



Guidance on Visits and Visiting

(away from University of Aberdeen controlled locations)

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		Date	28.11.22
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1.0 Purpose of the Guidance

The University has a responsibility to ensure the safety of its staff and students regardless of where they work or study. When they visit buildings and other locations to carry out work or study related activities, the degree of control it has over those locations may be limited.

However, where two or more employers share a workplace, whether on a temporary or permanent basis, both employers must co-operate with each other in order to ensure each can discharge its responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 (in Scotland, England and Wales) and probably appropriate local laws if outside the mainland of the U.K.

The purpose of this guidance is to assist those undertaking visits themselves, or organising them for others, to identify the checks which they should make to inform the risk assessment to ensure the safety of those visiting, which are proportionate to the risks of the activity and the location.

2.0 Scope of Guidance

This guidance is intended for visits to premises or places which are not the staff/student's usual place of work/study and are not owned and/or occupied by the University and so the same policies may not apply, and it cannot be assumed to be managed in the same way.

Visits to which this guidance would apply include:


- Premises owned and operated by other employers or organisations within the UK (e.g. for exhibitions, conferences, training, research purposes etc.).
- Remote locations away from buildings in the UK (i.e. fieldwork etc.)
- Locations overseas (i.e. involving travel outside the UK) for any work or study related purposes, including work placements
- Some social activities organised by the University (e.g. "away days" etc.).

This is not an exhaustive list.

Visits to and inspections of unoccupied premises and construction sites are not included in the scope of this guidance. These should only be undertaken by competent and appropriately equipped staff with risk assessments undertaken for these specific activities.

3.0 Definitions / Acronyms

Term	Definition
Visit	To Visit is to go to a location for a short period of time (probably hours or days, rather than weeks), either to meet someone or carry out an activity there.
employer in control of the premises	The "employer in control of the premises" is any employer which exercises some authority over who accesses the site. This includes both those on site and others, such as the landlord or managing agent, who may not be present but hold keys or set rules in relation to access by occupiers and contractors.

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4.0 Types and Duration of Visits

4.1 One off visits

Where the visit is of a short duration to another employer's site (for example when attending a 1-day conference, training course or attending a meeting) that individual should be made aware of the evacuation procedure and any "site rules" or policies which apply and of the welfare facilities available to them. This may be done via signs and information provided when signing in or by a short induction procedure. Where this is not the case they must, as a minimum, ask if there are any rules of which they should be aware and ensure they can safely evacuate in an emergency.

It is good practice to ask for this in advance. Some organisations may also provide this information up front, with their joining instructions or on their website before bookings are made. You may also be able to check with others who have attended the locations/events/employers previously.

4.2 Visits to outdoor locations and potentially more hazardous locations

Where the visits are to sites which are not buildings with someone there to greet you, they are outside, or there is a risk of exposure to unknown risks, enquiries will need to be made to obtain the information required to carry out a risk assessment for the intended activity.


If this is the first time a visit has been made of this type, or to the location, it will be necessary to do one or more of the following:

- Contact the owners or others with responsibility for information and advice.
- Carry out an initial visit, preferably with a guide or someone familiar with the location, to carry out the assessment in advance of taking others there.
- Research the location and hazards using independent available sources of information.
- Contact others who have visited the location for similar types of activity.
- If overseas the criteria to be complied with for overseas travel should be checked and adhered to as described in the University Travel Policy.

If you have used the location before, you may have an existing risk assessment which you can use, but always review it to check that it covers the activities that will be carried out, the content is correct and up to date, and to incorporate any changes or improvements.

If there were any accidents, near misses or lessons which can be learned from previous experience, these should be incorporated into the revised risk assessment.

Note: This document is not intended to provide detailed guidance on risk assessment for field work etc. It is only intended to make the case for thorough planning for such activities.

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4.3 Longer term visits / extended occupation of premises controlled by others

Where visits are undertaken to premises not under the control of the University, on a temporary or longer-term basis, either under a lease or under other arrangements (such as a secondment), there is a need to undertake more checks.

The longer the visit or period of occupation the more inquiries the organiser should make to satisfy themselves, on behalf of the University, that its staff/students will be safe while on the other organisation's site.

The time and effort spent on this should be decided on a case-by-case basis. The checks undertaken should be proportionate to the risks and the degree of responsibility on each party.

The organiser of the trip, placement, secondment or similar, should ensure the availability of the information described below, in advance, and may feel it appropriate to inspect the premises to be used to verify the information.

They should also check to see if the premises are accessible or if there are risks to the disabled or others with particular needs, where appropriate.


4.4 In depth checks

The following are examples of documents and checks which could be requested if appropriate.

- a) Copy of the Fire Risk Assessment for the building. (If necessary, contact the Health and Safety Team for advice on this, or to carry out our own assessment of the part of the building to be occupied).
- b) Copy of the evacuation procedure for the premises (ensuring, for example assembly points and search areas are agreed as well as who is in overall charge of the evacuation).
- c) Information on any other risks or hazards of which they are aware which may affect those in the building or on the site.
- d) Names of Fire Wardens/Marshalls and First Aiders (It is advisable to document any agreement with respect to which party provides these and any reciprocal arrangements).
- e) Ensure that the responsibilities for the premises are clear to all parties (as defined in the lease) with respect to both occupied areas and common parts, in particular that all parties are aware of their responsibilities with respect to repairs and maintenance and to whom they should report issues as they arise.
- f) Copies of any local policies, procedures or site rules etc. which are expected to be adhered to (Note: Other employers may have different policies or procedures for reporting maintenance issues for example.)

The above will enable ensuring that appropriate information is provided to staff / students such as:

- Names and contact details of First Aiders.
- Names of the Fire Marshalls for their part of the building.
- The emergency evacuation procedures.

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- How to contact the emergency services (e.g. can 999 be called directly, how to get an outside line etc.).
- The presence of Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) in the building and what to do if they are damaged or work is required which might disturb them.
- Any policies or procedures which apply to the premises.

The above requirements must be met in full where University staff/students occupy a premise for an extended period.

Examples of this are where the location is occupied to a degree where it would be reasonable to expect the University to take on some responsibility on site, probably for weeks rather than days, or where a lease or other agreement should be in place (i.e. not just for a conference or field trip).

Where a premise is occupied for a shorter period the above must be met to the degree which is reasonable in the circumstances and proportionate to the risk. If in doubt, contact your Local Safety Co-ordinator or the Health and Safety Team for advice.

If occupying a building for an extended period, you may also wish to request the following records:

- Lease or agreed responsibilities of those who will occupy the space and the owner/landlord.
- Asbestos survey report
- Water risk assessment (Legionella)
- Testing and Maintenance records for installed systems including: the electrical system, Gas installations, Fire alarm and Emergency lighting systems.
- Condition surveys.

Note:

Owners and occupiers have a legal duty to co-operate with other employers and occupiers of their buildings or with others sharing premises. If they fail to respond to requests for information in a reasonable period, contact the Health and Safety Team for advice.