

It's Time...

TO STAY SAFE



This PDA factsheet highlights the importance of ensuring a safe working environment to minimise health and safety risks and incidents, and in particular slips and falls, at work.

What are accidents at work?

An **accident at work** is an incident that results in personal injury or property damage and occurs in your workplace or whilst you are carrying out your daily work.

565,000 workers reported that they had a non-fatal injury at work according to self-reports from the Labour Force Survey in 2021/22. 30% of those were reported as slips, trips and falls.

The PDA knows from members that the most reported accidents at work for pharmacists are slips, trips, and falls.

Incidents, accidents and similar terminology

An **incident** is an unplanned occurrence of something that causes a health & safety risk.

An **accident** is an incident that results in personal injury or property damage.

Every incident has the potential to be an accident, and therefore all incidents should be treated with the same importance and urgency, whether or not injury or damage was sustained on that occasion. An incident that does not result in injury or damage may also be known as a **near-miss**.

A further term relating to specific type of incident is a **dangerous occurrence**. This term includes fires, leaks of substances, issues with building structures, or electrical failure, including equipment malfunction, which could potentially lead to personal injury or property damage.

All of the above should be reported, resolved, and prevented from reoccurring.

Who are the HSE?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. Its role is to prevent work-related death, injury, and ill health.

They do this by working with those responsible (both employers and employees) to advise, support, and, where necessary, intervene.

What are my employer's responsibilities?

The primary legislation covering occupational health and safety in Britain is the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. This outlines employer responsibilities for the management of health and safety. It sets out the general duties which employers have towards employees and members of the public, and employees have to themselves and to each other.

The Regulations sit beneath the Act and impose more explicit duties around specific hazards, processes or

groups of workers. Regulations are supplemented by Approved Codes of Practice (ACOPs) and guidance, which give practical advice on how to comply with the law.

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, which sit beneath the Act, employers are required by law to protect employees from harm. Their legal obligations include identifying hazards and risks and implementing ways to reduce or eliminate them.

Your employer is also required to have a health and safety policy which sets out how it manages work health and safety in your workplace, stating who does what, when, and how. Also to consult with staff or their union representatives on this process.

The Regulations cover a range of issues, including the use of computers, working with chemicals, work equipment, lifting operations, manual handling, radiation, personal protective equipment (PPE), and the working environment.

Members in Northern Ireland are covered by the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978.

Risk Assessments

The PDA is aware that, for pharmacies, there are specific risks associated with cluttered work benches, cluttered floors with deliveries being left on the floor, or falls from height. Your employer should be carrying out risk assessments with particular focus on high-risk areas to remove obstacles and identify other hazards. Your employer should have risk assessments available, but a simple risk assessment template provided by the HSE can be found [here](#). The HSE also has a [hazard-spotting checklist](#).

What are my responsibilities as an employee?

All employees also have a responsibility in law under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, to inform your employer of any work situation you consider dangerous, or of any shortcoming in their protection arrangements for health and safety.

What can I do to prevent slips and falls at work?

The Health and Safety Executive uses a slip potential model which identifies the following areas as the key factors that might contribute to a slip at work:

- Contamination
- Cleaning
- People
- Flooring
- Environment
- Footwear

What can I do to reduce risk?

- Report near misses and accidents promptly to your employer.
- If you see slip and trip risks, try to take action to rectify them or inform your employer. (For example, floors should be regularly checked for damage and problems dealt with immediately. Any mats should be securely fixed.)

- Help to keep floors clean and dry.
- Clear up spillages straight away.
- If you think of ways of preventing contamination (liquid medication, water, oils, cardboard, waste etc) from getting onto the floor, suggest them to your employer.
- Avoid causing trailing cables.
- Keep place of work clear of obstacles. Obstructions should be removed or suitable barriers and/or warning notices used.
- Ask your employer to mark slopes and changes of levels.
- If there isn't adequate lighting, report it.
- Follow all safety advice.
- Find out how to report incidents.
- Become a PDA Health and Safety Rep.

What do I do if I have an accident at work?

Immediately following an accident, you should:

- Report the accident to your line manager, Superintendent, or immediate superior.
- Report the accident to your local PDA Rep, Health and Safety Rep, or advise the PDA Member Support Centre.
- Seek medical advice where appropriate, ensuring your medical record states where the accident happened.
- If at work, report the incident in the accident book providing as much detail as possible. If you believe that unsustainable pressures within the workplace were a factor, please state this, and take contact details of all witnesses, where possible.
- If possible, take photographs or make a sketch of the area including any relevant hazards e.g., faulty equipment or slippery surfaces.
- Take the details of the type and serial numbers of any relevant equipment.
- Do not allocate blame or responsibility for what happened until all facts are known, and resist attempts by the employer or others to do so.

After the accident you should:

- If the incident happened at work, keep in touch with your employer and inform them of your progress if you had to take time off work.
- Keep a diary of your treatment, investigation, or any medical consultation and any receipts for medication/treatment.
- Document your progress and keep copies of any documentation you receive.
- Keep any receipts for expenses arising out of the injury e.g., prescriptions, taxis.

What about locums?

Although locums are not employees, there are similar responsibilities for the organisations that engage locums, even though they do so as 'clients' rather than 'employers'. Likewise, locums have a similar responsibility to employee colleagues to keep workplaces safe.

We encourage locums to also follow the above advice, however we recognise the additional concern there may be regarding any impact on future bookings. If concerned, locum members should contact the [PDA Member Support Centre](#) for advice, including on making protected disclosures.

How can the PDA help?

If you are concerned about a health and safety issue at work and your employer is not addressing it, contact your rep or the PDA.

If you have had an accident at work and want further advice, you can contact the PDA Rep or Health and Safety Rep in your workplace. You can also phone the PDA Member Support Centre for advice on 0121 694 7000.

We can establish if there is a breach of health and safety legislation and can support you in making a grievance where appropriate.

If you wish to pursue a personal injury claim, we can refer you for external legal assistance.

Each year, the PDA carries out the Safer Pharmacies Survey, based around the PDA's [Safer Pharmacies Charter](#). Find out more [here](#).

How do I become a Health and Safety Rep at work?

Health and Safety Reps help support members on health and safety issues at their workplace, raise issues with their employer, and carry out health and safety inspections.

The PDA provides Health and Safety Representative training and support. If you are interested in becoming a PDA Health and Safety Rep, then you can have an initial conversation with a member of the PDA Organising and Engagement Team, or for more information and to sign up, click [here](#).

Raising concerns by yourself can be daunting. Your colleagues may well share your concerns. Where possible, raise them collectively, preferably via your PDA Workplace Rep. If you do not currently have a PDA Rep, you could become one. Find out more [here](#).

Other helpful links and resources

[NHS workplace health and safety standards](#).

[NHS health and safety policy](#).

Further advice for PDA members working in Northern Ireland can be found [here](#).

It's Time...

TO JOIN TODAY

 It's Time...