



How to implement an OHS Management System at your business?

Having an OHS Management System in place makes it easier to comply with current OHS regulations as well as contributing to an overall improvement of safety in the workplace. Five steps can allow you to achieve those goals.

Step 1 – Engage the management and all staff in designing an OHS Management System. The management should define and communicate an OHS policy whereby they undertake to ensure adequate resources and funds necessary for its implementation.

Step 2 – Plan the OHS policy implementation activities. When planning, one should set objectives as well as specifying actions that will help achieve them.

Step 3 – Create conditions for the implementation of specified schemes. Smooth and efficient implementation will be ensured by setting out procedures that should be documented - in writing or in electronic form.

Step 4 – Monitor implementation of the plans and the functioning of the system taking corrective or preventative action where necessary. Both the state of OHS and actions aiming at its improvement should be monitored.

Step 5 – Carry out periodical checks and keep improving the implemented OHS Management System. The management should keep track of the functioning of the OHS Management System and carry out periodical assessment of its efficiency.



What is an audit? OHS Audit

OHS Audit refers to a systematic check of the state of occupational health and safety in the workplace with special attention paid to the organisation of work processes and the technical condition of machines and other technical equipment. It enables detection of any irregularities and helps define ways to rectify them. An OHS Audit is carried out by the OHS Service.

Under s 40 (1) of the Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy on the general regulations on occupational health and safety of 26 September 1997 (consolidated text: Dz.U. 2003.169.1650, as amended), it is an employer's obligation to ensure that the current work conditions be assessed for compliance with the law.

Carrying out such audits not only allows one to check the OHS compliance, but it can also give one an opportunity to rectify any issues detected without incurring legal consequences.

Members of the OHS Service are entitled to carry out such audits. Items checked during a typical audit carried out by the OHS Service include: compliance with OHS rules and regulations, number of accidents at work, work conditions at individual workstations, OHS training and occupational risk.

Upon completion of an audit, the auditors will draw up a report containing recommendations for the employer. If any issues have been identified, the employer will receive ready-made proposals for amendments and time to implement them.



Changes to the plastic-bag recycling charges

The Ministry of Finance published in April a Convergence Programme Update whereby it announced inter alia that the recycling charge will soon apply to all plastic bags, regardless of their thickness. Only the thinnest bags used for packing groceries will remain free of charge.

The document presented by the Ministry of Finance implies that one of the ideas is to make the recycling charge tighter by amending the so-called 'Plastic Bag Act'.

Currently, the recycling charge only applies to plastic bags 15 to 50 micrometres thick. Bags that are thicker are not subject to the recycling charge. As a result, shops have been circumventing the obligation by using bags thicker than 50 micrometres, for which they do not have to pay.

- This practice is not favourable from the viewpoint of waste-generation prevention as despite certain reduction in light plastic bags, it has led to an increase in the number of thicker bags on the market - wrote the Ministry of Finance in its Convergence Programme Update.

For this reason, the Ministry of Finance wants all plastic bags thicker than 15 micrometres to be subject to the charge. Only the thinnest ones would be free of charge, as they are deemed necessary for hygienic or food waste-generation prevention reasons. The amendments could come into force as early as September of this year.



