

PERSIMMON GROUP – SALES STAFF SAFETY MANUAL

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Appendix A - Sales Area Health and Safety Assessment

Appendix B – Emergency Contact List

Appendix C – Emergency Telephone Procedure

1. INTRODUCTION

It is essential that all Sales Directors, Managers and Advisers are familiar with the contents of this and any other relevant safety manual information, as these issues will either affect them personally while carrying out their work or will affect those they are responsible for.

The purpose of this manual is to address the Health and Safety issues relating to sales staff based on site and those involved in part exchange residential visits.

The hazards faced by such staff are varied and relate to two main areas:

- Sales Adviser Safety
- Health and Safety issues associated with construction work.

2. HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

The level of risk in each of the above categories needs to be assessed, and appropriate action taken to limit or eliminate this risk. This manual provides the tools to carry out this assessment, and provides guidance on what to consider and what measures can be taken.

Proper planning should **significantly** reduce the risk of injury!

3. SALES AREA RISK ASSESSMENT

An assessment should be carried out for each and every sales area prior to use by the Sales staff. The assessment will need to consider the following:

- Sales Adviser Safety
- Design/layout of Sales areas.
- Information and training.
- Other significant hazards.

Using form **PHG/HS/:022**, each Sales Director/Manager must ensure this assessment is carried out, and, upon completion, will arrange that any actions required/recommended are implemented before the sales area is used.

The purpose of the risk assessment is to ascertain the level of risk to which site based sales staff will be exposed, and as a result of this what actions need to be taken so as to eliminate or control these risks. **Risk assessment is a statutory requirement.**

Notes on completion of the risk assessment form

Site details: Complete this section relating to site and sales area locations, etc., including days and hours expected to be worked by sales staff. The number of sales staff is an important consideration as obviously there is safety in numbers and lone working should not be considered where the risk to safety is high.

Days and hours worked are also relevant as sales staff working alone on a site when there is no construction activities taking place, or during the hours of darkness.

Sales area: This part of the form needs to be completed prior to sales staff being placed on site to ensure any extra works required, such as external lighting, alarms, fencing, etc. can be agreed with the Construction Department. As the sales Advisers spend the majority of their time within the sales complex, then it is important that it is designed in such a way as to increase their safety. The list of items under this heading should be used as a check list, with the assessment being made as to whether or not each of the listed items are required, or are satisfactorily addressed within the design. Where action is required this needs to be specified in the third column. The number to the left of each item refers to the appropriate paragraph in Appendix B – Sales Area Design Considerations. When considering the particular item refer to Section 6 for further information.

Fire-fighting equipment, first aid equipment, signs, emergency and contact numbers must be in place immediately following installation/construction of the sales area, ready for use by the Sales Adviser.

Training and information: All sales Advisers must be issued with the Sales Safety Manual and Emergency Contacts **PHG/HS/:029**. All staff must also receive instruction in the procedures to be followed in case of accidents

Additional actions required: In certain situations additional measures will need to be taken to improve the protection of staff on a specific site. Such measures should be entered in this section. This can include such items as:

- additional training,
- meetings with the local crime prevention officer,
- security presence on site; and
- specific response required from alarm company whenever activated.

4. SALES ADVISER SAFETY

Sales staff can be at risk and need to take sensible precautions to protect themselves.

These precautions will only work if there is a proper, supportive, safe system of work provided by the local operating company, including:

- staffing levels – what is required to enable the site to operate safely
- hours of work – is the site safe after dark and on weekends for lone sales Advisers
- inspection of part exchange houses –use of an accurate diary system must be encouraged, and regular contact with the office must be available throughout the visit
- visitor books - a system whereby the names, address and times of visits are recorded
- the use of code words - these can be introduced into telephone conversations to alert staff either at the site office or in the local company office that the member of the sales team is or feels at risk.
- provision of personal alarms, where necessary
- regular tests of the alarm system – to check that it works, the range of the remote unit is appropriate, the response of the site team, etc.
- divulging personal information – sales Advisers should refrain from providing personal information to customers, such as address and telephone number.
- provision of mobile phones, where necessary;
- arrangements exist to call the member of sales staff as soon as they are due at the address to confirm they are OK. This is to include a code system to alert the office if they are concerned or in danger;
- accompanied visits where possible, particularly in “undesirable” areas or after dark.

5. VALUABLES

The presence of valuable items or cash can result in theft, sometimes compromising sales staff safety. Sales Advisers should keep all personal valuables such as handbags, purchases, jewellery, etc. out of sight, preferably in a secure locked drawer.

