



TOURISM FOR A BETTER WORLD

## Mastering Health & Safety in Tourism

This topic provides you with the knowledge to understand and implement the structures and processes essential for ensuring the **health and safety of all employees** in a tourism business. You'll learn to identify various workplace hazards and gain a deeper understanding of "health and safety" within the tourism and hospitality context. We'll also explore how occupational, human, and environmental factors can impact your well-being and that of your colleagues.

### What Will You Learn?

- The core **principles of health and safety** in tourism and hospitality.
- An understanding of the **occupational, human, and environmental factors** that influence workplace health and safety.
- Information on establishing **clear responsibilities and roles** within health and safety processes.
- The critical importance of **regular training sessions and employee supervision** for maintaining safety standards.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, tourism, management, health management, safety management

## Understanding Health & Safety Measures in Tourism

This section will guide you through the fundamental **principles of health and safety in tourism and hospitality**. You'll gain a clear understanding of the **occupational, human, and environmental factors** that impact your well-being and safety at work.

### What is Health & Safety in the Workplace?

Working safely requires more than just common sense or simply telling employees to "be safe." It starts with proactive measures, like providing **new employee orientation** before they begin work.

This includes reviewing duties, identifying who to approach for questions, and knowing where to go for first aid. It also means **training employees for each specific task**—demonstrating the correct way, then having them show it back to you.

Beyond initial training, **supervision is crucial** for maintaining a safe working environment. Managers should frequently check on staff, especially new workers, and correct unsafe practices on the spot. Remember, common sense isn't universal; **training and consistent supervision are the keys to a safer, more productive workplace for everyone.**

Liliane, the manager, demonstrated excellent health and safety practices. Let's delve deeper into what "health" and "safety" mean in this context.

### **Defining Health & Safety**

**Health** refers to a state of complete physical and mental well-being, free from illness or disease.

**Safety** is simply the **absence of risks**. A **hazard** is anything that could cause harm, such as chemicals, electricity, working on ladders, or an open drawer of knives.

Think about safety in your home. Growing up, relatives, doctors, nurses, and teachers all played a role in keeping you safe from hazards at home, school, and play. However, once you enter the professional world, **the responsibility for your own health and safety shifts to you**. If you supervise a team, their health and safety also become your responsibility. It's critical to consider the various factors that can affect health and safety at work for you and your colleagues.

### **Factors Affecting Health & Safety at Work**

These factors are typically categorized into three main areas:

- **Occupational Factors:** These relate directly to the tasks, tools, and materials involved in a job.
  - **Chemicals:** Cleaning agents, pesticides, etc.
  - **Equipment:** Malfunctioning machinery, tools, vehicles.
  - **Cooking processes:** Grills, steaming, deep-fat frying.
  - **Food ingredients:** Flour dust, yeast, hot oil.
- **Human Factors:** These relate to the individual's state and actions.
  - **Carelessness:** Lack of attention to detail.
  - **Inexperience:** Unfamiliarity with tasks or equipment.
  - **Lack of training:** Not knowing the correct procedures.
  - **Physical/mental stress:** Affecting concentration and judgment.

- **Overloaded with work:** Leading to rushing and errors.
- **Environmental Factors:** These relate to the physical surroundings of the workplace.
  - **Poor lighting:** Making it hard to see hazards.
  - **Excessive noise:** Causing distraction or hearing damage.
  - **Poor ventilation:** Leading to stale air or hazardous fumes.
  - **Slippery floors:** A common cause of falls.
  - **Unsafe temperatures:** Too hot or too cold.

It is crucial to be able to **identify and explain** these different factors, especially when implementing safety procedures or training your team members.