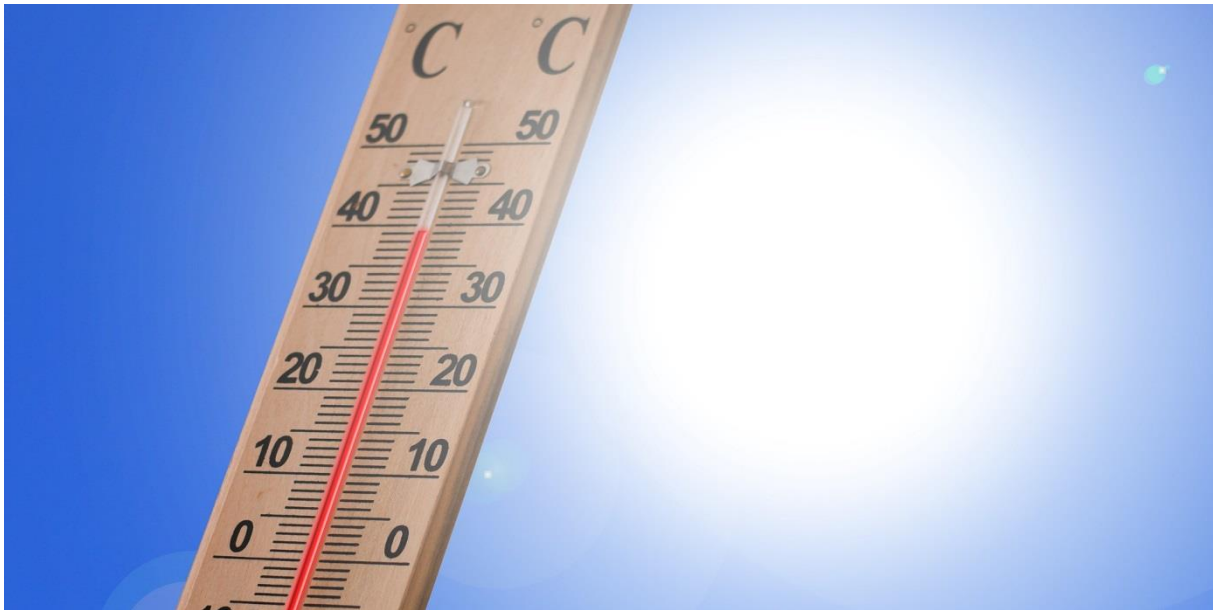
How to behave in case of a road accident?

When travelling by car or other vehicle, we must remember about safe driving rules and follow specific guidelines in case of an accident. Safety in travel depends primarily on ourselves.

Any action should be taken with due caution, without unnecessary emotions and additional damage before the arrival of specialist rescue services.

In case of an accident:

- Take out the ignition keys;
- Detach the battery clamp;
- Secure the vehicle in place, protect against slipping;
- Secure the place of accident and those providing assistance (turn on emergence lights, dipped headlights at night, place the warning triangle at a proper distance);
- Call rescue services or – if it is not possible due to a lack of telephone – stop another car;
- Provide first aid to the injured – preferably with the help of others; if others cannot help, do not lose time, act on your own – for the injured without palpable pulse and breathing the first minutes are crucial; however, the aid must be provided properly;
- If you feel the smell of fuel, leave the place immediately;
- When putting out a fire in the engine compartment with an extinguisher, remember not to fully open, but only crack open the bonnet - with fully open bonnet you risk an explosion and could be burnt.



Work in temperatures exceeding 26 degrees Celsius

Works performed at temperatures above 26°C outdoors, in open spaces without roofing, are certainly not easy. Similar experiences are reported by those working in sunlit rooms, where the only cooling element is draught.

Under the current regulations, an employer must provide to its staff refreshments in the amount sufficient to satisfy their needs, cold or hot (depending on the type of work performed), and in a hot environment (above 25°C and a specified WBGT factor) – also drinks enriched with minerals and vitamins.

Clothing in which the staff perform their duties is also important. For manual work, the clothes should be made from a breathing fabric while at the same time protecting against dirt and allowing for the application of protective clothing. In non-air-conditioned rooms the employer should allow for exceptions from the dress code, but under certain conditions:

- Gents – summer suits, short-sleeved shirts, no tie, long trousers made of natural fabrics (e.g. linen), full light footwear;
- Ladies – dresses, blouses made of light, airy blouses, without low necklines or narrow straps exposing the shoulders, light toe-covered shoes.

In temperatures exceeding 30°C, the employer **can** introduce shorter working hours or provide for extra breaks from work.



Facing the Notre Dame fire – fire safety rules for historical sights

In Poland, there are no specific regulations concerning fire safety in historical sights. Fire safety checks are performed as in the case of any other building.

In the face of a catastrophe, such as the Notre Dame fire, many experts have asked the following question: could the tragedy have been avoided? There is no definitive answer and in this particular case it will not be known before the Paris prosecutors have completed their investigation. Nevertheless, Notre Dame Cathedral, as a historical sight and one of Paris landmarks, should be, from a rational point of view, subject to special fire safety supervision.

What do the Polish fire safety regulations for historical sights provide in this regard?

Issues relating to historical sights are regulated in the Act on the protection of sights and sight care of 23 July 2003 (Dz. U. 2003 No. 162 item 1568, consolidated text: Dz. U. of 2018 item 2067, 2245). It lays down inter alia the rules for historical sight protection. On the other hand, there are no specific regulations concerning the fire safety of historical sights.

