

How to write and sign a health and safety policy

A plain-English checklist for writing and signing the policy

Need a health and safety policy? Use these ten steps to write and sign one. Each step maps to a section in the ESG Complete free Word template. A policy is not a procedures pack.

How to use this guide

Work through each step in order. Tick off the "What to include" bullets against your draft. Prefer short, honest clauses over claims you cannot evidence. This is not legal advice; adapt wording to your operations and jurisdiction. Sign and date it, and review it every 12 or 24 months.

1. Write a short statement of intent

Buyers want a signed commitment to safe and healthy conditions, written for the work you actually do.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Legal company name and country
- A commitment to prevent work-related injury and ill health, so far as is reasonably practicable
- A short list of what the business does
- That you will set health and safety objectives and continually improve

Tip: Put the title on the cover: Health and Safety Policy, Occupational Health and Safety Policy, or Work Health and Safety Policy.

Use in template section: Policy statement

2. Say who the policy covers

Reviewers reject generic scope. Name workers, and contractors or visitors if they come onto your work.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Workers, and contractors or visitors if that is true
- Workplaces and sites you control

Tip: Do not claim you cover every visitor if you never have them on site.

Use in template section: Scope

3. Name who is accountable

The most senior person signs. Name who leads safety day to day if that is someone else.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Who is accountable for the policy
- Who leads safety day to day
- What workers must do (follow controls, report hazards)
- What managers must provide (information, instruction, training, supervision)

Tip: Use real names or roles. Do not leave this as "management".

Use in template section: Responsibilities

4. Commit to consulting workers

Consultation is a legal duty in many places and a common reject reason when it is missing.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- That you consult workers, or that you will
- A reasonable chance for workers to contribute to decisions

Tip: If you already have a safety meeting or HSR, you can say so. If not, say you will consult.

Use in template section: Consultation

5. Describe how you manage risk

Name the hierarchy of control. Add one line on psychological health. Mention real risks only if they apply.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Identify hazards and eliminate them where you can
- Hierarchy of control: eliminate, substitute, isolate, engineer, administer, then PPE
- A short psychosocial / psychological-health line
- Optional: particular attention to construction, plant, chemicals, lone work, or office work

Tip: Do not invent SWMS, plant lists, or injury rates. If a risk does not apply, omit it.

Use in template section: Risk and hazard management

6. Cover induction and training

Buyers look for information, instruction, training, and supervision, not a training-hours figure.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Induction before new workers start
- Refresh when the work or the risk changes

Tip: Do not invent first-aiders names or course certificates.

Use in template section: Training and competency

7. Say how incidents are reported

Give a real contact. Say notifiable incidents go to the regulator.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Injuries, illnesses, incidents, and near misses
- Who they are reported to (email, phone, or role)
- That you will investigate
- Notifiable incidents reported to the regulator in the time the law requires

Tip: A role is fine if you do not want a personal email in the policy.

Use in template section: Incident reporting

8. Commit to the law, not a fake certificate

Legal compliance and making the policy available is enough. Only mention ISO 45001 if you already run it.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Health and safety law and other applicable requirements
- Available to workers and to buyers who ask for it
- ISO 45001 only if you already have that system

Tip: Do not claim certification you do not hold.

Use in template section: Compliance

9. Set a review date

Unsigned or stale policies get sent back. Pick 12 or 24 months.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Review at least every 12 or 24 months
- Sooner if the work, the law, or an incident means it is out of date

Tip: A one-page current policy beats a ten-page copy from three years ago.

Use in template section: Review

10. Sign and date it

The most senior person signs. Reviewers reject blank approval blocks.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Name and title on their own lines
- Date and signature

Tip: A policy is not a procedures pack. SWMS and a WHSMS come later if the buyer asks.

Use in template section: Approval

After the ten steps: keep the signed policy with your records. If you later need procedures or SWMS, write those next. They are not this document.

Prefer not to spend hours writing it?

Answer a short questionnaire and ESG Complete fills a branded health and safety policy for you. Same ten sections as this guide. **US\$99**. Usually the same day. Revisions included.

Start here: <https://www.esgcomplete.com/health-and-safety-policy/thank-you?scroll=think-about>