### **Chef Moussa's Day: Identifying Hazards**

Let's look at Chef Moussa's situation and identify the factors at play:

- **"A day off would do me good. I have worked 7 straight shifts and I am exhausted. I have not seen my family for days..."**
  - **Factor:** Human (Physical/mental stress, Overloaded with work). Time to recover from stressful daily life is important.
- **"I have to watch the boiling water today - my other chef burned himself last week when he did not lift the pot properly."**
  - **Factor:** Occupational (Cooking processes - boiling water/hot pots). Saucepans of boiling water and deep fat fryers need careful managing, yet many kitchen staff are untrained in their correct use.
- **"My cooker is broken. I really need to get my cooker fixed."**
  - **Factor:** Occupational (Equipment). Broken or worn-out equipment can be very dangerous and stressful to use.
- **"The floor is very slippery. It really needs to be cleaned."**
  - **Factor:** Environmental (Slippery floors). Greasy, dirty, and slippery floors are a top cause of kitchen accidents.
- **"I am so tired. I really need to take a break right now."**
  - **Factor:** Human (Physical/mental stress, Overloaded with work). Inexperience, pressure to finish, and tiredness are main reasons for serious injuries with knives and sharp objects in kitchens.

- **"The bin is already quite full. It needs to be emptied right away."**
  - **Factor:** Environmental (Dirty, overflowing bins). Dirty, overflowing bins with no lids attract vermin and insects that carry disease.
- **"The soap is almost empty. I must remember to refill it."**
  - **Factor:** Occupational (Chemicals/Hygiene - lack of soap). Not providing soap and hand towels is dangerous to employees and customers as dirty hands transmit bacteria and viruses such as COVID-19.
- **"I cannot see what I am doing at the corner cooker. I have to remind the manager to replace the bulbs."**
  - **Factor:** Environmental (Poor lighting). Poor lighting in kitchens causes many accidents.
- **"I really need to check with the manager again when the maintenance company is coming. The fan needs to be fixed."**
  - **Factor:** Environmental (Poor ventilation). Extractor fans that are dirty or clogged cause bad air and high temperatures in a kitchen.

By understanding and addressing these factors, you can significantly improve the health and safety of your tourism workplace in Your country. What's one area of health and safety you feel is most often overlooked in tourism businesses in Your country?

## Why Are Health & Safety Procedures Essential in Your Workplace?

You now understand what health and safety entails, along with the various factors that influence it. This brings us to a crucial question: Why do you need health and safety procedures in your workplace?

Consider the fast-paced nature of the hospitality and tourism industry. As Liliane, a hotel manager, puts it, "One minute I'm checking reservations, the next I'm helping serve food because we're short-staffed that night." Speed of delivery is vital; guests don't like to wait. However, this constant rush, stress, and hurried movement mean your workplace is often filled with hazards.

### **The Reality of a Hazardous Workplace**

With a large number of employees, many of whom may have limited training, it's no surprise that accidents are common. These can include:

- **Slips, trips, and falls**
- **Exposure to hazardous substances**
- **Cuts and other injuries**

Safeguarding yourself, your team, and your customers against potential accidents and hazards isn't just an employee's responsibility. **As a business manager or owner, it is your fundamental duty.** Health and safety means your workplace must adhere to safety instructions and never put colleagues, employees, or customers at risk.

What is one specific hazard in your tourism business that you feel needs more attention?

## Managing Health & Safety: Roles, Training, and Supervision

This section will provide you with vital information on establishing **clear responsibilities and roles** within your health and safety processes. You will also learn about the critical importance of **regular training sessions and consistent supervision of employees** to ensure a safe working environment.

## The Indispensable Value of Workplace Health & Safety Procedures

Let's explore why establishing **health and safety procedures** is so crucial for your workplace.

These procedures are essential because they:

- **Reduce accidents, stress, poor performance, and illness** for everyone.
- Clearly **demonstrate that the business owner cares about employee well-being.**
- **Preserve and promote a positive company reputation.**
- **Prevent legal action** against the business.
- **Improve costs** by cutting down on absenteeism and sick pay.

The hospitality and tourism industry is incredibly dynamic, with many active employees, often young people in their first jobs. Roles vary greatly, from baristas and chefs to tour guides and housekeepers. All these positions are physically demanding and involve diverse tools, equipment, and environments.

### Key Reasons for Clear Health & Safety Procedures

1. **Inexperience:** Many young workers are new to the workplace and need clear "Dos and Don'ts" to protect themselves and their colleagues. Some employees might also be too shy or feel incompetent to ask questions or seek help.
2. **A Feeling of Invincibility:** Some managers or supervisors mistakenly believe that safety procedures don't apply to them, potentially leading to risky behavior.
3. **Legal Duty:** As a business owner, you have a **legal obligation** to protect your employees by providing clear health and safety rules and regulations.

4. **Reputation:** Businesses that prioritize staff well-being gain a more attractive reputation as an employer, drawing in better talent.
5. **Prevention:** Health and safety procedures are vital for **preventing common injuries and illnesses**, such as:
  - Incidents involving hand tools, knives, hot liquids and objects, machines, and other equipment.
  - Heat/cold stress, scalds, and burns.
  - Slips, trips, and falls, along with injuries from overexertion.
  - Stress, bullying, and overwork.

Can you think of other reasons or benefits for having strong health and safety in the workplace in Your country?

### **Consequences of Non-Compliance**

Unfortunately, some employers and employees still neglect or ignore health and safety guidelines. The consequences for non-compliance can be severe:

#### **For Business Owners:**

- **Verbal or written warnings** from local authorities.
- **Improvement notices** from government agencies.
- **Prohibition notices** from local authorities.
- **Prosecution**, potentially leading to fines or even imprisonment.

#### **For Employees:**

- **Verbal or written warnings** from management.
- **Loss of employment.**
- **Prosecution** from management or local authorities.

### **Your Turn: Why Safety Procedures are Needed**

Let's test your understanding. Are these statements true or false regarding why safety procedures are needed?

- Employees may be shy and embarrassed to clarify when in doubt. **(True)**
  - *Many people, especially young people, are afraid of being judged, so they keep quiet instead of asking.*

- The company has extra resources for safety anyway. **(False)**
  - *Safety procedures are a necessity, not just an "extra."*
- It's the duty of employees to protect themselves even without experience. **(False)**
  - *While employees have a role, the primary duty to provide a safe environment lies with the employer.*
- New employees are unfamiliar with the work environment. **(True)**
  - *In a new environment, there's so much to learn that initial safety guidance is critical.*
- New employees often enjoy the procedures. **(False)**
  - *Their enjoyment isn't the primary reason for safety procedures; their safety is.*
- Young and strong employees think they can handle everything. **(True)**
  - *They may mistakenly believe youth and strength are enough, overlooking the need for proper training and care.*

### Actionable Insights

Understanding **why** you need health and safety procedures in your business comes from recognizing their **benefits** while being fully aware of the **consequences of non-compliance**. This understanding will help you assign the right people to the right health and safety responsibilities.

Use these insights to explain to your team why health and safety procedures are vital. You can even create your own set of flashcards and share them during training sessions to reinforce these critical messages.

## Who is Responsible for Health & Safety in Your Workplace?

While **health and safety in the workplace is a shared responsibility**—meaning everyone on your team plays a role in keeping the environment safe and well—it's crucial to clearly define **who is responsible for what**. This ensures everyone knows their specific duties in the process.

### Employer/Business Owner Responsibilities

As the **employer or business owner**, your responsibilities include:

- **Ensuring the overall health and safety** of all employees.
- Making sure all **workplace equipment is up to standard** and safe to use.
- **Correcting any hazardous workplace conditions.**

- **Providing and maintaining the correct protective equipment and clothing.**
- **Keeping employees informed about hazards** and ensuring all staff receive proper health and safety training and supervision.

### **Supervisor and Line Manager Responsibilities**

**Supervisors and line managers** are responsible for:

- **Ensuring the health and safety of employees under their direct supervision.**
- Making sure their staff are **informed about all workplace hazards**.
- Ensuring the **correct safeguards are used** when required and that staff follow their training.

### **Staff Responsibilities**

Every **staff member** has a responsibility to:

- **Take reasonable care to protect their own health and safety**, as well as that of their colleagues and customers.
- **Follow all safe work procedures.**
- **Use correct protective equipment** as provided.
- **Not come to work sick, drunk, drugged, hungover, or on heavy medication.**
- **Report all accidents, near misses, falls, or incidents** to their supervisor.

