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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this workbook is to help you, as a Charity Shop Manager, to understand your role in preventing work-related harm to all who work in, or visit, your shop.

This has been produced as part of a collaborative project jointly led by Oxfam and the Association of Charity Shops and partly funded by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.

The idea for the workbook derives from PDSA's *Retail Health and Safety Workbook* and from Oxfam's *H&S Learning Pack for Shops*. Thanks are due to both charities for sharing their materials.

How to use this workbook

This is a self-learning workbook and may take about 4 hours to work through from beginning to end. Alternatively you may wish to complete it section by section. It contains 4 types of exercises to help you learn, based on the circumstances in your own shop and your charity's policies and procedures.



Exercises marked with this sign involve finding out and recording the situation in your own shop.



At certain points you will be encouraged to seek further information from documents provided by your own charity.



At the end of most sections you will find a few simple questions, which will help you to assess how much you have learnt in those sections.



You will also find space to write down ideas for action or points that you want to talk over with your Manager.

It may be advisable to book a time with your Manager to talk through what you have learnt from this workbook.

MANAGING HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and Safety (H&S)

Health and Safety is not merely the absence of accidents, injury or illness.

It is an environment created by effective management identifying causes of harm and involving all persons at work in taking positive action to prevent people being harmed.

Health and Safety in an organisation or at a workplace needs to be **managed**.
Managing Health and Safety means:

- identifying and removing Hazards
- controlling any remaining Risks
- encouraging staff to work safely

A Hazard is something with the potential to cause harm.
A Risk is a combination of the severity of harm with the likelihood of it happening.

Causes of Accidents

Accidents rarely result from a single cause. Consider the case of a 70-year-old volunteer who falls over a sack in the sorting room and breaks her hip. The **immediate causes** of this accident are usually unsafe acts or conditions and are relatively easy to identify. Was there an excessive number of sacks in the backroom that day, blocking the walkway? Did the van driver who delivered the sacks not put them into the loading pen?

Closer examination might reveal more **basic causes**. The van driver may never have been told not to leave sacks in the walkways. The design of the backroom may be such that volunteers always have to reach across sacks to do their work.

Even further scrutiny might reveal an underlying **lack of management control** in the shop. Basic housekeeping standards, such as keeping walkways clear, may never have been set for the Shop Manager to maintain. Risks may never have been assessed in the backroom or for the most vulnerable workers.

Accidents can often be prevented by good management.

Safe Systems of Work

Good management means providing a safe system of work. This means ensuring that tasks are carried out in the safest way possible under the circumstances. Four things need to be considered:

PEOPLE Are they capable of doing the job? Have they received adequate training? Are they motivated to work in a safe way? Do they receive the correct level of supervision?

EQUIPMENT Is it suitable for its intended use? Is it adequately maintained? Are safety instructions being followed? Have users been trained in how to operate it safely?

MATERIALS What risks are attached to any materials used at work? Are there appropriate means of waste disposal?

ENVIRONMENT Are temperature, lighting and ventilation adequate? Are chemical hazards controlled? Are kitchen, WC and rest areas adequate? Are entrances and exits safe?



Consider each of these tasks that are done in your shop. Write down the training or instruction that has been given to those who do this work to help them do it safely, and when it was provided.

TASKS	TRAINING/INSTRUCTION	DATE
Receiving and storing unsorted stock		
Sorting and pricing		
Ironing and steaming		
Carrying stock to/from the sales area		
Storing and disposing of unsaleable stock		



Write down all the equipment used in your shop and the measures that are taken to ensure it is safe. (Equipment means any tool or mechanical aid including electrical appliances.) Insert X if you feel more could be done to ensure the safety of a particular item.

EQUIPMENT	SAFETY MEASURES	X

? What do you know about Managing Health and Safety?

Complete this statement.

Health and Safety is not merely the absence of accidents, injury or illness. It is an environment created by
 identifying
 and involving
 in
 to

Define these terms:

Hazards are

.....

Risks are

.....

The 4 factors to consider when providing a **Safe System of Work** are:

P..... **E**..... **M**..... and **E**.....

Which shop is the safest? **A?** **B?** or **C?**

The Manager of **Shop A** feels her shop is safe because there has never been a major accident since it opened 5 years ago.

The Manager of **Shop B** feels her shop is safe as she is a trained first aider and regularly checks that the First Aid box is fully stocked. She knows how to operate the fire extinguishers and has told her team what procedures to follow if a fire breaks out.

The Manager of **Shop C** feels her shop is safe because she has carried out an assessment of all the potential risks in the shop. She has taken the action that she and her own manager have agreed are reasonable measures to control these risks and she checks regularly to see that these measures continue to be effective.

Which type is your shop? **A / B / C**



If you do not think your shop is like **Shop C**, then list the possible reasons below and discuss them with your Manager.

HEALTH & SAFETY LAW

In the UK there are 2 types of Law.

Common (or Civil) Law derives from precedents set by decisions in court cases. **Statute (or Criminal) Law** stems from Acts of Parliament and Regulations.

Breaches of Common Law may lead to a claim for **compensation or damages** from one person to another, or to an organisation. Breaches of Statute Law may lead to **prosecution**, resulting in fines or imprisonment.

Duty of Care

Under Common Law all individuals or organisations have a **Duty of Care** towards others to ensure that "no reasonably foreseeable loss" is caused by acts or omissions of that individual.

Employers have a duty to take "reasonable care" to protect employees. In particular they have to provide:

- a safe place of work, including a safe means of getting in and out
- safe systems of work
- safe plant and equipment
- safe and competent employees

Under Common Law, employers are responsible for the actions of any employee while in the course of their work. So if any employee causes injury to another person, by neglect or through lack of competence, the employer may be liable for the injury. This is called **Vicarious Liability**.

Status of Volunteers

Although under Employment Law volunteers have a different legal status from employees, **under H&S Law volunteers are considered to be employees**. They have the same rights to protection and training, etc. as paid staff.

In this book whenever the terms "employee" or "staff" are used, they always refer to volunteers as well as paid personnel.

Statute Law

There are several pieces of H&S legislation setting out the duties of employers. The 2 most important ones are:

- **The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**, which establishes the legal framework for the protection of all employees at work (excluding domestic servants)
- **The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**, which require employers to manage H&S in a structured way, following certain principles and procedures

Other Regulations relate to specific subjects such as:

- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations
- The Manual Handling Operations Regulations
- The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations
- The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations

The Health and Safety at Work Act

This sets out employers' duties not only to employees, but also to **others who may be affected by their work activities.**



Write down all the categories of people who may be affected by work activities at your shop. Remember to include any self-employed people who may be affected. (And remember that your work activities may affect people outside your shop, not only those who enter the premises.)

