

# Is your workplace safe enough?

By  Su-Mari Du Bruyn

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As we strive to improve the level of health and safety in our clients' environments, we regularly come across ten common safety issues.



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- Wet floors - People who have spilled something on a floor or people who have cleaned a floor without putting a warning sign up for others to see, increase the risk of their colleagues slipping and falling.
- Standing on tables or chairs - Standing on a table or chair to reach for something or to pack something away is not safe.
- Blocked passages - Temporarily storing boxes on the floor (blocking passages), increases the risk of people tripping.
- Blocked fire escapes and fire extinguishers - In the event of a fire, blocked fire escapes and / or blocked fire extinguishers can cost a life.
- Fire extinguishers that have been stolen, used for fun and / or not serviced - If a fire extinguisher is not available and in a good working condition where and when you need it, it can cost the lives of your colleagues and your own in the event of a fire.
- First aid boxes that are incomplete, misplaced or inaccessible - It is useless to have a first aid box if it cannot be found, accessed or does not contain what you need when you need it. Ensure that you regularly check that the contents have not expired.
- First aid staff and fire fighters that are not trained - It is critical that you have a sufficient number of staff trained, with valid certificates from reputable organisations, so that they can assist you with minimising your risk and injuries during an emergency.
- Fire alarms that are out of order - Especially in big buildings, it is critical that you are able to notify people ASAP when an emergency arises and when the building needs to be evacuated.
- Evacuation plans and drills - In the event of an emergency, people need to know what to do and where to go. This can be achieved by having updated evacuation plans that are easily understood, clearly visible and regularly practiced. When you do have a drill, make sure that any external support services, which may be automatically notified when your emergency alarms are activated, are informed in advance of your drill, to avoid wasting their time responding to an emergency that does not exist.
- Emergency numbers that are outdated - This does not only apply to the numbers of external support services such as the fire department, but it is also important for the numbers of next of kin for your employees. Ensure that the numbers of external support services are regularly tested to ensure that they are still in working order.

With health and safety, regret is always something that will come too late. Ensure that management constantly maintains a high level of awareness of the responsibilities of each employee towards keeping the work environment healthy and safe.

Su-Mari Du Bruyn is co-founder of the company Adapt To Change. She is a qualified HR practitioner and logistics specialist and is passionate about Continuous Improvement and people development.

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