Health and Safety at the BBC

October 2017

Policy owner: Head of Health and Safety, BBC
Health and Safety at the BBC

Executive Summary

Our people are full of ideas. Big, bold, globe-spanning ideas. Ideas that we turn into award-winning content.

To protect our creative ambition, we need to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of the people making it happen. That means our employees and anybody that works for us and with us. It also includes anyone who visits BBC offices, studios, production locations and events. It is our legal duty as a company and it’s a personal priority.

Our approach needs to be balanced and pragmatic in order to allow us to say yes to the ambitious ideas and still keep everyone healthy and safe.

It all comes down to accountability. If you create the risk, you manage it. Whether you’re hosting an event for 3,000 four year-olds, recording at the Olympics, covering conflicts overseas or keeping our broadcast systems running, it’s your job to manage and communicate the risks of your work.

There are a lot of guidelines, processes, advice, support and training to help you. They’ll help you handle anything you turn your hand to, however risky.

And we do our best to look after you while you’re looking after each other. Our aim is to make the BBC a safe and pleasant place to work.

This document has everything you need to know about Health and Safety at the BBC. It starts by explaining who’s responsible for Health and Safety. It then covers how we manage Health and Safety: the way we plan, the laws we follow, and what training and tools we have to keep each other safe.

You can find more information on the [BBC Safety website](http://www.bbc.co.uk). If you have any questions, comments, suggestions or feedback, please contact [safety@bbc.co.uk](mailto:safety@bbc.co.uk).

Thanks for your support. And for all the ideas.

Tony Hall

Date: October 2017
Who is responsible for Health and Safety?

The short answer is: everyone. Every single person working for, or on behalf of, the BBC has a duty to look after themselves and others – and that includes anyone who might be affected by our work.

The slightly longer answer is that responsibility flows down our organisation. From the Director General through various committees and boards to the individual. We’ve created an outline below, but you can find more details [here](#).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive Committee</th>
<th>At this level, the Director General heads up all things Health and Safety and is supported by the Deputy Director General.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BBC Safety Committee</strong></td>
<td>The Safety Committee meets every three months with senior representatives from each division. They carry out the executive committee’s wishes. A parallel joint trade union group (the Corporate Consultative Committee for Health, Safety and Welfare) leads any formal consultations about safety.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Divisional Management Boards &amp; Ops Groups</strong></td>
<td>They keep an eye on Health and Safety as part of normal business and deal with any issues passed up to them.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Divisional Safety Committee</strong></td>
<td>This committee sets goals for Health and Safety and checks how well we’re doing against them on a local level. They also work to keep improving our standards. Some divisions have divisional and local trade union safety groups, and some departments have local safety groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Line Managers</strong></td>
<td>All producers and managers are responsible for making sure the right things are in place to manage risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employees and contractors</strong></td>
<td>It’s everyone’s job to protect themselves and others.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

It’s essential that everyone understands and acts on their responsibilities. You can find the responsibilities for each key role in myRisks. But we cover it in your Health and Safety training, too.

What about trade unions?

We have a strong and well-established relationship with trade unions for health and safety matters. After all, we’ve got the same aim: making sure the BBC is a healthy and safe place to work.

BBC representatives meet with national safety representatives from the trade unions every three months, in the [Corporate Consultative Committee for Health Safety and Welfare](#). You can find more information about trade unions [here](#).
Meet the teams

Below you’ll find the teams and individuals who support us in keeping each other safe. All of these teams are part of the Safety, Security and Resilience (SSR) Group. You can read more about the SSR’s key jobs on Gateway.

The Health and Safety Team – looks after Health and Safety across the whole of the BBC, and provides advice and support to help us all stay safe.

The Business Continuity Team – works with people from each division to plan, test, rehearse and co-ordinate our response to major incidents or emergencies.

The High Risk & News Safety Team – supports our staff working in dangerous places (what we call “hostile environments”) and anyone doing high-risk work.

The BBC Chief Medical Officer – oversees the BBC’s health policies and external health providers.

The occupational health service – helps managers prevent, spot and help with any work-related ill-health in their teams. It also promotes physical, mental and social wellbeing. You can find details about their services and how to contact them on Gateway.