6. SALES AREA DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Design and Layout of Sales Areas

While it is important for staff to understand various techniques for avoiding confrontation and dealing with it when it does occur, it is much more effective to design out the risk in the first place. The best way of achieving this is by designing a sales area that is secure, and provides the right facilities for preventing any would-be

assailants from attacking members of staff. This can be achieved through a number of measures including the following:

- a) Seating/décor/lighting.** While the majority of sales offices are well laid out with good lighting and décor it may be worth considering the addition of information that can distract an aggravated customer who is waiting for attention. This can include the use of magazines, comfortable seating, etc. An agitated customer who has to stand around waiting with nothing to do while a sales Adviser is either dealing with another customer or otherwise engaged, is only going to become more agitated.
- b) Video cameras/surveillance.** The presence of a CCTV system can act as a good deterrent to any would be aggressor. These can be fitted both internally to the sales office and externally to the areas around the sales area including the car parks and rear of houses. There are also some very effective “dummy” cameras that can be used.
- c) Alarms.** The use of alarms is an important issue, and it is essential that the system selected is appropriate. The choice of individual personal alarms alone is not recommended as it is generally not audible outside a double glazed house, particularly on a noisy construction site or in an area where background noise levels are quite high.

A proper alarm system, such as that fitted to showhouses, should be utilised to best advantage through the use of remote activators carried by staff. The selection of these remote units is also very important, as large bulky units will not be carried, but left in desk drawers. Such units should be lightweight, discreet and easily accessed for activation. Wall mounted panic buttons are only useful when in close proximity to them, which is not the case when visiting units under construction.
- d) External lighting.** For several months of the year the sales areas operate during hours of darkness. For this reason, it is essential that suitable lighting is provided to:

Light up the area outside the sales office. Sales Advisers sat inside a well lit office will not see anyone approaching the office until such time as they open the door. The sales Adviser will also have to go from a well lit area to an unlit area when leaving the office.

Light up car parking areas. This not only protects sales staff when arriving or leaving, but also protects customers who may arrive during the hours of darkness.

The lights must be operated on a timer and/or a manual switch rather than a sensor. If sales Advisers, or customers, have to walk from the sales area to the public highway, i.e. to catch a bus etc. then the access route also needs to be well lit. The walking surface should also be free from holes, trip hazards and loose materials.

- e)* **Escape routes.** Every sales area should, wherever possible, have a second exit so as to prevent any member of staff from being “trapped” by an assailant/aggressor entering the office via the public entrance. Where detached or integral garages are used then there should be a door linking or leading to the showhouse. Where such a door is used to allow customers to access showhouses then this would still be suitable as an escape route.
- f)* **Safe/Secure area.** In the event that a member of staff has to escape from an aggressor then they must be able to make their way to an area that is secure. This can include a house that can be easily and quickly locked from the inside i.e. by a latch or bolt, or a room similarly fitted. The door to such a room would need to be sufficiently robust so as to resist attack.
- g)* **Security of showhouses.** In situations where there is a risk of individuals gaining access into a show house without coming through the sales office then the use of special locks may need to be considered for front doors. This could include a push button combination lock, but the code would need to be changed at regular intervals.
- h)* In addition to this it may be worth considering, where justified by the risk assessment, the use of alarm contacts to all ground floor doors and windows, which can be activated through a zoning system during the day. This would prevent customers from opening doors and windows when viewing a property then gaining access via this opening later in the day. Such measures would activate the alarm so discreet signs would need to be fixed to windows and doors.
- i)* **Safe parking areas.** As mentioned above, car parks should be well lit. They also need to be designed so as to eliminate any cover for assailants, including plants such as large bushes and trees. Where possible the car park should be adjacent to the sales office and parking in this area by construction vehicles must be strictly prohibited.
- j)* **Clear visibility.** The position and internal layout of a sales office needs to be such that a sales Adviser sat at his/her desk has a clear view of the area to the front of the sales office and to the front of the show house. This will allow them to see anybody approaching the office or trying to gain unauthorised access into the show house. Where this is not possible then the use of mirrors and/or CCTV should be considered.
- k)* **Fencing to showhouses.** Where it has not been possible to prevent unauthorised access into showhouses through measures such as keeping them locked, etc. then it may be necessary to consider fencing which forces any customer to come through the sales office. While this is usually achieved for genuine customers through the use of low level picket fences, such measures would not be sufficient for determined intruders. As a substantial fence to the front of the showhouse would be totally unacceptable as detracting from its appearance, then other measures could be considered such as the planting of thorny bushes or the installation of metal fencing designed so as to discourage anyone from climbing over it. When considering fencing with metal points or arrowheads or the planting

of thorn bushes, consideration also needs to be given to the risk to members of the public and children in particular.

