



What to expect when we visit your business

Introduction

Our job is to keep people safe and healthy at work. We visit hundreds of locations every year as part of that job. Your visit is one of many that we do every day. We may have arrived without warning. This isn't unusual. We don't always tell people we're coming, and the law lets us visit at any reasonable time.

During the visit

The inspector will look at how you keep your workers, and anyone who may be affected by your work, healthy and safe. They may also give you advice on health and safety or make sure you are providing suitable welfare facilities, such as running hot and cold water and toilets.

While the inspector is with you, they may:

- Ask you about your workers and what they do
- Look at any possible health risks arising from the work you are doing
- Look at any machinery or other equipment that you have
- Ask to see records or other documents
- Take photographs

The inspector will want to know about:

- The main health and safety issues in your workplace
- Your own knowledge or experience of health and safety

The inspector may also talk to you about things like safety standards, guidance and everyday practices in your industry.

Your workers

The inspector will need to talk to your employees or their representatives during the visit.

What if there's something wrong?

The inspector may take action if they find you're breaking the law during the visit. They may also tell you to stop a dangerous activity in your workplace immediately. For example, a dangerous activity could be people working on a roof where scaffolding is unsafe.

After the visit

After the inspector has finished looking round your workplace, they might:

- Offer advice (either verbal or in writing)
- Write a Formal Letter of Advice
- Give you an improvement notice
- Give you a prohibition notice
- Prosecute you for breaching health and safety laws

Advice

The inspector may give you advice, verbally or in writing, about some improvements you could make to health and safety in your workplace. This advice is free.

Formal Letter of Advice

A Formal Letter of Advice (FLA) is a letter that tells you about health and safety laws you may have broken. It also explains how you've broken them. A FLA will tell you what you need to do to stop breaking the law.

The inspector will only give you a FLA in accordance with the HSE's Enforcement Management Model. This means the inspector thinks you have broken the law seriously enough for them to write to you about it.

We will give you a specified time frame to make any changes. Failure to follow any advice may be used as evidence of continued breach of health and safety laws.

Improvement notice

An improvement notice will tell you:

- What's wrong
- Any changes you need to make to put things right
- How long you have to make those changes

We will give you a specific timeframe to make any changes. You commit a criminal offence if you don't make the changes in the timeframe we give you.

Prohibition notice

You may get a prohibition notice if there is a risk of serious personal injury now or in the future. This could be, for example, people working on a roof where scaffolding is unsafe.

A prohibition notice orders you to stop doing something until you have made it safe to continue. This could be, for example, keeping workers off a roof until you fix any unsafe scaffolding. You commit a criminal offence if you don't comply with a prohibition notice.

Prosecution

We can prosecute you for breaking health and safety laws or for failing to comply with an improvement notice or a prohibition notice. The courts can fine you or in some cases send you to prison.

Disagreeing with our decision

If you don't agree with what we've decided when we write to you, you may be able to challenge our decision.

We will always tell you how you can challenge one of our decisions. Please contact your inspector or their manager before you start any formal dispute against one of our decisions. They may be able to look at the decision again.

Complaints

If you have any complaints about your visit, you can contact your inspector's manager to tell them why you're not happy. Your inspector has to tell you their manager's name. If you're not satisfied with what your inspector's manager tells you or any investigation they carry out, you can complain in writing to our Chief Executive at HSE@gov.gg or phone 01481 220010.