

Work Related Violence and Lone Working

The London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames has been alerted to an increased number of reported cases of work-related violence in work environments. This is not only physical assault but verbal abuse and threats, particularly where workers have face-to-face contact with the public.

Lone Working

Exposure to violence at work and the risk of assaults depends on a person's occupation, circumstances and the situation involved, for example working alone increases the probability towards that vulnerable worker.

Good Practice and Risk Awareness

Training to deal with aggressive behaviour can be an effective means of averting a volatile situation, tension or stress. By implementing policies and procedures and making staff fully aware of them can arm workers with the ammunition to do their job well. A good support system for staff (eg availability of an emergency system, the opportunity to discuss problems with management; allowing staff a break following a difficult predicament) is a major factor in maintaining worker confidence.

Assessing the risk

Although a risk assessment alone won't reduce work-related violence occurring it is a practical way of getting the right control measures in place. Action taken in response to findings will help you to develop policies and procedures on work-related violence.

A risk assessment is a legal requirement in any business and a web-friendly template is available on the Health and Safety Executive's [website](#). Guidance on making your assessment more effective is highlighted in this leaflet.



Food Hygiene Rating Scheme – Latest

Most of the food businesses in the borough will have now been provided with a food hygiene rating. Those ratings will be re-assessed each time a food business is inspected.

If you disagree with the rating you have been given there are a number of options open to you; these are outlined in a new information document which we have produced for operators. [This leaflet](#) is provided to operators scoring less than 5 after their inspection and can also be downloaded from our website.

Remember to keep us informed of your details, particularly when there has been a change of ownership. You can register your business online or by post. [More information is provided on our website.](#)

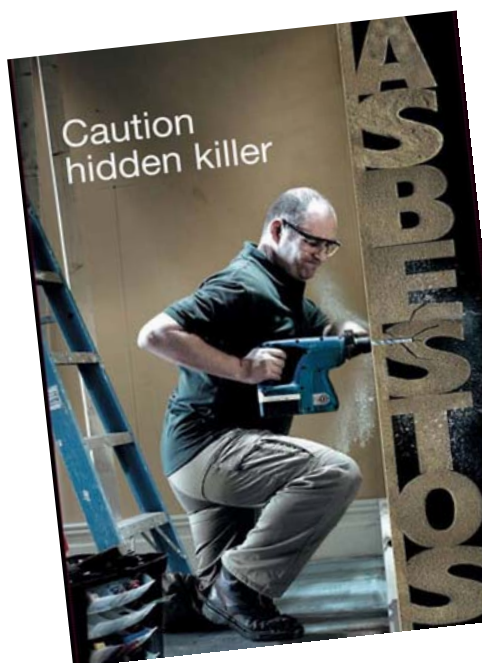
Food Sampling and Analysis Activity

Environmental health officers carry out a regular programme of food sampling to ensure that businesses comply with food safety and food standards legislation. As well as undertaking microbiological samples to determine whether food is safe to eat we also take samples in order to determine whether there is a presence of contamination and in order to confirm the accuracy of any information on labels or in advertising. Sampling activity is generally carried out for three main reasons:

- Local or national sampling programmes or projects (usually in partnership with other local authorities);
- Sampling activity forming part of our routine inspection activity; and
- Samples taken in response to complaints or allegations.

In 2012 some of our food sampling included:

- Checks for pathogens like E.coli O157
- Swabs taken to detect Legionella
- DNA speciation analysis of animal products
- Quantitative analysis of potential carcinogens
- Tests for presence of allergens in food
- Examination of foreign objects in food



Asbestos – Your Responsibility?

Asbestos is the greatest single cause of work-related deaths in the UK. It was extensively used as a building material in the UK from the 1950s through to the mid-1980s, so is present in many buildings. Asbestos fibres cause serious diseases which are responsible for around 4000 deaths a year.

If you own, work in or manage buildings built before 2000, find out if a survey has been carried out and if there are any asbestos containing materials (ACM) present. If there are, they do not necessarily have to be removed but do need to be labelled and managed to prevent accidental damage and inhalation of the dust.

Asbestos can be found in textured coatings (such as Artex), pipe insulation, fuse boards, floor tiles, and sheet materials (corrugated roofing). This is not a complete list so if in doubt consult with a specialist. If you manage non-domestic premises you have a duty to:

- Take reasonable steps to find out if there are any ACMs in the building and if so, how much, where it is and what condition it is in;
- Presume materials contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence that they do not;
- Make, and keep up-to-date, a record of the location and condition of the materials;
- Assess the risk of anyone being exposed to fibres from the materials identified;
- Prepare a plan that sets out in detail how the risks from these materials will be managed;
- Take the necessary steps to put the plan into action;
- Periodically review and monitor the plan and the arrangements to act on it; and
- Provide information on the location and condition of the materials to anyone who may disturb them.

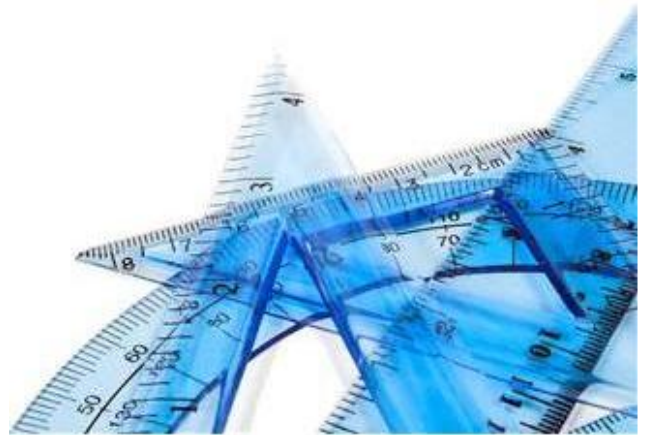
For more information and advice visit the Health and Safety Executive [website](#).