l) Telephones/radios. Every sales Adviser must have access to a telephone to make emergency calls. In most cases the land-line in the sales office will be sufficient, but where it is likely that the Adviser will be some distance from the office and where, because of the locality the risks may be greater, the provision of a mobile phone should be considered. This is not only in the event of a violent attack upon the staff member, but may also be required in the event of an accident resulting in injury to them or a member of the public.

m) Lone working. Lone working by sales Advisers should, where possible, be limited to week days, during the hours of daylight. Where this is not possible then other precautions need to be introduced during this time. This could include:

- a ban on visiting production units alone;
- locking of sales offices when taking customers around showhouses;
- recording the names, addresses and telephone numbers in the Daily Visitor Record and locking this record in a secure place before escorting them;
- hourly phone checks between Advisers on different sites;
- not giving customers a lift in their cars, nor accepting lifts from them;
- locking doors to sales offices (with the provision of a door bell) so that Advisers can let in those who appear genuine, and prevent access to others.

n) Welfare. Current legislation imposes a duty upon the Company to provide suitable welfare facilities for all staff. This includes, as a minimum:

- hot and cold running water;
- heating food;
- soap and means to dry hands;
- means of boiling water;
- toilet facilities.
- Where possible the facilities within the showhouses should be made available to sales staff. Where showhouses are not completed then other arrangements must be made. This can include:
- a mobile unit which is suitably equipped, connected to water and electricity, and maintained;

- the use of suitable facilities in a nearby (i.e. off-site) property;
 - the use of the general site welfare facilities, which should, where necessary, has a separate section for female use. There must be either a safe access route to this unit, or suitable personal protective equipment must be issued **and** worn.
- o) Fire and first aid equipment.** Every sales office must have the following items as a minimum:
- One 1-10 person standard First Aid kit;
 - One 2kg Dry Powder fire extinguisher;
 - One 200 x 125 mm Fire Extinguisher sign, located above the extinguisher;
 - One fire blanket located in each kitchen, adjacent to the hob;
 - The gas supply to any kitchen hob and oven should have a separate isolation point, to prevent accidental (or intended) use by visitors.

7. VISITOR INFORMATION

The customer safety information sheets should be clearly displayed within the sales office. All visitors to site must complete the Development Visitor/Safety Report Form and be issued with the visitor badge.

8. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of an emergency or incident occurring on site within the sales area or to a customer while on the construction site, then various systems need to be in place to prevent or limit injury. This includes:

- a means of raising the alarm i.e. telephone
- access to a list of emergency numbers and contact names
- access to a first aid kit and trained first aider
- fire procedure

Each sales office must be issued with a current *Sales Emergency Contacts* form containing the contact numbers for the emergency services and relevant Persimmon Homes staff. A blank copy is contained in Appendix B. There is also a copy of the *Emergency Telephone Procedure* form **PHG/HS/:030**, which assists anyone making a call to the emergency services on what information to provide. Although this may appear very basic remember, in the event of an emergency, a sense of shock may be experienced!

The telephone number and full address of the site must be added and the form displayed next to the telephone. This will enable anyone, including a member of the public, to make an emergency call.

9. REPORTING OF INCIDENTS

All incidents involving members of staff or customers that result in injury or could have resulted in injury must be reported using the relevant documents available.

See the “ACCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURE” in the policy arrangements section for further information.

Where the incident is identified as reportable to the HSE, or is the result of violence, both verbal and physical to a Sales Adviser, this must include a thorough investigation by trained management of the operating company.

10. TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Every member of the Sales team will require varying levels of health and safety training. The type of training needs to provide the relevant members of staff with the appropriate information.

- Sales Directors/Managers/Advisers – General health and safety law and principals, the contents of the “Sales Staff Safety Manual, and the methods of carrying out risk assessments.
- All site based Sales Staff shall undergo 1 day First Aid Appointed Persons course.

Local arrangements will need to be made for staff provided by an estate agent. This will include acceptance of this manual and the attendance on the above courses

11. MONITOR AND REVIEW

As the layout of the sales area and the site change over time, so will the level of risk. A temporary sales cabin on the edge of a site due for development is a long way from a purpose built sales area with show homes in the middle of a partially occupied group of completed houses. For this reason the safety measures in place, and the precautions to be taken by staff, need to be constantly reviewed and amended as necessary. The feedback from these individual reviews should also form the basis of the general review of the safety measures across all the sites in the area.

These reviews should consider:

- any incidents that may have occurred, including the locations and types of incidents, and changes/improvements in measures which may have resulted.
- staff experiences, some of which may not have resulted in a reportable incident but had the potential to do so.
- staff concerns. There may be a number of issues which cause concern but are not formally reported. These need to be known about before staff become anxious or lose confidence in the Company's approach to their health and safety.