The 1974 Act also sets out the duties of **people who are in control of premises**. They must ensure there are no risks to health or safety from the premises, plant and substances. Most charities expect the Shop Manager to be the person responsible for H&S at a shop.



What specific H&S responsibilities does your charity require of you as the Shop Manager? These may be in a Shop, or H&S, Manual. They may be summarised in a statement of Shop Manager H&S Responsibilities.

Finally, the 1974 Act sets out employees' duties with respect to H&S.

Employees are required to:

- **take reasonable care** for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do or do not do
- **co-operate with their employer** on health and safety
- **correctly use work items** provided, including personal protective equipment, in accordance with instructions or training
- **not interfere with or misuse** anything provided for their health, safety or welfare



Are all your staff aware of their H&S duties?

Yes / No / Not sure



Make a note of any further action you feel may be needed, or queries you want to raise with your Manager regarding your own responsibilities and your staff responsibilities for H&S.

Enforcement

Local authorities are responsible for enforcing H&S Law with regard to shops and related activities. The **Environmental Health Officer (EHO)** is the person who would do this.

The EHO has wide-ranging powers including the right to:

- **gain access** to a workplace at any time without a warrant
- **issue an Improvement Notice**, specifying a period of time by which a problem must be rectified
- **issue a Prohibition Notice**, prohibiting any work he considers to be contravening regulations from taking place until steps have been taken to remedy the situation
- **prosecute** employers (or managers) for failure to comply with an improvement or prohibition notice and for breaches of H&S legislation

EHOs will comment and advise on matters relating to fire safety although the **Local Fire Service** is the authority responsible for enforcing Fire Safety Legislation. EHOs and the Fire Brigade will also provide advice and assistance to help employees and managers to comply with the law.

The maximum **fine** for a breach of Statute Law that a Magistrate's Court can impose for any single offence is £20,000. There is no limit to a fine that higher courts can impose. Employers can be prosecuted for more than one offence at a time. It is the employer who is liable for a fine for a breach of the law. However, individuals, including Managers, can be prosecuted and fined in exceptional cases.



For a brief guide to H&S Law refer to the poster *Health and Safety Law* that should be on display on your premises.

It is a legal requirement to either have this poster on display for all staff to see, or to give each staff member a copy of a leaflet called *Health and Safety Law - What you should know*. Although this leaflet is written for employees, it is a very useful guide for employers, too. It sets out what you, **as an employee**, are entitled to expect from your employer. But it also implies what you, **as a Manager**, are expected to provide for your staff.

Each of the remaining sections in this workbook deals with your responsibilities as summarised on the *Health and Safety Law* poster.

? How much do you know about H&S Law?

Breaches of Common Law may lead to compensation/damages. **True/False**

What is the term used in Common Law to define an individual's or organisation's responsibility towards others

Volunteers are not strictly speaking "employees" and therefore not all of the H&S legislation applies to them. **True / False**

The Health & Safety at Work Act relates to people **at work**, so employers are not responsible for the safety of customers, donors and those who visit a shop. **True / False**

Name 4 things that **employees** are expected to be responsible for under H&S law.

1.
2.
3.
4.

EHO stands for **E**..... **H**..... **O**.....

What is the difference between these?

An Improvement Notice is

.....

A Prohibition Notice is

.....

The maximum fine for breach of Statute Law is £20,000. **True / False**

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk assessment is probably the most critical step charities must take to manage H&S effectively. Employers are obliged by law to carry out a "suitable and sufficient" assessment of risk to employees **or anyone else** who may be affected by their work activities. A "suitable and sufficient" risk assessment will identify what needs to be done to ensure a workplace is complying with H&S Law. Employers must:

- **assess the risks** to the health and safety of employees and others
- **make arrangements** to remove or control these risks
- **record the significant findings** of the risk assessment
- consider the needs of any **vulnerable workers** who may be at particular risk
- **inform staff** of the likely risks at work and how to deal with them

A thorough risk assessment should remain valid for up to 3 years unless:

- it is suspected that the assessment is no longer valid, or
- significant changes are made to working practices

Some risks are required by law to have their own separate assessment. These will be dealt with in more detail in later sections. They include:

- Fire
- Hazardous Substances
- Manual Handling



Computer display screen equipment also needs a separate assessment. If your shop has a computer, ask your Manager about this.



As a reminder, define these terms. (See page 3 for the answers .)

A Hazard is

.....

A Risk is.....

.....

A Control Measure is an item or action to remove a hazard or reduce a risk.

Five Steps to Risk Assessment

Assessing risks means doing 5 things.

Step 1 Look for the hazards

What could cause harm in your shop?

Step 2 Decide who might be harmed and how

Don't forget to consider those who may be at special risk - young, pregnant, disabled or elderly employees - and also customers, donors and other visitors.

Step 3 Evaluate the risks and decide what to do

How likely is it that the hazard could cause harm? How severe could that harm be?

Could the risk be removed altogether? (If there is a risk that someone might trip over an uneven floor, can it be repaired?)

If the risk can't be removed, how can it be controlled? (If the floor can't be fixed, can a ramp be installed or a warning sign be put up?)

Are there less risky ways of doing a task? (Can stepladders with wide, non-slip treads be used instead of small steps?)

Could the work be reorganised to reduce the number of times you need to do work that is hazardous?

Could personal protective equipment be provided? (Gloves or goggles for certain jobs?)


Step 4 Keep a written copy

An Environmental Health Officer would want to see your risk assessment on his visit. It needs to show that all hazards and people at risk have been considered, along with all existing control measures and any further action required.

The main findings should be shown to your staff (new and existing) and be kept on the premises. An assessment of a particularly vulnerable worker should be discussed with, and signed by, that person. You may want to limit the range of tasks done by a pregnant worker or a very elderly volunteer. (See page 41 for a fuller definition of vulnerable workers.)

Step 5 Review and revise it if necessary

For example, if new equipment is installed; if an extra floor is brought into use; if there has been a serious accident or incident; if significant changes to personnel or working practices are made.

 Spot the hazards in these pictures.
What are the risks and who could be harmed?