There is only one provision requiring that museums and historical buildings be equipped with fixed extinguishing equipment and fire alarm systems. In the event of any suspicions of a risk of fire in a historical sight, the Chief Commander or Regional (Voivodship) Fire Service Commander can order a comprehensive audit to be carried out immediately.



EC survey on implementation of environmental protection regulations

The European Commission has carried out a survey entitled “Environmental Law Implementation and Enforcement in EU Member States”. The results of the survey will help to develop an EC action plan for the years 2020/2021 supporting the EU Member State administrations in their efforts to fully implement EU laws on environmental protection.

The aim of the survey is to help the Commission to better understand the needs and expectations of those who are professionally engaged in environmental protection in public administration and organisations involved in environmental law enforcement, as well as the citizens that are actively interested in environmental law compliance and enforcement in their state, region or local community.

The survey is anonymous and available also in Polish. It comprises 2 parts: the first part consists of general questions on the implementation of EU environmental laws, while the second part focuses on the Forum for Environmental Law Compliance and Environmental Management and the EC action plan related to that forum. The completion of the survey will take no more than 10 minutes.

The deadline for filling in the survey is 15 November 2019, but the first answers provided until 30 April 2019 will be analysed and used for discussion during the Green Week organised by the Directorate General for Environmental Protection between 14 and 17 May 2019 and discussed on 14 May 2019 on the Forum for Environmental Law Compliance and Environmental Management.



Safe coach travel

The coach is still a very popular means of transport. Despite an illusory feeling of safety, due to the responsibility resting with the driver, it is good to stay alert and bear in mind several important safety rules.

The most frequent causes of accidents include: recklessness, drink and driving, failure to give way, improper overtaking and turn-taking. In the case of bus drivers additional factors include failure to observe the driving time norms and rest norms.

As a coach passenger, remember these several important rules:

- Prior to departure **assess the phyco-physical disposition of the driver and the technical condition of the bus;**
- **Never leave your luggage unattended;**
- Only carry **as much cash as necessary;**
- During breaks and stops **do not go too far away from the bus;**
- **Exercise special care** in crowded places:
- **Never accept** meals or snacks from strangers;
- **Do not trust** strangers.
- **Be careful** with particularly attractive job offers, profitable business proposals, offer of goods at low prices, etc.

However, should you fall victim of theft and get any documents, credit cards, luggage or other items stolen, remember to report to the nearest police station as soon as possible.



Can one wash their work clothes at home?

Working cloths are used at workstations requiring the highest hygienic standards, such as: restaurants, bars, canteens, food processing plants or child-care institutions. Can such work clothes be washed at home?

In order to function properly, work clothes should be properly maintained. Above all, one should remember that when washing work clothes such factors as temperature may be critical, as many germs dangerous to humans that can cause poisoning or infection (e.g. streptococcus aureus or salmonella) are killed by high temperatures and certain chemical substances.

According to research, household energy-efficient washing machines frequently fail to achieve the programmed 60°C temperature, not do they maintain it long enough. Moreover, they are not suitable for concentrated detergents that are necessary for the clothes to be washed really clean.

Household washing machines lack the technical capabilities to ensure a proper standard of work clothes maintenance.

Adequate maintenance is only ensured by industry laundries running certified **Quality Management Systems compliant with the ISO 9001:2015 and EN 14065:2016** standards.



Air traffic controllers' work conditions

The work of an air traffic controller (ATC) is extremely demanding. It belongs to the professional group of those responsible for the safety of flights in air space and at the airports. Responsibility for the life of others is one of the strains involved in an ATC's job.

An ATC's work involves a number of perception-related challenges, involved in such matters as data processing, quick responses, time pressure and resistance to stressful situations. Responsibility for the lives of others is one of the most important factors having impact on the controller's overall state of health and well-being.

Providing adequate work conditions to controllers is essential as it allows them to perform their work with greater efficiency. Special attention should be paid to prevent such work environmental factors as lighting, noise or room temperature from adversely affecting the employees.

Another important factor is workplace ergonomics, i.e. adjusted and properly regulated furniture.

One should also remember about software ergonomics, which should allow for easy access to the information received. This contributes to minimising the psychological strain and eye fatigue of the employee. Proper spatial and temporal organisation helps an employee to regenerate the employee's energy and reduce mental strain.