

Preparing for a Health & Safety Inspector's Visit

Employer Checklist

An inspection can happen for several reasons, from routine visits to complaints or workplace incidents. Being prepared helps ensure the process runs smoothly and that you understand what's expected.

Use this checklist to help prepare for, manage and follow up on an inspector's visit.

When an inspector arrives

- [ ] Ask to see the inspector's official identification or warrant.
- [ ] Record their name, job title and enforcing authority.
- [ ] Notify the appropriate senior manager.
- [ ] Arrange a quiet room for the initial discussion.

Opening meeting

- [ ] Confirm the reason for the visit, whether routine, complaint, incident or follow-up.
- [ ] Establish which areas and activities will be inspected.
- [ ] Identify the colleagues who will accompany the inspector.
- [ ] Involve relevant safety or employee representatives.

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Co-operation

- [ ] Provide safe access to all relevant workplace areas.
- [ ] Supply suitable PPE where required.
- [ ] Allow inspectors to speak privately with employees.
- [ ] Avoid obstructing, delaying or influencing the inspection.
- [ ] Answer questions honestly and factually. Avoid guessing if unsure.

Have documentation ready

Make sure the following records are accessible:

- [ ] Health & Safety Policy.
- [ ] Relevant risk assessments, method statements, COSHH and fire risk assessments.
- [ ] Employee training, induction and competency records.
- [ ] Accident and RIDDOR records.
- [ ] Maintenance, statutory inspection, monitoring and audit records.

Understanding inspector powers

- [ ] Allow photography, sampling, testing and measurements where required.
- [ ] Do not interfere with items the inspector has instructed must remain untouched.
- [ ] Provide copies of documents when formally requested.
- [ ] Support access to relevant IT systems and electronic records.
- [ ] Provide reasonable assistance and facilities throughout the visit.

Interviews

- [ ] Nominate an appropriate management representative.
- [ ] Ensure interviews can take place without interruption.
- [ ] Make notes of questions and responses where appropriate.
- [ ] If a formal Section 20 interview takes place, ensure directors understand the legal implications.

Closing discussion and feedback

- [ ] Attend the inspector's final debrief.
- [ ] Make sure you understand all concerns raised.
- [ ] Clarify any enforcement action, including: verbal advice, Notifications of Contravention, Improvement Notices, Prohibition Notices or recommendations for prosecution.
- [ ] Confirm deadlines and required actions.

After the inspector leaves

- [ ] Update senior management on the findings.
- [ ] Record all required actions in your corrective action system.
- [ ] Allocate responsibility and resources to complete actions.
- [ ] Add compliance deadlines to your diary.
- [ ] Keep all correspondence and evidence of compliance.
- [ ] Seek competent advice if enforcement action has been taken.

Next Steps

Once the inspection is complete, take time to review the findings and identify whether any wider Health & Safety improvements are needed. Use this opportunity to strengthen existing processes, address any gaps and help create a safer workplace moving forward.

Need Help?

Having the right advice and processes in place can make all the difference. Effective HRM provides practical Health & Safety support to help businesses understand their responsibilities and maintain safer workplaces.

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