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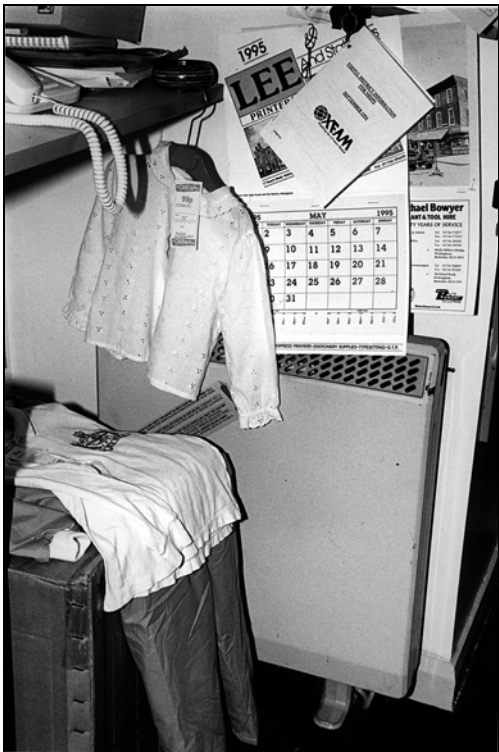
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Risk Assessment Records

Because many tasks are similar from shop to shop, it is quite common for charities to carry out a **generic** shop risk assessment and to provide this to Shop Managers. It should be used as a guide, and not as a substitute, for a local risk assessment. All shops will differ in some respect with regard to layout, staff ability and working practices. If your shop differs significantly in terms of layout, physical characteristics or working practices, the Environmental Health Officer will expect to see that the particular circumstances of your shop have been assessed.

Since the risk assessment is so fundamental to how an organisation manages H&S, **your Manager** will need to be involved with this process. At the very least, he will need to see and approve your assessment.

The Management Regulations require employers to assess the risks to particularly vulnerable people, especially young people (under 18) and pregnant women. It is acceptable to produce generic risk assessments for young people and pregnant women. A pregnant worker's risk assessment should be discussed and reviewed with her 2 or 3 times during her pregnancy and before she returns to work.



Consider those who may be particularly vulnerable in your shop. Who are they? What specific risks do they face?



Consider your own personal risks. What tasks do you undertake which have the potential to cause you harm? Write down what controls are in place to prevent harm from these risks (e.g. protective equipment; training you have received; procedures to follow; design of the workplace)



Check in your shop H&S files for any risk assessment that has been done in your shop. When was it carried out? Was it discussed with your shop staff? Is it still valid?



How much do you know about Risk Assessment?

The seriousness of a risk is determined by 2 factors. What are they?

.....

Assessments are normally valid for up to: **1 year / 2 years / 3 years**

One volunteer tripping over a sack and breaking her hip would not require the shop risk assessment to be reviewed. **True / False**

The closure of a charity's Sorting Depot means that all donated stock now has to be sorted in the shop backroom. Would this require the shop risk assessment to be reviewed? **Yes / No**

Control Measures are

.....

Your charity has assessed the risks associated with running all its shops, so you do not need to assess your own shop's risks. **True / False**

What are the 5 steps to risk assessment?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.



Write down any action points you feel you should take and anything you want to raise with your own Manager about risk assessment.

MANUAL HANDLING

Manual Handling means any transporting or supporting of a load by hand or by bodily force. This includes lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving a load.

Did you know that:

- manual handling is the biggest single cause of ill health and accident-related absenteeism at work?
- a load held at arm's length imposes 5 times more stress than when holding the same load close to the body?
- the recommended weight limits for lifting a load from the floor are 10 kilos for men and 7 kilos for women? (That's 22lbs and 15lbs respectively.)
- the weight of a typical sack of rags is between 7 and 10 kilos?

Manual handling injuries could be reduced significantly if everyone remembered 5 main points when lifting alone:

1. Check that you can lift the load on your own
2. Check that you have somewhere to put the load
3. Check that your way is clear of obstructions
4. Bend your knees, not your back
5. Don't twist your back during the manoeuvre



What are the most likely causes of accidents or injury from manual handling faced by you and your staff?

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations place a number of responsibilities on employers:

- **Avoidance:** changes should be made to the way work is done to eliminate manual handling as much as possible
- **Assessment:** where manual handling cannot be avoided, a risk assessment needs to be carried out
- **Risk reduction:** control measures need to be set up to reduce the risk of injury to the lowest level that is "reasonably practicable"
- **Monitoring:** the effectiveness of the control measures needs to be monitored by inspections, audits and investigation of accidents
- **Employees:** staff need to be told of their responsibilities to follow procedures and instructions, use any equipment provided and report any problems/concerns to their manager

Assessment

As with general risks, the assessment process is critical to reducing accidents and injuries from manual handling. Risks need to be considered under 4 headings:

Task	Does it entail holding a load away from the body? Stooping? Twisting? Reaching upwards? Carrying long distances?
Individual	Is the person vulnerable due to a health condition, previous injury, pregnancy or age?
Load	How heavy is the load? Is it bulky? Is it unstable? Is it sharp?
Environment	Are floors uneven or slippery? Are loads carried up or down a ladder or stairs?

A shop may require more than one Manual Handling assessment depending upon:

- **size and layout** - are the basement and first floor used?
- **range of products sold** - does the shop sell furniture?
- **variety of tasks performed** - collecting stock poses special risks
- **the policy of your charity** - some organisations produce separate assessments of common tasks (e.g. lifting while on a stepladder or emptying a storage pen)

A copy of the Manual Handling assessments should be kept on the premises. An Environmental Health Officer would want to see these on his inspection and to see how risks have been reduced as a consequence. Copies of any special arrangements made for vulnerable workers should also be recorded and filed.



Read the Manual Handling assessments for your shop.



Having read the Manual Handling assessments, are the risk controls listed on them adequate for the range of tasks performed at your shop? Are they being implemented? Are there any particularly vulnerable workers who may require special control measures?

Training

Training on correct lifting/handling techniques is a very important risk control measure. Basic instruction should be given to all new recruits during their induction. Those who do a considerable amount of manual handling should be offered more in-depth training - usually a 3 to 4 hour course.



Record the names of your team who may not have received basic manual handling instruction or who may benefit from refresher training. Who would benefit from a half-day training course?

? How much do you know about Manual Handling?