It may be beneficial to include health and safety concerns as an item to be discussed at the regular sales meeting held within the company. This will not only highlight issues which may otherwise remain buried (until it is too late!), but will also improve the attitude of Sales Advisers towards safety generally as they will feel and be part of the decision making process.

Quarterly inspections using form **PHG/HS:023** shall be undertaken by Sales Directors/Managers. The results of these inspections will be discussed at regular Sales Management Meetings, where control measures to rectify perceived hazards can be discussed and implemented. This may entail undertaking further Risk Assessments.

Sales Directors should report all relevant unsolved Health and Safety issues at their Board Meetings for discussion and action.

12. SAFETY RULES FOR SALES ADVISERS

GENERAL SAFETY

Whichever site you work on the following safety rules will apply:

- You must wear a safety helmet and suitable footwear when visiting the construction area.
- Do not misuse or interfere with any safety equipment provided.
- Report all injuries and dangerous occurrences and seek first aid treatment for even the most minor injury.
- Be on the lookout for hazardous conditions that could lead to an accident, and report it to the site manager immediately.
- Obey all warnings and hazard notices.
- Do not run or rush about.
- Obey all speed limits and traffic controls, and park in the designated areas.
- Report to the site manager any unauthorised parking in the sales area car park.
- Do not overload electrical supplies and appliances.
- If issued, carry your personal alarm with you at all times.
- Face your desk towards the entrance so that you can see who is coming and going.
- If leaving the sales office to use the welfare facilities, lock the door – leave a brief note on it “Back in 5 minutes”.
- Do not leave potentially dangerous articles, such as scissors, on your desk for an assailant to use.
- Be familiar with the emergency procedure, in case you should ever need it.
- If you smoke, do so only in designated places.

GENERAL SECURITY PRECAUTIONS

In the interest of security, you must note the following guidelines:

- Never leave valuable items unattended or purses or keys in clothing you are not wearing.
- Be careful with keys. Put them in a safe place and do not put spare keys in unlocked desk drawers.
- Close windows and lock doors in your absence.
- Do not disclose confidential information with a stranger.
- Never leave callers alone in the sales office.
- Move car to outside sales office before it gets dark. Always lock your car and check rear seats before getting in.
- Do not leave front door to showhouses open

ESCORTING CUSTOMERS TO VIEW PROPERTIES

It is part of the Sales Adviser role to escort customers around showhouses and production units. If the sales area, including the showhouse, has been properly designed to include measures to protect staff, such as alarm systems, then the risk of attack should be comparatively low. When escorting customers around other units, i.e. non show-homes, then additional precautions will need to be taken. Because these properties will not be equipped with the appropriate alarm system, and will also not be part of the sales area, then the means of raising the alarm is limited, and the means of escaping to a secure area does not exist. However, in all cases, the following rules should be adhered to:

- When issued carry your personal alarm with you at all times;
- Do not give purchasers a lift in your car or accept a lift from them when going to view a house:
- When showing purchasers around a house, unlock the door, stand back and let them in first. Always let purchasers lead and follow them upstairs, not the other way round. If men say “Ladies first”, respond “Gentlemen first, it’s company policy”. Leave keys in the lock and the door open at all times.
- If in doubt, do not accompany a purchaser around a plot. Give an excuse for not joining them and give them a key. Try to get them to leave their car keys in place of our keys. Failing that, get them to sign for the keys and note down the plot numbers at all times. If someone is acting suspiciously on your site inform the site manager.
- If possible, arrange a joint warning scheme with sales staff from other house builders in the area. Build up a relationship with a local resident that you can telephone if suspicious, or will phone the police if they hear your personal alarm activate.

- Record name, address and telephone details in Daily Visitor Record as soon as you can and **before** escorting the customer. Consider noting car number if possible. Lock this record in a safe place before leaving the sales office.
- When locking up the showhome at the end of the day, drop the catch on the door behind you whilst you turn off the lights, etc. If access to the showhouse is through the sales office, lock the front office door before entering the showhouse.
- Never escort customers into the construction area during hours of darkness. Not only does this increase the potential for violence, it also presents a serious safety hazard to you and the customer.

If it becomes necessary to escort male customers only, then the following additional precautions should also be considered:

- Arrange for the site manager to escort them.
- Only escort them during working hours during the week, when there is construction activity being carried out in the immediate vicinity.
- Where an additional sales Adviser is available, bring them along. However, still be careful!

Whatever course of action you decide to follow in a particular set of circumstances, do not compromise your own personal safety.

13. PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC

GENERAL

House building presents a particular problem because often parts of the new estate will become occupied as others are still being constructed. