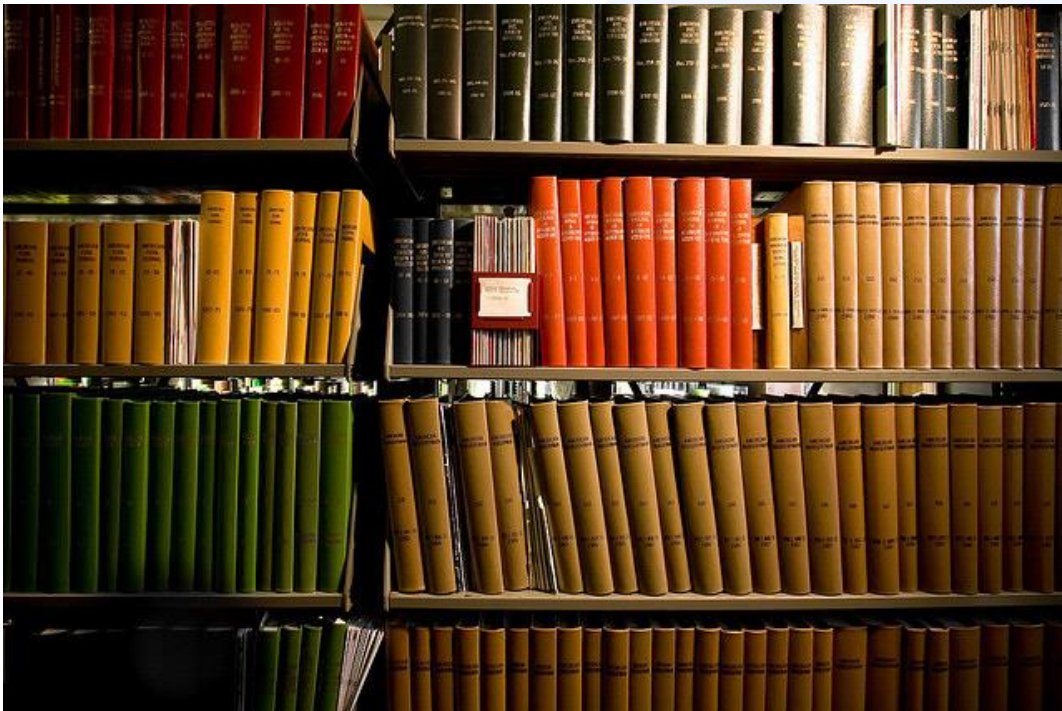




## **Basic Health and Safety Guidelines for Museums, Galleries, Libraries and Archives**



**AXA ART insures a portfolio of museums, galleries, libraries and archives which differ greatly. Recognising the need for a set of consistent Health and Safety guidelines which can be used, we would like to offer the following best practice advice.**

**Our guide concerns three parties likely to enter a gallery and encounter risk: owners / employers, employees, and visitors (invited and uninvited). It follows the advice of the Health and Safety Executive (hereafter the HSE). Further details can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk>.**



## **1. General Principles for Risk Assessment**

### **a. The Employer's Responsibility to Control the Risks in the Workplace**

As part of managing the health and safety of a business, it is your responsibility as an employer to control the risks in the workplace. This process is known as a risk assessment and it is something you are required by law to carry out. You are probably already taking steps to protect your employees, but your risk assessment will help you decide whether you should be doing more. If risk assessment is not carried out sufficiently, you might face:

- Employer Liability: the employer has a duty of care to his/her staff.
- Property Owner Liability: the property owner has a duty of care to all visitors.

### **b. The Five Stages of the Risk Assessment Process**

Firstly, you need to identify the risks at your workplace:

- Think about your workplace activities, processes and the substances used that could injure your employees or harm their health.
- Ask your employees what they think the hazards are, as they may notice things that are not obvious to you and may have some good ideas on how to control the risks.
- Check manufacturers' instructions or data sheets for chemicals and equipment, as they can be very helpful in spelling out the hazards.
- Some workers may have particular requirements, e.g. new and young workers, migrant workers, new and expectant mothers, people with disabilities, temporary workers, contractors, homeworkers and lone workers.