What are the 5 main points to remember when lifting on your own?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations place legal responsibilities on employees. Name 3 of them.

1.
2.
3.

The Manual Handling assessment process helps Managers to consider the risks under 4 headings. What are they?

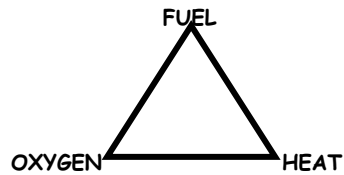
1.
2.
3.
4.



Record any ideas you have for reducing manual handling injury risks, or points that you want to discuss with your Manager.

FIRE SAFETY

Fire needs 3 elements to ignite. These are **Fuel**, **Oxygen** and **Heat**. This is known as the Fire Triangle.



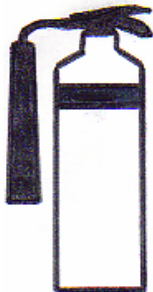
Small fires can be put out by removing one of these elements. A fire blanket cuts off the supply of oxygen. Cold water will cool the heat source.

When burning, a very large number of synthetic materials give off toxic fumes that can kill quickly. They can travel and kill faster than fire. **Most fire deaths are caused by inhalation of smoke and toxic fumes.**

Fire Extinguishers

Different extinguishers are designed to fight different types of fire. All fire extinguishers made since 1997 are red, and each has a coloured panel near the top for identification. Those made prior to 1997 are the colour of the panel.

CARBON DIOXIDE (CO₂)



(black panel)

Use on flammable liquids and live electrical equipment. **After the fire is out**, ventilate the area to discharge fumes.

DO NOT USE on wood, paper and textiles.

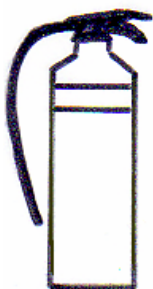
POWDER (multi-purpose)



(blue panel)

Use on wood, paper and textiles. Use on flammable liquids. Use on gaseous fires. Use on live electrical equipment.

FOAM (AFFF)



(cream panel)

Use on wood, paper and textiles. Use on flammable liquids.

DO NOT USE on live electrical equipment.

WATER



(red panel)

Use on wood, paper and textiles.

DO NOT USE on live electrical equipment or flammable liquids.

All fire extinguishers must be easily accessible - usually either wall-mounted or on a stand on the floor. The specialist company that services your fire extinguishers will advise on the number and type required and their location. When they inspect the extinguishers each year, they will sign and date each one.



List the different types of fire extinguisher in your shop, their locations and the date of their last inspection.

TYPE	LOCATION	DATE



Make a note of those who would benefit from training in how to use fire extinguishers. Training is usually provided by the local Fire Brigade or the company that services them.

Evacuation Procedures

Employers are required by law to set up emergency procedures at each workplace and to ensure people know what to do in the event of a fire. A notice describing the Fire Emergency procedures, including the Fire Assembly Point, must be on display in your shop. All staff should be reminded of these procedures regularly.

All routes to fire exits must be kept clear and unobstructed. All fire exit doors should be easily and immediately opened without the use of a key. Any door used for means of escape that has to be kept fastened while people are in the building should be fitted with a single form of release (e.g. a panic bolt or push pad). Fire exit signs should be easily seen and conform to the statutory regulations. (Homemade signs are not acceptable.) All escape routes should be adequately lit.

Evacuating everyone from the building is more important than trying to rescue belongings and valuables or even trying to put the fire out.

Personal safety is more important than the building, contents or cash!

Fire Drills and Fire Alarms

Employers are required by law to carry out a fire risk assessment for all workplaces, which would include deciding on the frequency of holding fire drills. This will vary according to the degree of risk identified in the assessment. The official recommendation for fire drills is **at least once a year**.

One of the challenges facing a charity shop manager is ensuring that the whole team of volunteers practices a fire drill. Varying the day of the week when these are held will help. Some charities hold 'Passive Fire Drills' whereby each volunteer is asked to explain what the shop's evacuation procedure is and how they would raise the alarm. In this way workers on all shifts can be involved in regular fire drill training. A record should be kept of the date of every fire drill, including passive training drills, and who was involved.



What is your charity's policy regarding fire drills? (the frequency and whether 'Passive Fire Drills' are acceptable)

If your shop does not have an automatic fire alarm, very simple devices (such as a whistle or a hand bell) can be used as fire alarms, so long as occupants on each floor can hear them. It is even acceptable in small shops to shout "FIRE!" as the means of raising the alarm. The findings of the fire risk assessment should determine what fire alarm system is appropriate to the risks.



Are your Fire Emergency procedures on display? Yes / No

Where is your Fire Assembly point?

How do you raise the fire alarm?

When was your last Fire Drill?

Where are your Fire Drills recorded?

Fire Prevention

Preventive measures are as important as fire fighting or evacuation procedures. Some of these entail setting and maintaining good **housekeeping standards**:

- store combustible materials safely
- keep combustible stock at a safe distance from heating appliances
- do not allow rubbish or other materials that could be set alight to accumulate (inside or outside the building)
- operate a No Smoking policy



Do all your team know the importance of keeping fire exits clear and unobstructed at all times? Yes / No / Not sure



Is there a sign at each entrance saying 'No Smoking. It is against the law to smoke in these premises'? These are required by law.

Automatic fire alarms and emergency lighting will need to be tested regularly.



If your shop has an automatic fire alarm and/or emergency lighting, check the procedures laid down by your charity for testing these. These are likely to be contained in your Shop Operations or H&S Manual.



Enter below who tests these and how often.

Other preventive measures are to make sure that gas and electrical installations and appliances are safe. Gas appliances need to be inspected annually by a CORGI registered engineer. Fixed electrical installations should be inspected and tested regularly, usually every 3-5 years, by a suitably qualified and competent person. Fixed electrical installations are anything from the socket backwards, so include the wiring, lighting, mains switchboard, fuses and meter.

Electrical appliances are either **transportable** (e.g. storage heater or water boiler) or **portable** (anything with a flexible lead and plug that fits into a socket). They all require testing by a competent person at varying intervals, from 1-2 years depending on the risk, including how often they are used and moved. Most portable appliances are usually tested annually.

It is good practice to keep an inventory of all electrical appliances with the date when each was last tested and/or to put a sticker on each item with its code number and date of last inspection.

Any appliance brought in by a staff member or donated for use in your shop becomes your employer's responsibility and the same regulations, including the need for testing, must be applied before it can be used.

