

EXAMPLE PROJECT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY IN GENERAL DENTAL PRACTICE

10.1 Aim

To ensure the whole practice team have a thorough understanding of the Health and Safety requirements for General Practice.

10.2 Background

Health and safety legislation protects patients and staff and it is a legal requirement under the Health and safety at work act 1974. Below is a list of many of the aspects, but is not exhaustive.

- Riddor
- Cossh
- Display screen
- Portable appliance testing
- Fire precautions
- First aid and medical emergencies
- Infection control
- Manual handling
- Mercury spill hazard
- Pressure vessels
- Protective equipment
- X-ray registration and testing
- Risk assessment
- Safety signs
- Waste disposal
- Working environment
- Water supplies

10.3 Who is involved?

All members of the dental team have a responsibility to ensure that practice policies and guidelines are adhered to although the ultimate responsibility is that of the employer.

As with any audit it is important to ensure that all members of the team are kept informed of developments and feel that they play a role in the development of any future policies and procedures.

Involve the team in developing a data collection sheet and in discussion of results.

10.4. Research Materials

BDA advice sheet A3 (Health and safety law for dental practices)

HSE guidance and Act

NRPB radiological guidance

10.5 Standards

Most Health and Safety requirements are law and therefore require complete compliance (a guide is available at the end of the advice sheet A3).

10.6 Data collection

Most of the data collection will revolve around whether you comply with the Act and other aspects of Health and Safety Law. There are numerous aspects to Health and Safety and it should be remembered that it does not just involve having a piece of paper with a written policy on, the act also requires that procedures are in place to ensure that policies are carried out within the practice and regularly updated.

Don't forget to ensure that part of your audit includes checking that the practice has an induction or training procedure for new members of staff who may not be conversant with the act.

As a starting point look at what requirements there are within the act (again the guide at the back of the A3 document is a good starting point) then assess how the practice complies compared with these standards.

In the data collection sheet perhaps consider collecting data on:

Name of policy: fully or partly written

Compliance with policy: full or part

Induction procedure in place: full or part

Once this data is collected look for where the gaps are and devise a plan to implement and fulfil the requirements.

Anonymise and discuss the results and improvements with other members of the group. Ensure all members of the team are involved.