

Facilities Management from A to Z



Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard
published monthly in Facilities by Lexis Nexis between 2008 and 2016

Safety

Of all the competences required to be a successful facility manager among the most critical are the knowledge and skills involved in maintaining a safe working environment. Many FM departments are responsible for the management of the organisations Health and Safety policies. However even where this is not the case, the nature of facilities management dictates a close involvement with the implementation of such policies.

Facilities management responsibilities for areas like maintenance, catering and cleaning all carry significant risks. Hazards from the use of ladders or power tools, hygiene issues from food safety or toilet cleanliness, water safety, electricity, portable appliances, fire, ergonomics, manual handling or slips and trips on stairs and pathways – the list is almost endless. In most organisations FM has more potential to create or to prevent accidents than any other business function.

The wide scope of the FM function and the ever increasing scale of legislation and regulation affecting the workplace mean that safety compliance has become an important aspect of every facility managers role. The penalties of non compliance can be severe and increasingly impose personal responsibilities and liabilities on those responsible for the implementation of the policy. The Corporate Manslaughter Act of 2007 has brought increased focus on issues of liability and negligence.

While compliance is important it is not as critical as the need to provide a safer workplace for employees, suppliers and customers. In 2007/2008 the number of people killed in accidents at work was 229, while nearly 140,000 serious injuries were reported under RIDDOR and six million working days were lost due to workplace injury.

Managing health and safety requires the completion of assessments to establish the risks in the workplace. Once risks have been identified sensible measures can be put in place to control them and to make sure that they stay controlled.

For more information on establishing a Safety Policy visit the Health and Safety Executive website

www.hse.gov.uk