You and your team should also play your part in checking that electrical appliances are safe. Regular visual inspections to check that there is no damage to plugs, cables or the appliance itself should be carried out. All users should be told to report any fault to you and to stop using the appliance immediately.



Do all your team know they must report any faulty appliances to you and stop using them immediately? Yes / No / Not sure

How often do you do a visual check of electrical appliances?



Record the code and inspection date for your electrical appliances.

CODE	ITEM	DATE	CODE	ITEM	DATE

Who inspects/tests the electrical appliances in your shop?

.....



Read the Fire Risk Assessment that has been carried out for your shop and check that it is still up to date. (You may need to ask your Manager or Building Services Department for a copy of this.)



What do you know about Fire Safety?

What are the 3 elements in the Fire Triangle?

1..... 2..... 3.....

Which fire extinguishers are safe to use on live electrical equipment?

Foam Carbon Dioxide Water Powder

How often should fire extinguishers be checked?

Fire exit routes must always be 1..... 2.

and 3.



List any ideas for action or points you want to discuss with your Manager on fire prevention, fire fighting or evacuation procedures.

HAZARDOUS and DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES

Some chemicals are legally classified as **hazardous substances** as they can cause ill health. Contact with the skin or eyes, swallowing them or breathing in the vapours may result in damage and irritation of the skin and eyes, respiratory problems, asthma and stomach upsets.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) cover the use of hazardous substances at work. The presence of an orange warning label on products will generally indicate whether they are hazardous.



CORROSIVE

Will cause burns to skin, eyes and respiratory tract and can cause permanent damage



TOXIC

Will cause acute or chronic damage to health when inhaled or swallowed.



IRRITANT

Will cause redness and irritation to skin, eyes and respiratory tract, but no permanent damage.



HARMFUL

May cause temporary or permanent damage to your health if swallowed or inhaled

Other materials are classified as **dangerous substances** as they represent a fire or explosion risk. The use of these materials at work is controlled by the Dangerous Substances and Explosives Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR). These products will be classified as Flammable or Highly Flammable. Highly Flammable products will be labelled with an orange warning symbol.

FLAMMABLE

Produces vapours which will burn at temperatures below 55°C, if they come into contact with a spark, flame, etc.



HIGHLY FLAMMABLE

Produces vapours which will burn at temperatures below 21°C, if they come into contact with a spark, flame, etc.

All hazardous or dangerous substances should be avoided wherever possible. If a substance cannot be eliminated, a risk assessment must be undertaken to reduce the risk as far as reasonably practicable. Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) would want to see such risk assessments on their visits. All who work on the premises need to be informed about any hazardous and dangerous substances they may be exposed to, the risks they present, and the precautions to take.

The most commonly used chemicals in charity shops are cleaning agents. **Bleach**, if mixed with certain other chemicals, can create chlorine, a toxic gas. If drunk, it can cause serious ill health and even death. Since there are other proprietary cleaning products available that do the same job most shops should be able to cope without using thick bleach that carries the orange warning label.

The manufacturers of hazardous and dangerous substances are obliged by law to provide safety data sheets. These contain first aid instructions that should be followed in the case of an accident. Two control measures commonly used by charities are to issue a list of products shops are allowed keep on the premises and to provide shops with the safety data sheets.

Shops that sell furniture may use a wider range of chemicals, for instance, paint strippers and varnishes. Additional precautions would be to restrict their use to authorised and trained persons only and to keep the chemicals in a secure cupboard. All hazardous substances should always be kept in their original labelled containers and stored out of the reach of the public, especially children.



List the hazardous and dangerous substances that are used in your shop. Tick if you have the manufacturers' safety data sheets. Have they all been approved by your charity?

SUBSTANCE	✓

Asbestos

Thousands of tonnes of asbestos were used in the construction of premises in the past and much of it is still in place. As long as it is in good condition and is not being disturbed or damaged it poses no health risk. But if it is disturbed or damaged it can become a danger to health.

Breathing in air containing asbestos fibres can lead to diseases, mainly cancers of the lung and chest lining. There is no cure for asbestos-related diseases.

Employers are required by law to prevent exposure of employees to asbestos, or if this is not reasonably practicable, to control their exposure to the lowest possible level. They are also required to inform anyone liable to work on it or disturb it of the location and condition of the asbestos.

Those involved in building maintenance work would be at greatest risk but anyone installing telephones, computers or other electrical equipment may disturb asbestos. If workers do have to work on materials containing asbestos, they must know this and know what precautions they should take.

Since October 2005 every workplace must have been inspected to see if materials containing asbestos are present. The location and condition of the material should be recorded on a plan or drawing. Where practical the material should be labelled.

A plan for managing the risks everywhere asbestos is found should have been drawn up. This could mean repairing the material if it is slightly damaged, removing it if in poor condition or monitoring it regularly if in good condition.



Check whether an Asbestos survey has been carried out on your shop premises. Have any materials containing asbestos been identified? Do you know where these are and what condition they are in?



Check the COSHH assessments at your shop.



Do they include all the hazardous or dangerous substances on the premises? YES / NO
Do all your team know about the substances, the risks and the precautions to take? YES / NO / NOT SURE



What do you know about Hazardous Substances?

What word will be found on the warning label of the products that have these risks?

.....
Will cause burns to skin, eyes and respiratory tract and can cause permanent damage

.....
May cause temporary or permanent damage to your health if swallowed or inhaled

.....
Will cause acute or chronic damage to health when inhaled or swallowed

.....
Will cause redness and irritation to skin, eyes and respiratory tract, but no permanent damage



List any ideas for action or points you want to discuss with your Manager on the control of hazardous and dangerous substances.

ACCIDENTS

First Aid

The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 require employers to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to enable first aid to be given to employees if they are injured or become ill at work.

What is "adequate and appropriate" will depend on the circumstances at each workplace and employers have to assess what the first aid needs are. Most charity shops are likely to be classed as "lower risk" sites. This means that there do not have to be fully qualified first aiders on site, but there does always have to be an **Appointed Person**.

Appointed Persons must:

- look after the first aid equipment, such as restocking the First Aid box
- take charge when someone is injured or falls ill, calling an ambulance if needed

First aid provision needs to be available at all times people are at work. Because of this, a charity shop will need to have at least 2 Appointed Persons, in order to perform the role in your absence.