Secondly, you need to decide what harm they might cause to employees, visitors or other people and whether you are doing enough to prevent harm.

- Having identified the hazards, you then have to decide how likely it is that harm will occur.
- Think about how accidents and ill health could happen and concentrate on real risks – those that are most likely and which will cause the most harm.

Thirdly, you have to decide on and implement sensible and proportionate measures to control the risks in your workplace.

- Risk is a part of everyday life and you are not expected to eliminate all risks. What you must do is to make sure you know about the main risks and the things you need to do to manage them responsibly.
- Generally, you need to do everything reasonably practicable to protect people from harm.

Fourthly, you need to keep records of the findings of your risk assessment and the measures you undertook.

- Make a record of your significant findings – the hazards, how people might be harmed by them and what you have in place to control the risks.



- Any record produced should be simple and focused on controls.
- If you have fewer than five employees you do not have to write anything down, but it is useful to do so in order to review it at a later date, particularly if something changes in the interim. If you have five or more employees, you are required by law to write it down.

Finally, few workplaces stay the same so you need to review your assessment regularly.

## **2. The Risk of Slips, Trips and Wet Floors**

### **Consider the flooring and work environment**

The HSE states that **slips and trips are the most common cause of injury at work**, causing 40 per cent of all reported major injuries and leading to other types of serious accidents such as falls from height. It is important to:

- Check for loose, damaged and worn flooring and replace as needed.
- Ensure floors likely to get wet or have spillages on them are of a type that does not become unduly slippery.
- Make sure lighting is sufficient and that slopes or steps are clearly visible.
- Keep walkways and work areas clear of obstructions.
- Get the right footwear
- Use slip-resistant footwear where floors cannot be kept clean and dry to help prevent slip accidents.
- Trial footwear first to make sure it is suitable for the environment and for those who will be wearing it, i.e. comfort and fit.
- If footwear is supplied as personal protective equipment (PPE), it must be supplied free of charge to employees.
- Consider how work is organised and managed, e.g. to avoid rushing, overcrowding, trailing cables.
- Make sure employees are involved in the decisions that affect them, e.g. choice of PPE footwear or a change in cleaning methods.

### **In an institution environment, what can employees do to prevent slips and trips?**

- The HSE emphasises the need for employees in all workplaces to report all accidents or near misses to employers promptly. They can then use this information to prevent future accidents.
- Staff must tell employers about any work situation that you think is dangerous, or if they notice that something has gone wrong with their health and safety arrangements.
- If employees see a spillage, they must clean it up or make arrangements for it to be cleaned.
- If employees see items on the floor, where a visitor or another member of staff could trip over them, they must remove them or arrange for them to be removed or for the situation to be made safe.
- All employees must report any damaged floors or mats.



- All employees must play their part and keep the workplace tidy.
- If staff are given PPE, they must wear it and look after it. Report any faults or damage to employers and make arrangements for a replacement.

### Stop floors from being contaminated

Institutions experience lots of human traffic bringing water, dirt and other excess materials inside with them, which consequently increase the chances of employees and visitors slipping or tripping. Simple and effective **wet floor** management thus becomes the crucial means of managing and preventing such risks.

It is important to:

- Use doormats to stop rainwater being tracked in and making the floor slippery.
- Ensure spillages are cleaned up promptly so people do not slip.
- Fix leaks from machinery or buildings.
- Make sure plants and equipment are maintained.
- Plan pedestrian and vehicle routes to avoid contaminated areas.

### Use the right cleaning method

Owners and employers must ensure that the right cleaning methods are used on all flooring. Doing it incorrectly or incompetently increases the risk of an employee or visitor slipping, which in turn could lead to a painting or object on display being knocked and damaged.