Planning Policy and Noise Control Measures

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into force in March 2012 and represents the government's commitment to sustainable development through its intention to make the planning system more streamlined, localised and less restrictive. It aims to reduce the regulatory burden and place sustainability at the heart of development process.

With regard to acoustic design and noise control, the NPPF provides a set of overarching aims which broadly reflect those already contained in the Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE). Development should therefore aim to avoid significant adverse impacts and reduce and minimise other adverse impacts on health and quality of life, within the context of the governments policy on sustainable development.

The emphasis is on local authorities creating local policy and guidance which reflects both the NPPF and the NPSE whilst at the same time reflecting the needs and priorities of their communities. We are currently developing a new Supplementary Planning Document on Noise which will assist all concerned which will hopefully be available later in 2013.



Foreign Language Labelling

The Food Labelling Regulations 1996 state that, where labelling is required, it should be in a language "easily understood by the purchaser". In the UK, this is accepted as being in the English language. It is therefore an offence for retailers or wholesalers to supply food without English labelling.

The Regulations require certain compulsory information, which must be in English and appear either on a label on, or attached to, the packaging, or on a label clearly readable through the packaging. Please contact us if you require any more information about food labelling issues.



Can We Help You?

Here is a non-exhaustive list of our services in relation to commercial and industrial premises:

- Food safety and standards inspections
- European approval of food establishments
- Food complaint investigations
- Food poisoning outbreak investigations
- Infectious disease and public health investigations
- Health and safety inspections
- Workplace health, safety & welfare complaints
- Workplace accident and death investigations
- Noise pollution advice and complaints
- Construction noise and nuisance complaints
- Licensing consultations and representations
- Planning consultations and development advice
- Acoustic monitoring and advice
- Authorisations to polluting processes
- Public health, rubbish and nuisance complaints
- Pest control advice and complaints
- Oversight of exhumations
- Advice on provision of sanitary conveniences
- Sunday trading advice

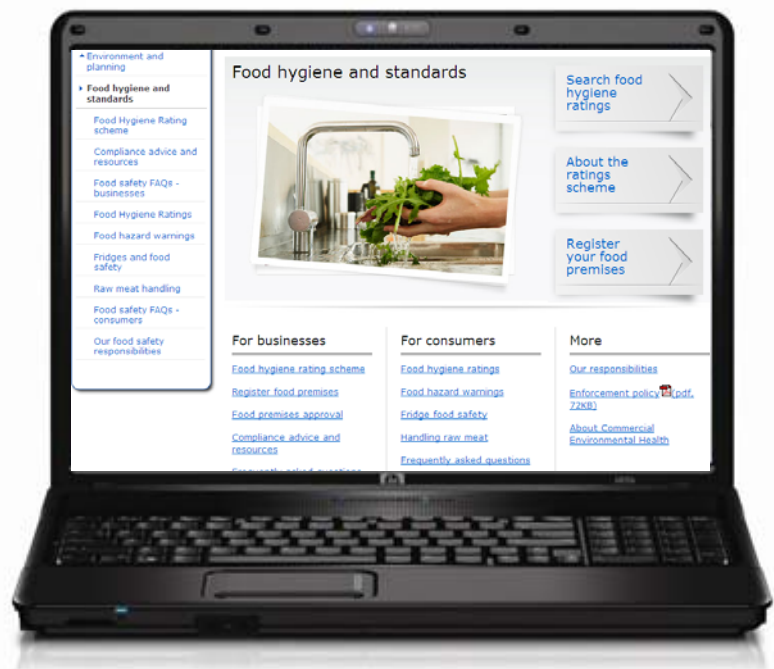
Improvements to Website Content and Functionality

We have recently started to improve the accessibility and content of the material on our website, starting with the Food Hygiene pages.

Users can now access information according to whether they are a consumer or a business. In particular, we intend expanding the information we provide to businesses over time in order to help them with regulatory compliance issues.

We intend building three main areas which include food, health & safety and environmental protection (our main areas of responsibility). Planned changes to the website will hopefully be completed and in place by the end of the year.

In the meantime, the food hygiene pages can be accessed here.



Consultation on Deregulation of Entertainment



The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has issued a Response to its consultation on the deregulation of entertainment. The Government now plans to deregulate entertainment beginning in April 2013 with:-

- Plays and the Performance of Dance will be deregulated for audiences of up to 500 between the hours of 08:00 to 23:00;
Indoor sport for audiences of up to 1000 between 08:00 to 23:00;
- Permitted music performances with audiences from 200 to 500 in on-licensed premises and workplaces;
- Recorded music in on-licensed premises between 08:00 to 23:00 with an audience limit of 500 (and the prospect of a Review if noise nuisance is caused);
- Plays, films, indoor sporting events, live and recorded music and performances of dance, held on their own premises by Local Authorities, hospitals, nurseries and schools (except higher education) will be exempt between 0800 to 2300, with no audience limit;
- Community premises such as church and village halls and community centres will be exempt from licensing requirements for live and recorded music for audiences of up to 500 people;
- Circuses will be exempt from regulation for live and recorded music, plays, dance and indoor sport between 08:00 to 23:00 with no audience restrictions.

Regulation will remain in place for all activities that exceed the audience limits and timings listed above. Boxing and wrestling will remain regulated, with the exception of the Olympic sports of Greco-Roman and Free style wrestling. Cage fighting/mixed martial arts will become regulated activities. Films will remain regulated, but the Government will consult in 2013 on proposals to examine the possibilities for safeguarding the community (focused screenings that maintain child protections).