

SECTION 3(21)

**WORKPLACE
HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE**

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Introduction

The Council must ensure that all existing workplaces comply with the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992. Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance entitled Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare: Approved Code of Practice ISBN 978 0 7176 0413 5 (ACOP) is available free from the HSE

[Workplace regulations ACOP](#)

Office Ventilation (Regulation 6)

Generally there is no specified level of ventilation for workplaces. However, provision must be made within all workplaces to ensure effective and suitable ventilation is maintained by a sufficient quantity of fresh or purified air incorporating filtration or dust extraction if necessary.

More detailed guidance on what may be considered as satisfactory can be found in:

- a) Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers Design CIBSE Guide: Volume A "Design data" GVA 2006.
- b) Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers "Ventilation Effectiveness in Mechanical Ventilation Systems" BTN1 1988 ISBN 0-86-022189-X.

Temperature (Regulation 7)

Achievement and maintenance of a "reasonable temperature" should normally ensure reasonable comfort without the need for special clothing. A minimum temperature of 16°C is specified in the ACOP for workrooms (or 13°C where much of the work involves severe physical effort). Where a reasonably comfortable temperature cannot be achieved, then steps must be taken to limit or avoid discomfort.

Lighting (Regulation 8)

Advantage must be taken of available natural light when considering the siting of workstations. Staff should be made aware that eye strain may be a particular hazard within the office workplace and must report any fears of work-related eye strain. The line manager must be informed if it is suspected that the lighting levels are insufficient. Suitable and sufficient emergency lighting must be provided. More detailed guidance can be found in: [HSE lighting at work](#)

Cleanliness and Waste materials (Regulation 9)

Workplaces, furnishings and fittings must be kept "sufficiently clean". It is recognised that, for example, offices will inevitably be easier to maintain at a higher level of cleanliness than a workroom where process waste is generated, but waste materials must not be allowed to accumulate except in suitable receptacles.

Room Dimension and Space (Regulation 10)

A standard space of 11 cubic metres/person relating to the volume of an empty room is considered by the HSE to be a minimum value. Action may be appropriate where cramped working conditions are caused by excessive furnishings, equipment, etc. In calculating the volume, any height over 3.0m should be ignored.

In a typical room, where the ceiling is 2.4m high, a floor area of 4.6m² (for example 2.0m x 2.3m) will be needed to provide a space of 11m³. Where the ceiling is 3.0m high or higher, the minimum floor area will be 3.7m² (for example 2.0m x 1.85m).

Workstations and Seating (Regulation 11)

A "Workstation", being defined as a fixed or habitual working position, must be so arranged that it is suitable for both persons at work and any work that is likely to be undertaken there both safely and comfortably. See Sect 3(5): Display Screen Equipment where this applies. Also HSE guidance is available in: [VDU Guidance](#)

Condition of Floors and Traffic Routes (Regulation 12)

A floor must be of such construction and sufficient strength for the use to which it is put. Fixed ladders can constitute a traffic route, but may only be used where a conventional staircase cannot be accommodated (see Regulation 17). Every floor and traffic route must be kept free from obstruction and any article or substance which may cause a person to slip, trip and fall.

More detailed guidance on strength can be found in: BS 6399: Part 1: 1996 "Design Loading for Buildings: Code of Practice for Dead and Imposed Loads".

Falls or Falling Objects (Regulation 13)

"Effective measures" must be undertaken to protect against falls or falling objects, e.g.: fencing, barriers and covers must be used where practicable and areas where there is a risk must be clearly indicated.

Window, and Transparent or Translucent Doors, Gates and Walls (Regulation 14).

Transparent doors must be appropriately marked at a conspicuous level. Swing doors and gates must be transparent or have see-through panels made of a safety material. More detailed guidance can be found in: [HSE Glazing](#)

Windows, Skylights and Ventilators (Regulations 15 and 16)

It must be possible to reach and operate the control of openable windows, skylights and ventilators in a safe manner. The bottom edge of opening windows must normally be at least 800 mm above floor level, unless there is a barrier to prevent falls.

More detailed guidance can be found in BS 8213: Part 1: 2004 "Windows"

Organisations etc of Traffic Routes (Regulation 17)

This regulation covers not only the layout of traffic routes for pedestrians and vehicles, but traffic management systems and the provision of signs. A traffic route includes stairs, fixed ladders, doorways, loading bays and ramps. There must be suitable and sufficient routes of sufficient width and headroom so as not to cause danger. Where vehicles and pedestrians use the same routes, there must be sufficient separation between them and/or adequate signs and markings.

Any signs used in connection with traffic must comply with the Traffic Regulations and General Directions 2002 and the Highway Code for use on the public highway.

Doors and Gates (Regulation 18)

Doors and gates must be suitably constructed (including being fitted with any necessary safety devices). The fire resistance of doors is dealt with in Building Regulations and in fire precautions legislation. Advice can be sought from fire authorities.

Sanitary Conveniences (Regulation 20)

For a sanitary convenience, shared use is only permitted in the case of a room containing a single WC where the door to the room can be locked from the inside. The required numbers of sanitary conveniences and urinals are specified in the ACOP. The rooms containing the sanitary conveniences must be adequately ventilated and lit and kept in a clean tidy condition.

There is no specific requirement for an intervening ventilated space (IVS) either in the regulations or the ACOP. However, the ACOP does refer to an IVS as one way of achieving adequate ventilation of sanitary conveniences. However, no room containing a sanitary convenience should open directly into a room where food is processed, prepared or eaten.

Washing Facilities (Regulation 21)

Suitable and sufficient washing facilities must be provided. These will include showers if the nature of the work requires them for health reasons. They must include a supply of clean hot and cold, or warm water, soap and suitable means of drying. The rooms containing them must be sufficiently ventilated and lit and kept in a clean and tidy condition. The ACOP shows the minimum number of wash stations which must be provided.

Drinking Water (Regulation 22)

An adequate supply of wholesome drinking water must be provided for all persons in the workplace. Drinking cups or beakers must be provided free of charge unless supplied by means of a drinking fountain.

Accommodation for Clothing (Regulation 23)

Accommodation must be provided for a person's own clothing not worn during working hours and special clothing which is not taken home. Facilities for personal clothing must be secure where facilities to change clothing are required. Where necessary to avoid risks to health or damage, this accommodation must be separate from accommodation for clothing worn at work and accommodation for other clothing. All accommodation must include facilities for drying and be in a suitable location.

If a person is required to wear special clothing at work, and for reasons of health or propriety cannot be expected to change in another room, suitable and sufficient facilities must be provided and where necessary for opposite sexes.

Facilities for Changing Clothing (Regulation 24)

Suitable and sufficient facilities must be provided for persons at work in the workplace to change into clothing required to protect health or propriety or special clothing for the purpose of the work involved. Other regulations and approved codes of practice on the control of substances hazardous to health also deal with changing facilities.

Facilities for Rest and to Eat Meals (Regulation 25)

Suitable and sufficient rest facilities must be provided at readily accessible places. Where necessary for reasons of health or safety, rest facilities must include suitable facilities to eat meals where food eaten in the workplace would otherwise become contaminated. For example, work carried out in a micro-biological laboratory.

It is considered that food eaten at a desk in an office environment is not subject to contamination; therefore this situation is suitable.

Prevention of Discomfort Caused by Tobacco Smoke (Regulation 25)

Rest areas and rest rooms must be arranged to enable employees to use them without experiencing discomfort from tobacco smoke. Methods of achieving this include:

Smoking is not be permitted in any Council office, corridor, stairway, lavatory, etc. for more information see: Section 2(10): Smoking at Work.