Appointed Persons are not first aiders and so **should not attempt to give first aid** for which they have not been trained. It is not compulsory for Appointed Persons to attend a training course, but half-day courses are run by organisations such as St. John Ambulance and The Red Cross. (A fully qualified First Aider needs to attend a course lasting about 3 days.)

It is important that the First Aid box is checked regularly to make sure that the contents comply with the recommended list and that they are within date. Anything out-of-date or not on the recommended list of contents (such as any medicines) should be disposed of safely. The location of the First Aid box should be made known to all staff and be clearly signed.



Who are your Appointed Persons?

.....

Is there always one on duty every day? YES / NO

Will there always be one on duty when you are on holiday? YES / NO

How often is your First Aid box checked?

Accident Records

Another duty of an Appointed Person is to ensure that a record is kept of any accident, however small, affecting staff, customers or visitors to the shop. Your charity will either have supplied an Accident Book or Form for this purpose.

All accidents, however small, should also be reported to management. Each charity will have its own means of doing this and preferred frequency. Depending on the size of your charity and its policy and procedures, other departments, such as Personnel, may also need to be informed. This is because accident records can be a very useful source of information for monitoring, analysing and learning how to prevent future accidents.



Check what instructions you have been given about the routine reporting of accidents. To whom do you have to provide this information? How often? And how? (If the instructions are not clear, you may want to make a note to discuss this with your Manager.)

RIDDOR

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) lay down that certain accidents, work-related diseases and dangerous occurrences have to be reported to a government agency.

To be reportable, the accident or incident must **"arise out of or be in connection with work"**, relating to 1 or more of the following:

- how the work is organised, supervised or performed
- the equipment or substances used (e.g. pruning guns, electrical appliances, cleaning chemicals)
- the condition or maintenance of the premises (e.g. stairs, carpets, lighting)

The following examples of accidents would **not be reportable**:

- a customer has an epileptic fit in the shop and is taken to hospital
- a volunteer has a heart attack or black-out and is taken to hospital

However, if a customer has a heart attack during an argument over a charity's retail policies, the accident may be reportable. If lack of ventilation in the shop is the probable cause of a person fainting, falling and requiring hospital treatment, then this may also be reportable.

The type of person who is injured in an accident also determines whether it needs reporting under RIDDOR. For instance, any accidents to members of the public, requiring them to be taken from the site of the accident to a hospital, are reportable.

The table below summarises when an accident is reportable. An **“Over-3-day Injury”** is one that prevents someone from doing his normal work for more than 3 days after the date of the accident.

REPORTABLE ACCIDENTS

Injured Person	Employee at work (includes volunteers, trainees, work experience, New Deal)	Self-employed person at work on premises (e.g. stock collector, window cleaner)	Person not at work (e.g. customer, donor, member of the public)
Reportable Event	Death Major injury Over-3-day injury Certain diseases	Death Major injury Over-3-day injury	Death Injury where a person is taken directly to hospital for treatment

Major Injuries

These are defined as:

- any fracture, other than to fingers, thumbs or toes
- any amputation
- dislocation of the shoulder, hip, knee or spine
- loss of sight (temporary or permanent); any penetrating injury to the eye, or chemical or hot metal burn to the eye
- injury due to electric shock or burns that results in unconsciousness or requires resuscitation
- loss of consciousness due to lack of oxygen or exposure to a harmful substance or biological agent
- acute illness requiring medical treatment or loss of consciousness caused by absorption of any substance by inhalation, ingestion or through the skin
- acute illness believed to be the result of exposure to infected material or an organism that causes disease
- any other injury which results in the person being admitted to hospital for more than 24 hours

Incidents, such as acts of violence at work, which lead to Major Injuries or Over-3-day Injuries are also reportable.

Dangerous Occurrences and Diseases

Reportable **occurrences** include:

- the collapse, overturning or failure of a load bearing part of a lift or hoist
- the explosion, collapse or bursting of any closed vessel or associated pipework (a closed vessel is part of a pressurised system such as air compressors at garages)
- an electrical short circuit or overload causing fire or explosion
- an explosion/fire resulting in the suspension of normal work for more than 24 hours
- the collapse or partial collapse of any scaffold over 5 metres high
- any unintended collapse of any building or structure under construction, alteration or demolition involving a fall of more than 5 tonnes of material or of a wall or floor in a place of work
- any plant or equipment coming into contact with overhead power lines

Certain occupational diseases are reportable where the individual's work activities are likely to be the cause. The cause may be biological (e.g. bacterial or viral), physical (e.g. radiation or excessive repetitive movements), or a substance (e.g. asbestos). Wrist or forearm problems due to repetitive movements would be classed as an 'occupational disease'.

Reporting Procedure

In England, Scotland and Wales reports must be made to a national Incident Contact Centre. In N. Ireland the local district council must be notified. Major injuries and dangerous occurrences must be reported without delay by telephone, fax or via the Internet. Over-3-day injuries should be notified within 10 days of the accident. An official form (F2508) must be used for all reports. It is normal practice for these to be completed by Head Office staff.



Check what procedures have been established within your charity for reporting serious accidents and dangerous occurrences. (If they are not clear, make a note to discuss this with your Manager.)

If in doubt over whether an accident is reportable, telephone your Manager or Head Office as soon as possible.

Fines

Failure to submit a report could incur a fine. If an organisation is found guilty in court for a breach of the law, then a fine of £5,000 may be levied for failure to report the incident. This fine would be additional to any that the court imposes for the original offence.

EHO Investigations

The ICC passes RIDDOR reports to the relevant local authority to investigate.

Under a strategy launched by the Health & Safety Commission in 2000, Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) are being exhorted to pay particular attention to the problems that cause the majority of accidents and most serious injuries including:

- Slips, Trips and Falls
- Manual Handling

Slips and Trips are the No. 1 priority. They account for about one-third of all reportable accidents to employees and the majority of accidents to members of the public. EHOs will concentrate on ensuring floors and stairs are in good condition and free from obstructions such as trailing cables, sacks, etc.

They will look for Manual Handling assessments at shops and for real examples of how injury risks have been reduced.

? What do you know about First Aid?

What are the 2 main roles of an Appointed Person?

1.
2.

Where is your First Aid box kept?

.....

Where is your Accident Book (or Form) kept?

.....

? What do you know about Accident Reporting?

What is your organisation's procedure for the regular reporting of minor accidents? To whom do you report them? How frequently?