The Corporate Security & Investigations Team – advises BBC staff, programme makers and management on how to keep our people, programmes, events and buildings safe. You can find information and guidance on security, as well as the relevant contact details on myRisks.
How do we manage Health and Safety risks?

There’s a lot to it. Not least because we have so many types of risk to deal with. In general, though, a risk is anything that might cause injury or ill-health, break the law, or damage our equipment, buildings or reputation. This section explains how we keep all of those to a minimum.

Following the rules & keeping it legal

The UK’s Health and Safety laws are there for a reason. So we always follow them when we’re working at home. And when we’re abroad (where UK laws don’t usually apply) we comply with local standards. You can read more about how we work overseas on p.8. The Health and Safety team keeps an eye on any changes to Health and Safety laws that might affect what we do. They share these changes with the rest of the business in a report they write for the BBC Safety Committee every three months.

But our work is often so ambitious, pioneering or far-flung that UK laws aren’t enough. When that happens, we put extra standards and processes in place. Whatever it takes to keep our people safe.

You can find more information in myRisks, a toolbox we’ll tell you all about shortly.

Proper planning

Across the BBC, the Head of Safety and their team work with divisional leads to identify the significant Health and Safety risks and lessen them. Every department and division should also record any big risks in our corporate risk register – a list the BBC keeps of all its biggest risks. You can do this using the Magique risk management system. As part of this, specific action plans are put in place for the BBC, divisions and departments.

Managers have an important role for Health and Safety - and will:

- ensure there are suitable and sufficient risk assessments. They must do this in plenty of time before the work goes ahead, and look at all of the risks involved
- put things in place to deal with any risks that the assessment has flagged up
- share their most important findings with anyone the work might affect
- record the risk assessment properly and do another one if circumstances change
- make sure that the safety measures stay in place, and check regularly that they’re still the right ones
- make arrangements to train your team in relevant health, safety and security matters they need for their work
- Reporting accidents (including adding them to myRisks within 1 week)
- Reviewing and/or investigating accidents

You can find safety guidance and information for all BBC activities – and there’s a huge range of them – on myRisks.

What’s a risk assessment?

A structured way of finding out what could go wrong during an activity, who could be at risk – physically and psychologically - and what we can do to lessen that risk, or remove it completely.
If you think your work carries a significant risk (physical and/or psychological), you should do a risk assessment.

How do I complete a risk assessment?

- myRisks is an online tool that helps you complete and record your risk assessments.
- You can find detailed guidelines about how to do a risk assessment here.
- Everybody involved in the activity should contribute to the risk assessment and help put safety measures in place.
- Risk assessments must be “signed off” (approved) by your line manager or a different (more senior) person.
- Important findings from the assessment should be shared with everyone involved. You should send a copy to the team doing the work, and bring up the key points at your briefings.

myRisks – a safety toolbox for everyone

myRisks is an online portal with everything you need for managing Health and Safety risks at the BBC. It includes:

- bbc.co.uk/safety – a website full of safety information, safety news/alerts, Guides and procedures
- An app - to keep our safety information accessible to our people, wherever they are
- Open up – it’s good to talk about our mental health. Recognising this and looking after yourself and supporting others makes the BBC a healthier, happier, even greater place to work.

Helping our people

Training everyone

Our training helps to keep our staff safe. But it also helps to prepare our staff and keep our organisation safe by showing people how to avoid damaging our reputation. Line managers and the BBC Academy team work with the BBC health, safety and security teams to make sure we have all of the courses our people need. There is a wide range of training such as about mental health, first aid, safety management and leadership.

Who needs training?

There are compulsory courses for all of our job roles, and everybody must refresh their training when they’re asked to. Training is free to join, takes place during normal working hours and is run by the BBC Academy. All the courses are here. Some are mandatory, but others are listed here.

During our annual appraisal process, line managers will suggest training for their people. Their suggestions will be based on the person’s responsibilities, abilities and the amount of risk in their jobs. The Health, Safety and Security Training and Competence Guidelines show managers which training people in different roles should have completed, and what they should be able to do to be thought of as safe in their role. Everybody has a training record, which is held in myDevelopment, the BBC’s learning and development tool that both individuals and managers can use.
What about freelancers?
Specific guidance is published on myRisks.

