

Health and safety in a fitness environment

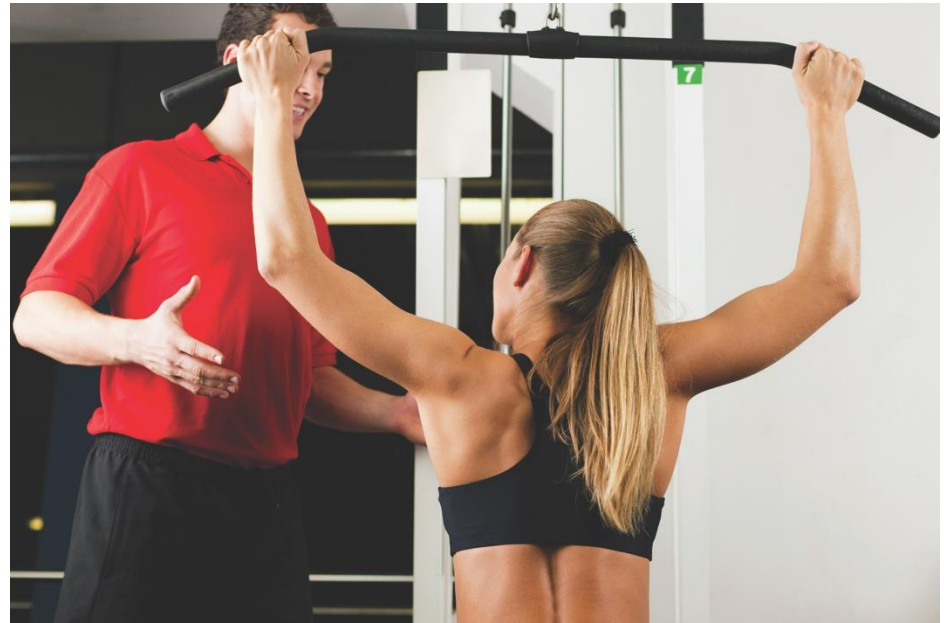


Unit: Health, safety and welfare in a fitness environment

The importance of health and safety

CONSIDER

Why is health and safety important in a fitness environment?



The importance of health and safety



- Legal requirement.
- Duty of care.
- Keep people and workplace safe.
- Prevent accidents and emergencies.
- Professional practice.

Legislation

TASK

Name some of the key legislation that applies in the workplace and outline what is covered by different pieces of legislation.



Legal and regulatory requirements

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

- Identifies the responsibilities which both employers and employees have to themselves and members of the public.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

- Identifies in more detail what is required from employers to manage health and safety in the workplace.



Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Employers must make every attempt to ensure maximum health and safety requirements as far as is 'reasonably practicable'.



Health and Safety at Work Act 1974



Employer's responsibilities:

- Provide and maintain equipment and work.
- Deal with substances, such as chemicals, safely.
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision.
- Maintain safe and healthy workplaces with the necessary facilities.
- Provide a Health and Safety Policy Statement when employing five or more people.
- Ensure that visitors and members of the public are not put at unnecessary risk.

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Employee's responsibilities:

- Take care of their own health and safety at work.
- Take care of the health and safety of others.
- Cooperate with their employer.
- Do not misuse or interfere with anything provided for health and safety purposes.



Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

States:

‘It is a legal requirement for employers to conduct a risk assessment on all work practices, equipment and working environments.’

The **Health and Safety Executive** (HSE), a governmental body responsible for health and safety, defines risk assessment as: ‘a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people’.

Other legislation

- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR).
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (PPE).
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH).
- Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969.
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992.

Duty of care and role boundaries

TASK

What is the required duty of care for a fitness instructor?

What are the role boundaries for special populations?

What are the roles of other people in the workplace?



