

The retail industry employs around 3 million people in the UK, ranging from small independent stores to large multinational supermarkets. Legally all employers must assess the risks to their employees and people affected by their business (customers), below are some of the key hazards relating to the retail industry.



Key Hazards

Slips and trips

Slips and trips are the most common cause of accidents in the retail industry. A smooth floor only needs to be slightly wet to become slippery, an example would be customers coming in and out of the shop on a rainy day.

Consider cleaning regimes within the premises including dealing with spillages and inclement weather. Segregate areas where there are spillages or cleaning is taking place.

Plan for the location of your equipment to ensure that there are no trailing cables, where portable appliances are used ensure the area remains safe for employees and customers.

Manual handling

Managing manual handling risks within the workplace reduces injuries, improves efficiency and reduces the amount of sick days taken. When assessing manual handling risks think TILE: -

Task – What needs to be done?

Individual – Who is completing the task? What are their capabilities? Do they need additional support?

Load – What needs to be moved? How heavy is it? What shape is it?

Environment – Is the ground level? Are there any stairs? Does weather impact on the task?

Staff must be trained in manual handling techniques and also on any specific safety procedures relating to the tasks. Where possible replace the need to manual handling with mechanical and non-mechanical aids such as pallet trucks and fork lift trucks.

Workplace transport

As a retail outlet the chances are you will either have your own vehicles for deliveries and/or collections or you will have another company delivering to you, in either case you have a legal obligation to keep your employees and others such as customers safe. A good risk assessment can help you implement suitable control measures.

If you have your own vehicles and drivers then consider the following during your risk assessment process: -

Safe driver – competent drivers, required training/licenses, understanding of drugs and alcohol policy, training in safe procedures in place.

Safe vehicle – visual inspections prior to use, regular maintenance, MOT or service. For forklift trucks compliance with Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 is mandatory.

Safe site – traffic management, separation of pedestrians, speed limits, well maintained surfaces and suitable signage

Even if you do not have your own vehicles consideration for a safe site must be given and communicated to contractors and visiting drivers to your site.

Violence

The definition of work related violence is 'Any incident where a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work'. Violence can be physical or verbal which includes threats, intimidation, racial or sexual slur and shouting, swearing and insults. Consider the risks to your employees and implement suitable control measures, it is also worth considering how your business will handle a violent incident.

For more information or support with your business health & safety please call Harrier UK Ltd on 01332 460703 or email us at info@harrieruk.com

*This guidance sheet is not designed to be a comprehensive health & safety guide, each business should assess their own hazards and risks on a regular basis. This sheet is not updated regularly and therefore may not cover all legal obligations.