Spreading the word

We talk about Health and Safety as much as we can – up, down and across the organisation. And we tell our freelancers all about it, too. When we get it right, all of our people know what could put them at risk, and how to lessen that risk, or avoid it completely. Here are all the ways we talk to our people:

Online

- The myRisks portal
- Online safety training
- A safety e-newsletter
- Articles in ‘Ariel’, our company e-newsletter
- Safety videos

Face-to-Face

- Targeted Health and Safety briefings by Safety Advisers
- Health and Safety committees and forums
- Safety alerts about urgent and unusual matters (these are sometimes shared outside of the BBC)
- Team briefings, coaching, safety training and advice from Health and Safety Advisers
- Mental Health training and campaign
- Health and well-being events

We also like to share our expertise. So we take part in industry and professional forums like the Joint Advisory Committee for Entertainment (JACE), Broadcast Industry Safety Group (BISG), Safety Advisory Group for Entertainment (SAGE) and more.

Creating safe and secure places to work

Managing our UK buildings

We own and rent buildings of all shapes and sizes in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. And we need to make sure they’re all safe to work in.

The BBC Workplace team looks after every BBC-occupied building with the help of some carefully chosen external contractors. Led by the Director of Workplace, the team manages the day-to-day running of the buildings. They also look after special building issues like Legionella, asbestos, fire safety, environmental matters and site transport.

If anybody in one of our buildings has to do specific construction or maintenance work, the BBC Workplace team organises a formal permit for them. These permits are then managed by a local permit officer and the facilities manager for the building. The facilities manager also keeps an eye on how things are running in their building and reports back to Workplace.

You can find out more about how we manage our buildings here.
Protecting our people overseas

We send staff all over the world. We also have staff living overseas and working in our international offices. Where possible we try to use the same approach no matter where our people are working and we also risk assess accordingly.

Our policy and the way we work are based on UK laws, but we also adjust our plans to fit the laws and local standards of the country we’re in.

We also check regularly that our international offices are following similar standards and procedures at our UK sites. We look at health, safety, security and business continuity, then give advice and support to the managers there. And we support the rest of our overseas staff to make sure they’re working safely, legally, and with minimal impact on the environment.

Since the international work of our international teams may face specific risks in different locations, we have a special committee dedicated to keeping them safe.

You can read our health, safety and security standards for international offices on myRisks. And if you work abroad, you can access resources, training and support on myRisks.

Staying safe in dangerous places

These are areas outside of the UK that are particularly dangerous because of war, conflict, political pressures or natural phenomena. Our work in these areas is assessed and controlled very thoroughly.

Our High Risk team gives security, travel and health advice and support for work in these places. Nobody is allowed to work in a hostile environment without the right training and approval from the right level of management.

We’re just as careful about people working on our behalf. Any independent production that we’ve commissioned in a hostile environment is overseen by our High-Risk Team.

You can read more information on ‘hostile environments’ here. And you can read about the specific procedures you need to follow in myRisks as part of the High Risk Guide.

Working with other people

Suppliers and contractors

Working with people from outside the BBC helps us make our content the best that it can be. And we take those people’s safety (and our safety while we’re working with them) very seriously. We work with people who properly manage their health, safety, and fire risks.

Before we start working with a supplier or contractor, we check them out. And we won’t consider using them unless they reach the standards we expect. For higher-risk activities, like scaffolding or special effects, we have lists of vetted suppliers and preferred suppliers. Our own people can nominate contractors or suppliers to be vetted and added to the lists. In certain circumstances we might be forced to use somebody who’s not on our list – for example, if the owner of a building we’re using says we have to.
How do we keep everyone safe?

Our contracts explain which BBC policies and safety requirements external people have to follow, and the standards they have to meet. At the very least this will mean following relevant laws. But with more risky activities – like special effects – we’ll put extra measures in place.

Whoever’s in charge of the work must make sure they’ve followed our rules for hiring external people (what we call the BBC Procurement Standards). And it’s up to them to coordinate everyone involved, making sure they work well together, and share information about risks, responsibilities and safety measures. They should also make sure somebody supervises external people and reports back on how they’re doing.

You can find more information about working with external contractors and suppliers here.

Independent productions

Often we call on independent production companies or event organisers to make content on behalf of the BBC.