.....
.....
.....

What does RIDDOR stand for?

- R.....
- I.....
- D.....
- D.....
- O.....
- R.....

An accident which requires a customer to be taken to hospital for treatment to a broken arm must be notified to the government:

On the day / within 10 days / within a month

What is the size of the potential fine an employer could receive for failing to report an incident? £.....

What is your organisation's procedure for reporting accidents that may be required by law to be notified to the government? To whom do you report them? How? And how soon after the accident?

.....
.....
.....



Summarise any ideas for action or points you want to discuss with your Manager about First Aid or Accident Reporting.

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

Employers must ensure that each workplace is safe to work in and that provisions are made for the welfare of workers. This includes ensuring ventilation, temperature, and lighting are adequate and also that sanitary, washing and rest facilities are provided. It also means carrying out minor maintenance work (e.g. to floor coverings), ensuring that work areas and access routes are kept clear, and managing waste safely.

The legal minimum temperature for shops is 16°C (61°F) and this level should be achieved within an hour of the shop opening. Under current legislation there is no maximum temperature.

Sales Area

There are good business reasons why you would wish to have the right temperature, ventilation, lighting, cleanliness and tidiness on your sales floor. The presentation of your products will be enhanced; customers will find your shop more pleasant to browse in; and your staff will be more comfortable at work there. The shop will also be **safer** for your customers and staff if the shop floor is free from obstructions.

Remember: the majority of reported accidents to members of the public are due to Slips, Trips and Falls.

It is also worth remembering that housekeeping activities themselves can pose a hazard. If the floor is cleaned during shop opening hours, is there a trailing lead from the vacuum cleaner that someone could trip over?

Backrooms

The risk of Slips, Trips and Falls is even greater in the backrooms due to the rapid influx of donated stock. The accumulation of stock (for example, saving garments for another season or special promotions) can create hazards if it is not stored safely or if fixtures and fittings are overloaded.

As already mentioned, all routes to fire exits must be kept clear and unobstructed at all times. The accumulation of rags and rubbish (in the backroom and outside) can pose a fire threat. It can also attract rodents and create a tripping hazard.

Kitchen, WCs and Rest Area

Smaller charity shops may not be able to provide a rest area separate from the sorting/storage area in the backroom. However, all shops should have a suitable kitchen and adequate sanitary and washing facilities. The temperature in a fridge should be maintained at 5°C (41°F) or below.

Waste Management

The disposal of broken glass and other sharp objects is a common cause of injury in charity shops. It is important that everyone knows how to do this, carefully wrapping them before placing them in bins, for instance. It should also be remembered that you owe a duty of care towards the refuse collectors who could injure themselves on sharp objects protruding from sacks.

Housekeeping Standards

In order to comply with the law, it is not enough to provide certain facilities at a workplace: it is necessary for these to be maintained at an acceptable standard.



Check what housekeeping standards are set for you to maintain.



How often are you asked to monitor these?

Do all your team members know what they must do to maintain good housekeeping standards? YES / NO / NOT SURE

How often are the WCs cleaned in your shop?

How often are the hand/kitchen towels washed?

How often is the fridge temperature checked?

How often is your shop/backroom temperature checked?



List any ideas for action or points on good housekeeping that you may want to discuss with your Manager.

EQUIPMENT

All equipment must be suitable for its intended use and be adequately maintained. Specific risks associated with particular pieces of equipment need to be controlled, and users must be trained in how to operate them safely. (You may find it helpful to refer back to the exercise on Page 5 in which you were asked to list all the equipment used in your shop and the safety measures that are in place.)

Steamers

These probably carry the greatest risks to those who work in charity shops, with the potential to cause scalds, burns or electric shocks.

It is important that the manufacturer's instructions are followed with regard to operating the steamer safely and also for carrying out regular maintenance (and descaling in hard water areas). Some suppliers provide a safety notice which should be displayed prominently.

Only personnel who have been trained to use a steamer should be allowed to do so and a record of who has been trained should be kept. Steaming should be carried out in a safe place (such as on a level floor, away from walkways). Wearing long-sleeved clothing would provide additional protection against burns to arms. Some charities provide goggles to protect the eyes.

Pricing Guns and Sharp Blades

Pricing guns probably account for most of the wounds to fingers and hands in charity shops. Stanley (or similar) knives used for opening boxes also pose a risk of injury. Typical precautions when using these tools include storing them in a safe place; using only guns and knives with covers/retractable blades; and ensuring that needles and blades are covered/retracted when not in use.

Stepladders and Kickstools

These should be used to store items above head height. Chairs must never be stood on. The safest stepladders have a handrail and wide, non-slip treads.

Sack Trucks and Trolleys

These mechanical aids will reduce the risk of manual handling injuries, but they do require regular inspection to make sure that they are in good working order.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Employers are obliged by law to provide free protective clothing or equipment for staff where risks cannot be adequately controlled by other means.

In charity shops some of the greatest risks of injury are associated with the handling and sorting of donated stock. Cuts and puncture wounds can be caused by broken or sharp items. Diseases can be picked up from contaminated materials, blood and bodily fluids.

Heavy-duty gloves will provide a degree of protection for those who have to lift and move sacks and boxes of donated stock. Lighter-weight gloves would be more appropriate for those who have to sort donated stock. Gloves containing latex should be avoided due to the risk of an allergic reaction.

Footwear with protective toe-caps will provide extra protection for those who have to collect and deliver furniture. High Visibility and waterproof clothing may also be required for those involved in house to house stock collections.



How often do you check ladders, kickstools, sack trucks and trolleys?



Do you have a record of those who have received training in how to use the steamer?



List the Personal Protective Equipment provided in your shop.



Does everyone know where it is kept and when to use it? YES / NO



Note any ideas for action or points you want to discuss with your Manager on Shop Equipment and Personal Protective Equipment.

PERSONAL SAFETY

Vulnerable Staff

Employers owe a duty of care to each individual employee. This means that the needs of any particularly susceptible worker should be taken into consideration. The need to carry out a personal risk assessment of vulnerable staff has already been referred to on pages 12, 13 & 17. Legislation makes specific reference to those under 18, pregnant women and nursing mothers. Other vulnerable persons would be the physically or mentally impaired and the very elderly or frail.

Persons under 18 may not be familiar with a work environment and may lack maturity and knowledge of potential risks. Young people such as Work Experience trainees, sixth formers or those doing voluntary work as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award may need extra induction training and instruction about safety precautions.



