Health and Safety Induction: Getting New Starters Off to a Safe Start

Training · Published 16 November 2026 by Integral Safety Ltd · integralsafetyltd.co.uk/blog/health-and-safety-inductions-for-new-starters



Why the First Weeks Matter Most

New starters are at particular risk of injury in their first weeks in a job. The reasons are straightforward. They do not yet know where the hazards are, which shortcuts are tolerated and which are not, or who to ask when something looks wrong. Many are also keen to make a good impression, which makes them reluctant to admit confusion or to refuse a task they are not ready for. A structured health and safety induction closes that gap deliberately rather than leaving new employees to pick things up by watching and guessing.

The legal basis for this is not optional guidance; it is a specific duty. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to provide health and safety training when someone starts work, and again whenever their risks change through a new job, new responsibilities, new equipment or new technology. The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 sets the wider duty to provide the information, instruction, training and supervision needed to keep people safe. Together these mean that safety training for new starters is a legal requirement, not a courtesy, and it applies from the first day someone starts work, even if the paperwork has not yet been finalised.

Who Is Responsible for Getting It Right

The employer carries the legal duty, but in practice it is usually delegated. A director or senior manager should own the induction policy and make sure it actually happens, not just that a form exists. Line managers and supervisors are usually the ones delivering it, which means they need to understand the content well enough to explain it in plain language, not just hand over a booklet. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, employers are also required to appoint competent people to help them meet their health and safety duties, and for many smaller organisations that competent advice is bought in rather than held in house.

Where managers are expected to run inductions, assess risk and supervise new staff, formal grounding helps. Integral Safety, an IOSH approved training provider, runs the IOSH Managing Safely course for exactly this reason: it helps supervisors and managers understand their health and safety responsibilities, so an induction reflects the risks in their workplace rather than a generic template copied from elsewhere.

What a Good Induction Covers

The depth should match your risks, but for most workplaces the core content looks like this:

- **Emergency arrangements first:** what the alarm sounds like, escape routes and the assembly point, who the fire marshals are, and physically walking the route rather than pointing at a plan on the wall
- **First aid arrangements:** who the first aiders are, where kits and the accident book are kept, and how an injury gets reported; the actual training of first aiders should come from a dedicated first aid training provider, not be improvised on the day
- **Accident and near miss reporting:** how to report, and a clear message that reporting is welcomed, not punished
- **The main hazards of the workplace** and the site rules that control them: vehicle and pedestrian routes, restricted areas, permit to work systems, PPE zones
- **Their specific job risks:** the relevant risk assessments translated into plain instructions for the tasks they will actually be doing
- **PPE:** what is needed, how to get it, how to wear, store and maintain it
- **Welfare basics:** toilets, rest areas, drinking water, and the smoking and vaping policy
- **Who to ask:** a named person for safety questions, with explicit permission to stop a task and ask when unsure

What a Compliant Induction Actually Looks Like in Practice

Day one should cover what could hurt someone on day one: emergency arrangements, immediate hazards and how to stop work safely if something feels wrong. Everything else lands better spread across the first days and weeks than crammed into a long slideshow the newcomer will not retain. Practical demonstration usually works better than a passive briefing: walk the site, point at the actual fire exits rather than a diagram, show the machine guard in use, watch the person carry out

the task and coach them through it.

A short conversation to check understanding, not a written exam, tells you whether the induction has worked and signals that safety is taken seriously here rather than treated as a box-ticking formality. Many employers also build in a structured follow-up at the end of week one and again around the one month mark. By then the new starter has real questions they did not know to ask on day one, and they often notice hazards that long-serving staff have stopped seeing at all.

Where Inductions Commonly Go Wrong

The most frequent failure is treating the induction as paperwork rather than a genuine briefing: a form gets signed, but the content was never properly explained or demonstrated. A close second is delivering the full induction weeks after someone has already started working unsupervised, which defeats the purpose entirely. Generic inductions that never get adapted to the actual site, task or sector are another common problem, particularly where a business has several locations and uses the same slide deck for all of them regardless of local hazards.

Inductions also go stale. A programme written five years ago may still reference equipment that has since been replaced, fire exits that have moved, or a supervisor who has left. If the induction has not been reviewed since the workplace changed, it is quietly drifting out of date. A periodic audit is useful here; Integral Safety's auditing and inspection service can test whether what is written down matches what actually happens on the floor.

Do Not Forget the Not Quite New

Induction duties reach further than permanent recruits:

- **Agency and temporary workers** need induction matched to their actual tasks, however short the assignment; both the hirer and the agency have duties towards them, so agree who provides what rather than assuming the other side will
- **Young workers** need extra care, closer supervision and a risk assessment that specifically accounts for their inexperience, as required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations
- **Contractors** need a site induction covering your rules and hazards, and you need to understand theirs; this matters particularly on construction sites where multiple employers and trades are working alongside each other
- **Transfers and returners** after long absence need a refresher for their new area or role, since familiarity with the old job can mask real ignorance of the new one

The same logic applies across sectors with vulnerable people on site, such as care homes and schools, where a poorly inducted new starter can put residents, pupils or visitors at risk, not just themselves.

Records, Review and Keeping It Current

Record what was covered, when, by whom, and get the inductee to sign that they received and understood it. This record matters if anything goes wrong later; it is the evidence that the duty under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations was actually met, not just assumed. Keep inductions under review whenever your processes, layout or equipment change, and set a baseline review, at least annually, even if nothing obvious has shifted. Occasionally ask a recent starter what they actually remember; the gap between what was delivered and what stuck is often where the next incident is waiting to happen.

If your organisation is anywhere across Leicestershire or the wider East Midlands and wants help building a fit-for-purpose induction programme, Integral Safety's health and safety consultancy service can help design one around your actual risks rather than a generic template. Get in touch with our East Midlands team to give your next new starter a safer first day.

Talk to Integral Safety Ltd

We are health and safety consultants based in Coalville, Leicestershire, working with businesses across the East Midlands. If anything in this guide applies to your workplace, we can help.

Phone	01530 382 150 or 01664 400 450
Email	info@integralsafetyltd.co.uk
Website	integralsafetyltd.co.uk

This guide is general information about UK health and safety law and practice, correct as at 16 November 2026. It is not advice on your particular circumstances. The latest version is at https://integralsafetyltd.co.uk/blog/health-and-safety-inductions-for-new-starters.