It is important to:

- Make sure that your cleaning method is effective for the type of floor you have.
- Not introduce more slip or trip risks while cleaning is being done.
- Leave smooth floors dry after cleaning or exclude pedestrians until the floor is dry.
- Have effective arrangements for both routine cleaning and dealing with spills.
- Use the appropriate detergent mixed at the correct concentration.

## 3. Lifting Hazards

One of the most common causes of injury is lifting. The following tables from the HSE give general advice as to how best lift and hold items.

<b>The loads, are they:</b>	<b>Can you make the load:</b>
Heavy or bulky?	Lighter or less bulky?
Difficult to grasp?	Easier to grasp?
Unstable or likely to move unpredictably (like animals)?	More stable?
Harmful, e.g. sharp or hot?	Evenly stacked?
Awkwardly stacked?	
Too large for the handler to see over?	If the load comes in from elsewhere, have you asked the supplier to help, e.g. by providing handles or smaller packages?



<b>Problems to look for:</b>	<b>Ways of reducing the risk of injury</b>
<i>The tasks, do they involve:</i>	<i>Can you:</i>
Holding loads away from the body?	Use a lifting aid?
Twisting, stooping or reaching upwards?	Improve workplace layout to improve efficiency?
Large vertical movement?	Reduce the amount of twisting and stooping?
Long carrying distances?	Avoid lifting from floor level or above shoulder height, especially heavy loads?
Strenuous pushing or pulling?	
Repetitive handling?	Reduce carrying distances?
Insufficient rest or recovery time?	Avoid repetitive handling?
A work rate imposed by a process?	Vary the work, allowing one set of muscles to rest while another is used?
	Push rather than pull?

<b>Individual capacity, does the job:</b>	<b>Can you:</b>
Require unusual capability, e.g. above average strength or agility?	Pay particular attention to those who have a physical weakness?
Endanger those with a health problem or learning/ physical disability?	
Endanger pregnant women?	Take extra care of pregnant workers?
Call for special information or training?	Give your employees more information, e.g. about the range of tasks they are likely to face?
	Provide more training
	Get advice from an occupational health advisor if you need to?

<b>The working environment, are there:</b>	<b>Can you:</b>
Restrictions on posture?	Remove obstructions to free movement?
Bumpy, obstructed or slippery floors?	Provide better flooring?
Variations in floor levels?	Avoid steps and steep ramps?
Hot/cold/humid conditions?	Prevent extremes of hot and cold?
Gusts of wind or other strong air movements?	
Poor lighting conditions?	Improve lighting?
Restrictions on movements from clothes or personal protective equipment (PPE)?	Provide protective clothing or PPE that is less restrictive?
	Ensure your employees' clothing and footwear is suitable for their work?

<b>Work organisation factors:</b>	<b>Can you:</b>
Is the work repetitive or boring?	Change tasks to reduce the monotony?
Is work machine or system-paced?	Make more use of workers' skills?
Do workers feel the demands of the work are excessive?	Make workloads and deadlines more achievable?
Have workers little control of the work and working methods?	Encourage good communication and teamwork?
Is there poor communication between managers and employees?	Involve workers in decisions?
	Provide better training and information?

Handling aids and equipment:	Can you:
Is the device the correct type for the job?	Adjust the work rate?
Is it well-maintained?	Provide equipment that is more suitable for the task?
	Carry out planned preventive maintenance to prevent problems?
Are the wheels on the device suited to the floor surface?	Change the wheels, tyres and/or flooring so that equipment moves easily?
Do the wheels run freely?	
Is the handle height between the waist and shoulders?	Provide better handles and handle grips?
Are there any brakes? If so, do they work?	Make the brakes easier to use, reliable and effective?

