

Health & Safety Policy Essentials

What your health and safety policy legally needs to cover, and how expectations scale as your business grows.

By business size

Business size	Legal requirement	What the policy should include
Fewer than 5 employees	A written health and safety policy is not legally required, but is still recommended good practice.	• A short statement of intent • Key risks relevant to your work • Basic arrangements for managing them
5 or more employees	A written health and safety policy is a legal requirement under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.	• Statement of intent, signed by the business owner or director • Organisation section: who is responsible for what • Arrangements: risk assessment, training, and emergency procedures
Larger SME or multi-site	As above, with site-specific detail expected by clients and assessment schemes.	• Everything above, plus site-specific supplements • Contractor and subcontractor management • A defined review schedule (typically annual)

Beyond the legal minimum

Even where a written policy isn't a legal requirement, having one in place tends to matter for other reasons: it's usually the first document a client, insurer, or SSIP scheme asks to see, and it makes onboarding new staff or subcontractors considerably more straightforward.

Keeping it current

- Review the policy at least annually, and any time your work activities or team size changes materially.
- Make sure the policy is signed and dated; an unsigned or outdated policy is one of the most common reasons documents get rejected during tender assessment.
- Keep risk assessments as a living document alongside the policy, not a one-off exercise.

Smallbizbod writes and maintains health and safety policies that hold up to client and SSIP scrutiny, sized to fit your business rather than copied from a template. Book a free, no-obligation chat at www.smallbizbod.com.