List those members of your team who may be particularly vulnerable. Have you assessed their special risks and agreed precautions with them? Have you provided any additional training for them?

Security

All staff working in the sales area are at risk from violent or abusive members of the public. Those who do the banking face an extra risk of being mugged.



What guidelines has your charity laid down for how to deal with abusive customers and how to make banking safer? These are likely to be in a Shop Manual or Operations Handbook.

Personal possessions are at risk of being stolen if not stored in a locked area. The loss of cash, valuables and personal belongings can cause considerable upset and stress. Most charities are not insured for the loss of personal possessions.



What is your charity's insurance policy regarding personal belongings? Have all your staff been told what it is?

Working Alone

All the risks associated with dealing with the public are multiplied if someone is working alone while the shop is open. Even if the shop is closed to the public, someone working alone is more likely to tackle a job that requires 2 people. Any injury that might be sustained may be aggravated by the lack of any immediate assistance.

Staff who work alone off the shop premises can also be at greater risk, for instance if they enter private or work premises unaccompanied or with people they do not know.



What is your charity's policy regarding working alone? Does it cover working alone off the shop premises? This is likely to be contained in a Shop Manual or Operations Handbook.



What Personal Safety Precautions are in your shop?

Have all your staff been given instructions and training in how to deal with violent or abusive customers? YES / NO / NOT SURE

Have you considered and taken steps to reduce the risk of mugging when banking? YES / NO

Do you have a safe place for the storage of personal belongings in your shop? YES / NO

Are you satisfied that everyone stores their belongings safely?
YES / NO / NOT SURE

What guidance do you give to those working alone on stock collections who may be invited into private houses or workplaces?

.....
.....



List any ideas for action or points to discuss with your Manager about the personal safety of you, your staff and your belongings.

TRAINING

At the very least, employers must provide employees with the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary for their health and safety. They also have a legal duty to consult employees or their safety representatives on matters relating to health and safety at work.

Employers have to provide H&S training for people:

- when they start work
- when their work or responsibilities change, resulting in new or greater risks
- periodically, if needed
- to take account of any new or changed risks
- during work hours and not at the expense of staff

Positive H&S Culture

Managing H&S effectively, though, means doing more than this. It entails getting staff involved and committed to working in a safe manner. This is often referred to as developing a "positive H&S culture".



Do you remember the definition of Health and Safety on page 3?

Health and Safety is an environment created by
.....identifying..... and
involving
in
to



What steps do you take in your shop to involve members of your team in developing a "positive H&S culture"?

Induction Training

Health and Safety needs to be included in the induction training given to all new members of your team.



What are the H&S matters listed on your charity's Induction checklist for new staff and volunteers?



Compare yours with this list and tick the items that are on it.

TOPICS	DETAILS	✓
FIRE	Location of Fire Exits Location and use of extinguishers Evacuation drill and Fire Assembly Point Fire prevention - clear stairs, walkways and fire exits, storage of combustible material No Smoking Policy	
FIRST AID	Location of First Aid box Location of Accident Book/Form Names of Appointed Persons Contact details of nearest Doctor/Casualty Department	
SAFE PRACTICES	Control of hazardous and dangerous substances Manual Handling techniques Safe Sorting of donated stock Safe Storage of stock, equipment and rubbish Good housekeeping standards Use of electrical appliances Use of equipment Use of Personal Protective Equipment Working Alone policy Security/Personal Safety policies	
NOTICES and RECORDS	H&S Law poster H&S Policy Statement Other H&S posters and notices Location of H&S Manual and files	

Refresher Training

Employers are also advised to provide **refresher training** to bring people's skills up to date, especially when the training relates to something they do not often do, such as dealing with emergencies. An example of this would be a fire drill.

Staff should also be reminded of the safe way of doing tasks they do quite frequently if the risks of injury are significant. It is easy to slip into bad habits with common tasks like Manual Handling and sorting. A simple cause of injury is to forget to empty the contents of a sack onto a table and to plunge your hands into the sack.



When was refresher training last provided for your team?

TOPIC	WHO WAS TRAINED	DATE



Is there any refresher training you would welcome for yourself?

Training Records

Employers are advised to keep records of the training provided for staff. These records not only provide evidence that an employer has discharged his duty of care, but also can be monitored to see when refresher training may be needed.



List any ideas for action or points you wish to discuss with your Manager about H&S training for you and your team.

MONITORING

Effective management of H&S entails monitoring whether control measures in shops are being implemented and remain effective. There are 2 types:

- doing this regularly, before things go wrong, is called **Active Monitoring**
- investigating accidents or incidents to understand what caused them, and to see if controls need to be improved, is called **Reactive Monitoring**

Active Monitoring

In this workbook there are references to Active H&S Monitoring, such as:

- checks of basic housekeeping standards, such as routes to fire exits being kept clear and unobstructed
- regular visual checks of electrical appliances
- checking the First Aid box contents
- checking that ladders and trolleys are in working order
- testing the automatic fire alarm and emergency lighting

Some of these inspections need to be made daily or weekly. Others can be done monthly, quarterly or even half-yearly. Some of the more frequent checks should be done informally as part of the routine running of the shop. Less frequent ones are usually more formal exercises involving the use of checklists. Your Manager will probably be involved with some of the less frequent monitoring exercises.



Find out what your charity requires you to monitor, informally or formally, and how often. This information may be in an Operations or H&S Handbook or on a list of Shop Manager H&S responsibilities.



What aspects of H&S does your Manager monitor at your shop?



List points to discuss with your Manager about H&S monitoring.

SAFETY, THE LAW AND YOU

You have now come to the end of this self-learning workbook. We hope that it has helped you learn more about:

- what health and safety at work entails
- health and safety law
- the importance of managing health and safety effectively
- what you have to do to manage health and safety in your shop

You have an important part to play in assisting your charity to:

- ensure the health, safety and welfare of your staff so far as is reasonably practicable
- provide and maintain safe equipment and safe systems of work in a safe working environment
- minimise risks from using, handling, storing and transporting materials
- provide necessary training and information to ensure safe systems of work
- avoid unnecessary risks to customers and visitors to the premises

REMEMBER!

Safety is not a subject that should be learnt and then forgotten. It should be a whole way of working that not only helps to prevent accidents, but also aids team morale. It is a continuous learning process, which should be reviewed and updated constantly.