balance.



Types of Falls

There are two types of falls:

1. Falling on the same level or against objects (e.g., a stack of books)
2. Falling to a lower level (e.g., from one step to the one below)

If you do fall, you can help prevent a more serious injury by attempting proper falling technique:

- Protect your head by pivoting to your side and tucking it in.
- Avoid falling flat on your back or stomach, which can lead to serious injuries.
- Bend your elbows and knees to absorb the impact on fleshy parts of your body.
- Aim for soft tissue areas like the side of your thigh, buttocks, and shoulder.
- Roll with the fall instead of fighting it.

Incorporate a regular exercise routine into your life, focusing on activities you enjoy and can do at least three times per week. Keeping physically fit as a caregiver is crucial for your overall well-being and can help prevent workplace injuries.

Violence in the Workplace

As a caregiver, you may be entering client homes. You should be able to recognize and report any instances of verbal abuse or threats encountered in the workplace.

- Know Your Rights: Understand your right to a safe workplace and access to information about potential security hazards.
- Take Action: Quickly and calmly end any threatening interactions, seek assistance, and file an incident report when necessary.

Stay Alert for Warning Signs

Violent outbursts often have telltale signs beforehand. Recognize these cues as potential indicators of aggression:

Verbal Cues:

- Raised voice or yelling
- Swearing
- Threatening language



Non-verbal Cues:

- Neglected appearance (disheveled clothing, poor hygiene)
- Arms crossed tightly
- Clenched fists
- Aggressive posture

Behavioral Cues:

- Heavy breathing
- Pacing or restlessness
- Throwing objects

Other Cues:

- Sudden behavioral changes
- Signs of intoxication or substance abuse

The more cues displayed, the higher the risk of violence.

Be aware of your body's reactions. Your body often gives warning signals in response to potential danger. Pay attention to your instincts and bodily sensations. Your intuition is a powerful tool—trust it. Your personal safety and the safety of others is important. Always tell your manager if you feel unsafe.

Responding to Threatening Situations

Always be alert to the signs a situation is becoming unsafe. Always be aware of other people in the room, objects such as chairs, tables, or items on a table, and the space around you like exits or openings, and if you are blocking the person in a way that makes them feel trapped. You can try to maintain your behavior in a manner that may help diffuse anger by:

1. Acting with a calm and caring attitude. Appear calm and self-assured even if you don't feel it
2. Not matching threats or giving orders
3. Use a low, dull tone of voice and don't get defensive, even if insults are directed at you
4. Maintain limited eye contact and be at the same eye level
5. Encourage the client to be seated, but if he/she stands, stand up also
6. Maintaining neutral facial expressions with your hands in front of your body in an open and relaxed position. Avoid shrugging your shoulders.



7. Refrain from pointing fingers, excessive gesturing, pacing, weight shifting, or fidgeting.
8. Attempt to maintain a distance of 12 feet or more

De-Escalation Techniques

There are techniques you can use to help de-escalate a situation before it becomes unsafe:

1. Listen: Acknowledge feelings
2. Show Empathy: Express understanding, even if you do not agree with the person
3. Clarify: Clarifying, paraphrasing, and asking open-ended questions can help the person feel you have understood their frustrations completely
4. Ask: Ask to take notes, ask for their ideas or solutions, and help them talk out feelings of anger rather than act on them
5. Create hope: Include the person in future plans

If the de-escalation does not work, you should stop and call for help.