We have strict guidelines for checking these companies, and won’t start working with them until we have. The guidelines are based on how our industry has agreed to measure safety. They’re also based on the amount of risk involved in a project. You can read these guidelines in full here.

Everybody involved in the commissioning process (the job of bringing these companies on board) must follow these guidelines. You can find out more about the commissioning process here.

How do we keep our standards up?

There are hundreds of BBC activities happening around the world every day. And our organisation, with the help of its people, needs to constantly check that safety standards aren’t slipping. This section explains how we do this.

Sharing our stories

We think it’s important to keep everybody in the loop about how we’re doing with Health and Safety. So we have:

- An online dashboard – data about how well we’re doing at health and safety. Forum members have automatic access to this but anyone can request to have a look, too.
- Reports from the health and safety team – highlighting key issues and analysing how well divisions and departments are looking after safety. Presented every three months to our safety committees and shared further by our safety managers. All issues raised by the reports or the discussions that happen afterwards are passed to the divisions or the Executive Board. They then put things in place to help solve the issues.
- Detailed annual reports – one for the Executive Committee, and another that is publicly available as part of the BBC Annual Report and Accounts.

You can find out even more about how we monitor safety here.
Managing accidents and incidents

Accidents happen. But we don’t let them go by without reporting (within 7 days), investigating (within 5 days), and learning from them. The same goes for near misses.

If you’re involved in an accident, it’s up to you (or sometimes your line manager) to report it. You can do that through myRisks.

Investigations always focus on the root causes of the accident. That’s so that we can find the best way to remove those causes and stop the same thing happening again.

Everything you need to know about handling accidents (including what to do if somebody makes a claim against the BBC), can be found in Accident Reporting and Investigation.

In some cases, accidents have to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive. If this is needed, the local Safety Adviser will assist.

How do we keep getting better?

We want to keep improving health and safety at the BBC. So our Safety Committee has agreed on an action plan.

It has three overall aims: to prevent injuries, to prevent damage to our property, and to keep our people as healthy and well as possible. For us, that last aim is also about proactively promoting health and wellbeing. And that includes making sure people have support with mental health issues, including work-related stress. You can find more details here.

To help us all achieve the action plan, we have some company goals (or as we call them ‘corporate objectives’). As an organisation the BBC must:

- Deliver safe and sustainable ways to create content.
- Ensure that our people, productions and infrastructure remain safe, secure and on air.
- Plan and be prepared for the unexpected.
- Spot if the way we’re doing things creates a risk to our programmes and services. Then lessen those risks.
- Let everyone in the organisation access relevant, useful and practical Health and Safety information and tools.
- Share the benefit and successes of our approach to Health and Safety.

All of our divisions have local action plans in place to support these goals. Meanwhile, the Safety Committee reviews its main action plan every three months and makes any changes it needs to.

If you have any questions or thoughts about the action plan, please do come and chat to a member of the Health and Safety team. You can find our contact details here.
Our Internal Audit team

For us, it’s not enough to have systems and processes to keep everyone safe and healthy. We want to make sure that those systems and processes are doing a good job, too. That’s where the Internal Audit team comes in, examining and evaluating how well our systems keep our healthy and safety performance in check. Not even the Health and Safety department is spared; they’re assessed regularly too.

In case of emergency…

We have all kinds of arrangements in place to help us prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. These are all published on myRisks and on Gateway but we’ve included some specific links below that you might find useful.

- Incidents: Management for Business Continuity
- BBC Security Response levels
- BBC “159” service – Emergency information
- BBC Premises - Emergency procedures
- BBC Safety Guideline - First Aid in BBC Premises

International emergencies

We also have arrangements in place to deal with international emergencies.

Our travel assistance programme provides 24-hour worldwide medical emergency advice to employees working abroad. It also organises medical evacuation of our people from any part of the world accessible to civilian transport. You can find out more here.

If any of our people are killed, injured, kidnapped or held against their will, a number of contingency plans and procedures swing into action. We can also call on specialist support from external experts if we need it.

The risk assessments we do for work in hostile environments or high-risk circumstances explain in detail our plans and procedures. And our High Risk and Occupational Health teams will add even more arrangements if needed, for example if somebody is working in an area with no communication infrastructure.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about this document (or about anything to do with Health and Safety), please come and chat to a member of the Health and Safety team. You can find our contact details here.