### **Beyond Procedures: The Right People Matter**

Simply adopting the best health and safety **procedures** isn't enough. **Assigning the right person to oversee these procedures is critical** for their successful implementation. Recruiting someone ill-suited for the role could lead to the failure of even the best safety protocols.

### **Applying Safety Principles: Real-Life Scenarios**

Consider these scenarios, similar to what Liliane, the manager, demonstrated:

- **Liliane stops Fiona from kicking the door open. Why?**
  - Because the door **could hit somebody**. (This highlights the proactive identification and prevention of hazards).
- **Liliane draws Brian's attention to something. To what?**
  - She tells him to always **put the guard on the mixer** – she wants him to work safely. (This emphasizes proper equipment use and adherence to training).
- **Liliane rushes to Bruce to stop him lifting plates. Why?**



- She is afraid he **will hurt his back**. (This shows concern for physical well-being and preventing strain injuries).
- **Liliane stops Bruce from cleaning the meat slicer. Why?**
  - She is correcting his mistake – he **should have turned off the equipment and unplugged it** from the wall before cleaning. She is also making sure that when she sees someone doing something wrong she corrects them. (This underscores the importance of immediate correction and reinforcing safe procedures).

### Keys to a Safer Workplace: Show, Don't Just Tell

**Health & Safety should not rely solely on common sense or just telling employees what to do.** You need to **show them** how to work safely and then **supervise them** consistently.

- **Orient New Employees:** Provide a thorough **orientation BEFORE they start work**. Cover general information like duties, who to ask for questions, their rights and responsibilities, and where to go for first aid. Encourage all questions, emphasizing that there's no such thing as a "stupid question."
- **Task-Specific Training:** For each specific task, **show employees how to perform it correctly, then have them demonstrate it back to you**.
- **Regular Supervision:** **Regularly check on your employees** to ensure they're performing tasks properly, efficiently, and safely. Pay extra attention to new staff. Always offer positive reinforcement, and gently but firmly correct behavior that isn't up to standard. If you see something wrong, **correct it immediately**.

By following this checklist, you can ensure you are effectively performing your health and safety duties and fostering a truly safe working environment in your tourism business in Your country. What's one area of health and safety responsibility you'd like to reinforce with your team this week?

## Implementing Workplace Health & Safety: Training, Supervision, and Ongoing Reinforcement

To effectively implement workplace health and safety, you must ensure employees receive the right **training and supervision** *before* they start work or begin a new task. This is particularly crucial for **young or inexperienced workers**, who may not feel comfortable asking questions or might not fully recognize potential hazards. It's vital to provide **clear health and safety procedures** and create a training environment where your team feels encouraged to ask questions and discuss safety topics openly.

Remember, one training session isn't enough. **Health and safety training should happen regularly** to maintain a consistently safe environment.

## Ensuring Ongoing Health and Safety Training

How can you guarantee continuous health and safety preparedness?

- **Observe:** Regularly **observe workplace activities** to ensure safe practices are consistently followed.
- **Reward:** **Reward positive behavior** when safety procedures are adhered to. This reinforces good habits.
- **Correct:** **Correct unsafe behavior** immediately and constructively.
- **Hold Accountable:** **Hold employees accountable** if safety standards decline.
- **Reinforce:** **Reinforce safe practices by setting a positive example** yourself.
- **Inform:** For each job or task, **inform your staff or colleagues** about safety protocols, even if they seem obvious.
- **Point Out:** **Point out potential hazards and discuss** them with your team.
- **Discuss:** Talk about **past accidents and near misses**, and ask employees how they would prevent similar incidents in the future. This fosters critical thinking and collective problem-solving.
- **Explain:** Clearly **explain that all employees are responsible** for reporting hazards, such as spills or electrical faults, when they see them.

You are now well-equipped to manage health and safety within your tourism business in Your country. What's one ongoing health and safety practice you plan to implement or strengthen starting this week?