Duty of care

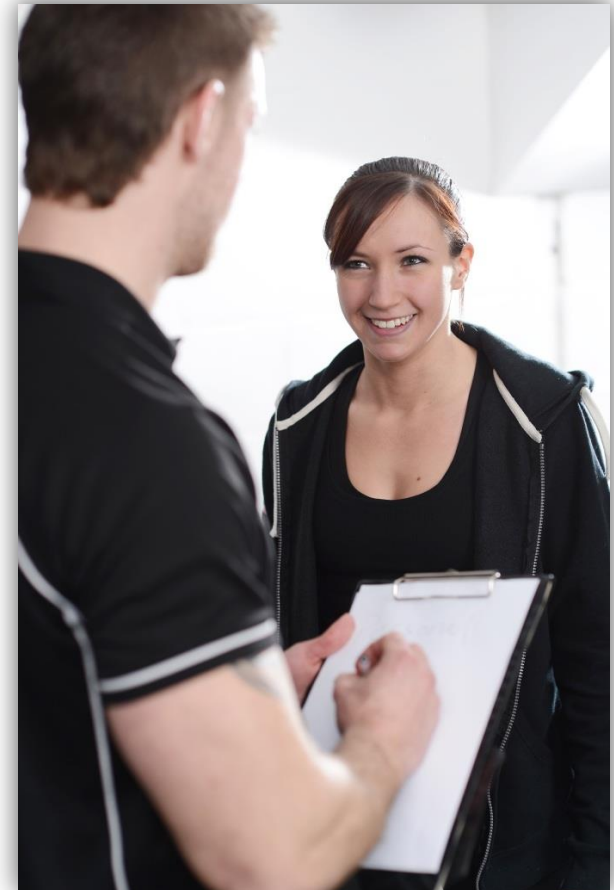
The obligation to apply a reasonable level of care towards an individual to avoid injury to that individual or his/her property.

A 'reasonable' level of care is considered to be that you have, **to the best of your knowledge and ability**, taken all precautions to minimise risk.



Health and safety relevant to an instructor

- General health and safety duties.
- Emergency action plans (EAPs):
 - Working practices.
 - Client screening.
 - Equipment safety.
 - First aid (if qualified).



Emergency action plans

EAPs detail a company's procedures in the event of accident or incident, e.g. bomb threat, evacuation, gas leak, fire and other high risk and life or death situations.

They will give details on:

- What to do in the event of...
- What to do during...
- What to do after...

Employers will regularly test their staff to ensure their competence in the event of such matters.



Working practice policies



- Competency, qualifications.
- Public liability insurance.
- Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs).
- Induction and structure (e.g. screening, PAR-Q).
- Risks of exercise and exercise benefits (e.g. CHD).
- Where to go in event of fire, nearest telephone, nearest first aid kit and qualified first aiders, nearest drinking water.
- Checking environment before/after session, reporting damage and recording accidents/incidents.

Duty of care and special populations

Duty of care is considered to be greater when dealing with individuals who are in certain special population groups:

- Children.
- Young adults (14-16).
- Older adults (50+).
- Ante- and postnatal women.
- Disabled people.

Knowledge of the physiological processes involved with specific populations.

Additional qualifications required to work with special populations.



Health and safety roles and duties



Health and safety officer – overall responsibility.

Department lead – responsibility for health and safety in named department.

Duty first aider – managing first aid emergencies and accidents.

Everyone still has a responsibility to themselves and others.

Instructors will be required to carry out regular health and safety checks within the fitness environment (e.g. studio, gym or pool) in accordance with their employer's policies and procedures.



Health and safety documents

TASK

Which health and safety documents are essential in the workplace?



Health and safety documents



- Health and safety policy and procedures.
- Health and safety poster.
- Incident or accident report book.
- Risk assessment report.
- Screening documents, e.g. PAR-Q, informed consent.
- Client records, e.g. emergency contact.

Security

Thought storm

What security arrangements may be required in a fitness environment?



External security

- Video monitoring system (CCTV).
- Monitor front door and parking area.
- Monitor every exit area from the inside.
- Light security.
- Security and alarm stickers.
- Effective security.
- Adapt to the necessary level of required security.



Centre/studio security

- Access control.
- Intruder, panic, personal alarm.
- Preventing violence.
- Radios, pagers, mobile phones.
- Training for staff.
- Keep personal information confidential.
- Discourage lone working.