**Safe lifting techniques illustrated:**



**4. The Risk of Transporting Art**

Artworks become more vulnerable whilst in transit. As employers, you must ensure that employees and anyone involved in the handling process has the correct training and guidelines available, which they must then follow in order to prevent injury to themselves and the artwork. Indeed, the need for thorough staff training whilst moving art cannot be over emphasised, a fact reinforced by The Antiques Trade Gazette:

*If staff are going to be involved in the process, for example as a courier, it is important that they are not just aware of the risks, but professionally trained to deal with them. It is important to ensure their competence levels match the level of risk to which they may be exposed. You can do this by following two fairly simple procedures:*

**I A R E:** Identify, Avoid, Reduce risk, and have Emergency procedures in place.

**A R M S:** Assess, Remove, Mitigate risk, and Support staff through training and briefing.



Prior to any trip, ensure the courier has:

- A fully charged mobile phone;
- Sufficient cash including any foreign currency; and
- A clear understanding of the itinerary.

During the trip ensure that:

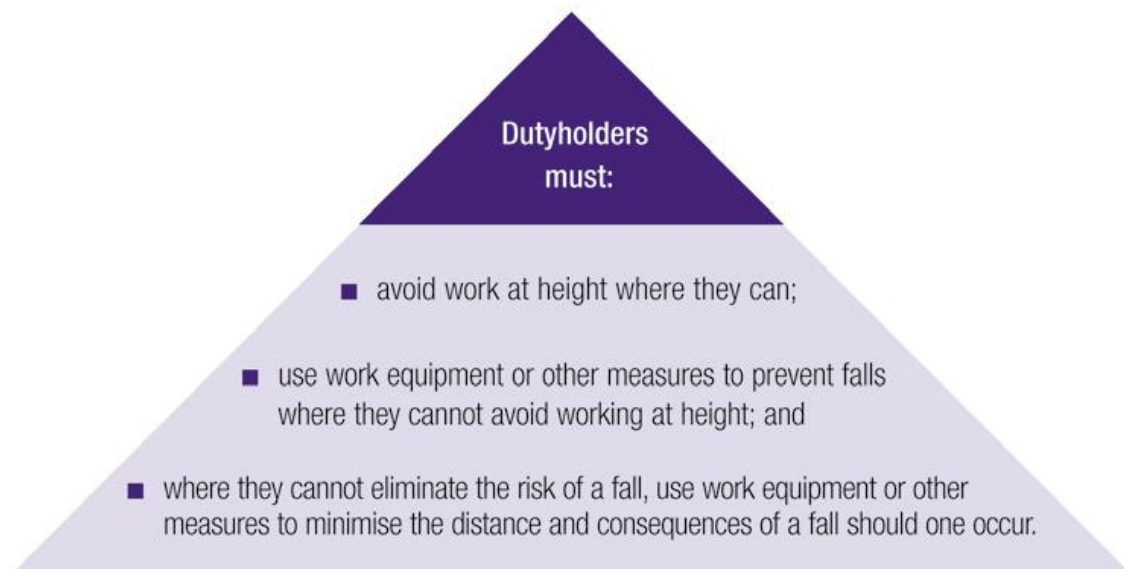
- If two people are travelling, one should carry and one should observe, but both must remain alert. Discretion is just as important as preparation.
- Make sure that valuables in transit are carried separately from personal items.
- Use sturdy simple baggage that you can easily recognize and avoid designer bags or laptop cases.
- Vary routes and hotels, if you or your courier are regular travellers, in order to be unpredictable, and operate on a need-to-know policy when it comes to informing others about what is being carried and your whereabouts.

## 5. The Risk of Working at Height and Falls

In a institution environment where hanging paintings often requires using ladders and working on different raised platform levels, **staff training** is again crucial to minimise the risks of falling whilst working at height. Employers must ensure that everyone involved in the work is competent (or, if being trained, is supervised by a competent person). This includes involvement in organisation, planning, supervision, and the supply and maintenance of equipment.

*The Work at Height Regulations 2005* Guide, issued by the HSE, states that employers must ensure that:

- All work at height is properly planned and organised.
- All work at height takes account of weather conditions that could endanger health and safety.
- Those involved in work at height are trained and competent.
- The place where work at height is done is safe.
- Equipment for work at height is appropriately inspected.
- The risks from fragile surfaces and falling objects are properly controlled.





In regards to falling objects, the HSE advises that where it is necessary to prevent injury, employers must do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent anything falling:

- You must ensure that nothing is thrown or tipped from height if it is likely to injure anyone, or stored in such a way that its movement is likely to injure anyone (as far as reasonably practicable) unauthorised people are unable to reach it.
- If the workplace contains an area in which there is a risk of someone being struck by a falling object or person, you must ensure that the area is clearly indicated and that (as far as reasonably practicable) unauthorised people are unable to reach it.

## **6. Electrical Risk**

Institutions often use electricity to achieve certain atmospheric effects and to heighten the impact of artworks on show if at a gallery or museum. Electricity, if used incorrectly, can kill or severely injure people and cause damage to property. Every year, many accidents at work involving electric shock or burns are reported to the HSE. Even non-fatal shocks can cause severe and permanent injury. For example, shocks from faulty equipment may lead to falls from ladders, scaffolds or other work platforms. Those using or working with electricity may not be the only ones at risk – poor electrical installations and faulty electrical appliances can lead to fire, which may also cause death or injury to others. Again, most of these accidents can be avoided by careful planning and straightforward precautions.

An institution's health and safety risk assessment should take into account the risks associated with electricity. It will help owners decide what action they are duty bound to take as property owners to maintain their electrical installations and equipment and also how often maintenance is needed.

### **What are the hazards?**

- Contact with live parts causing shock and burns – normal mains voltage, 230 volts AC, can kill.
- Faults which could cause fire. Electricity could be the source of ignition in a potentially flammable or explosive atmosphere.

The risk of injury from electricity is strongly linked to where and how it is used. Such risks are greatest in harsh conditions, for example:

- In wet surroundings some electrical equipment could easily become live and make its surroundings also likely to cause electrical shocks.
- Outdoors – equipment may not only become wet but may be at greater risk of damage.
- In cramped spaces with a lot of earthed metalwork such as inside a tank – if an electrical fault developed it could be very difficult to avoid a shock.
- Some items of equipment can also involve greater risk than others. Extension leads are particularly liable to damage – to their plugs, sockets, connections and the cable itself. Other flexible leads, particularly those connected to equipment which is often moved, can suffer from similar problems.





## **Managing electrical risk**

Once a risk assessment has been taken of an institution, employers can use its findings to reduce unacceptable risks from the electrical equipment in that workplace. There are many things employers can do to achieve this, and the HSE lists the following specific measures:

- Ensure people working on or with your electrical equipment or systems are 'competent' for the task. Competent means having suitable training, skill, and knowledge for the task to prevent injury to themselves and others.
- Ensure the electrical installation is safe. Make sure that new electrical systems are installed to a suitable standard, e.g. BS 7671.
- Make sure that equipment is safe when supplied and that it is then maintained in a safe condition. Gallery owners must importantly provide enough socket outlets, as overloading socket outlets by using adaptors can cause fire.
- Choose equipment that is suitable for its working environment.
- Electrical risks can sometimes be eliminated by using air, hydraulic or hand-powered tools which are especially useful in harsh conditions.
- Provide an accessible and clearly identified switch near each fixed machine to cut off power in an emergency.
- For portable equipment, use socket outlets which are close by so that equipment can be easily disconnected in an emergency.
- The ends of flexible cables should always have the outer sheath of the cable firmly clamped to stop the wires (particularly the earth) pulling out of the terminals.
- Replace damaged sections of cable completely.
- Use proper connectors or cable couplers to join lengths of cable. Do not use strip connector blocks covered in insulating tape.
- Some types of equipment are double insulated. These are often marked with a 'double-square' symbol. The supply leads have only two wires – live (brown) and neutral (blue). Make sure they are properly connected if the plug is not moulded.
- Protect light bulbs and other equipment which could easily be damaged in use.
- In potentially flammable or explosive atmospheres, only special electrical equipment designed for these areas should be used. You may need specialist advice.

## **Reduce the voltage**

One of the best ways of reducing the risk of injury when using electrical equipment is to limit the supply voltage to the lowest needed to get the job done, such as:

- Temporary lighting can be run at lower voltages, e.g. 12, 25, 50 or 110 volts;
- Where electrically powered tools are used, battery-operated ones are safest; or portable tools designed to be run from a 110 volt centre-tapped-to-earth supply are readily available.



### **Provide a safety device**

If equipment operating at 230 volts or higher is used, an RCD (residual current device) can provide additional safety. An RCD is a device which detects some, but not all, faults in the electrical system and rapidly switches off the supply. The best place for an RCD is built into the main switchboard or the socket outlet, as this means that the supply cables are permanently protected.

(Remember; an RCD is a valuable safety device, never bypass it; if it trips, it is a sign there is a fault – check the system before using it again; if it trips frequently and no fault can be found in the system, consult the manufacturer of the RCD; and if the RCD has a test button to check that its mechanism is free and functioning – you should use this regularly.)

### **Carry out testing and preventative maintenance**

All electrical equipment, including portable equipment and installations, should be maintained (so far as reasonably practicable) to prevent danger; this is a requirement of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.

It is recommended that fixed installations (the wiring and equipment between the supply meter and the point of use, e.g. socket outlets) are inspected and tested periodically by a competent person.

### **Work safely**

Make sure that people who are working with electricity are competent to do the job. Even simple tasks such as wiring a plug can lead to danger – ensure that people know what they are doing before they start.

- Ensure suspect or faulty equipment is taken out of use, labelled 'DO NOT USE' and kept secure until examined by a competent person;
- Where possible, tools and power socket outlets are switched off before plugging in or unplugging;
- Equipment is switched off and/or unplugged before cleaning or making adjustments.
- More complicated tasks, such as equipment repairs or alterations to an electrical installation, should only be carried out by people with knowledge of the risks and the precautions needed.
- You must not allow work on or near exposed, live parts of equipment unless it is absolutely unavoidable and suitable precautions have been taken to prevent injury, both to the workers and to anyone else who may be in the area.

### **PAT - Portable appliance testing**

The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 require that any electrical equipment that has the potential to cause injury is maintained in a safe condition. However, the Regulations do not specify what needs to be done, by whom or how frequently (i.e. they don't make inspection or testing of electrical appliances a legal requirement, nor do they make it a legal requirement to undertake this annually).



## **7. The Risk of Using Knives**

The use of knives, particularly Stanley knives, is common in galleries for the purposes of stock handling and unpacking. It is therefore essential employers ensure staff are properly trained with guidance available to follow as to how they can prevent injury both to themselves as knife user, but also to protect the object they are unpacking, often a vulnerable painting millimetres away from the cutting utensil.

Hand knife injuries usually happen when the knife slips during cutting or trimming. The following guidance seeks to avoid such accidents:

- Ensure the blade is secure before use.
- Keep body and free hand well away from cutting area.
- Always cut away from the free hand and your body. Never cut towards your other hand or towards your body.
- Ensure the direction of cut is such that the blade will not strike any part of your body, or another person should it slip.
- If using a straight edge or pattern use a safety type with an up-stand to guard the free hand.
- After use, retract the blade fully so that no part of the blade is exposed. Store the knife in a safe place or sheath, where it will not be displaced or hidden.
- The HSE notes the importance of preventing situations where knives are left lying loose on work benches/surfaces or where individuals carry them in their hands from one place of work to another. Such poor practice has led to injuries to both knife user and others, including people walking into each other with exposed blades.
- Disposable blades must be put in safety containers as soon as they are taken out of the knife.
- Only use a Stanley knife that is in good condition.
- If you are in any doubt as to the condition of the knife, do not use it.

## **8. Accident books**

### **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)**

UK Health and Safety legislation states that all accidents that happen at work must be recorded; institutions too must have a current accident book available for recording accidents. RIDDOR is the law that requires employers, and other people who are in control of work premises, to report and keep records of:

- Work-related deaths;
- Serious injuries;
- Cases of diagnosed industrial disease; and
- Certain 'dangerous occurrences' (near miss incidents).

From 1 October 2013, new RIDDOR Regulations came into force which introduced significant changes to reporting requirements:



- Reportable injuries (including deaths) do not have to be automatically reported, but must be reported if they occur as the result of a work-related accident. For the purposes of RIDDOR, an accident is a separate, identifiable, unintended incident that causes physical injury. This specifically includes acts of non-consensual violence to people at work.
- When deciding if the accident that led to the death or injury is work-related, the key issues to consider are whether the accident was related to:
  - the way in which the work was carried out;
  - any machinery, plant, substances or equipment used for work; and
  - the condition of the site or premises where the accident happened.
- If any of the above factors were related to the cause of the accident, then it is likely that a reportable injury will need to be reported to the enforcing authority.
- If none of the above factors are satisfied, it is likely that you will not be required to send a report.
- Examples of incidents that do and do not have to be reported are available at [www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/do-i-need-to-report.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/do-i-need-to-report.htm)

*[Claims for personal injury may be brought within a certain period of time after the accident took place (Limitation Act 1980 specifies claims for personal injury can be brought within 3 years of the Claimant's date of knowledge of the cause of action). Therefore, documentary evidence of accidents that took place should to be kept for a sufficient period of time.]*

### **Issues for Special Considerations Specific to Galleries**

#### **1. Lone Working**

AXA ART recognizes that lone working is commonplace in smaller institutions. But it is important for owners to recognise that a collection becomes increasingly vulnerable, and thus a greater risk to insure, when there is only one person left in charge of the workspace. Underwriters prefer a minimum of two people working at any one time; we advise asking the following questions and taking precautions to evaluate the risk if lone working is unavoidable:

- Does the employee have control? If there is more than one room to control, often this is not the case. The owner must take responsibility by considering whether it is safe to have the premises open to the public if two members of staff are not available, as not all areas of the premises will be observable or covered.
- Is the employee able to summon assistance? Is there a silent alarm? At the very least there must be a telephone and the capacity to quickly call for help.
- Technology, specifically the latest biometric security systems, can help reduce the risks associated with lone working. Facial recognition systems can alert staff to suspicious customers and also to VIP's, simultaneously enabling the control of the risk of theft or vandalism, but also boosting a galleries commercial productivity.
- The use of street buzzers particularly comes recommended as a means of gifting greater control to the lone employee; potential visitors can be profiled before entering the premises, and undesirable or threatening visitors can be refused.



## 2. Seating

Accidents involving chairs are a common workplace issue and therefore makes sure that they are sound. Make sure that all seating is able to provide normal use. Consider correct posture for work.

## 3. Cloakroom

If you provide a cloakroom the onus is upon you to provide adequate security against damages.

## 4. Delivery Off-Site

Employers should conduct risk assessments to consider in advance any risks arising from employees transporting/delivering/installing artworks off-site, including no lone working, suitable driving skills for commercial vehicles, working at height (*as elaborated above*).

## 5. Large Accumulation of People for Events

Institutions as part of their fire risk management shall have determined the maximum number of persons that can be on their premises at any one time for fire evacuation purposes. These numbers should be strictly adhered to for exhibition openings or similar events.

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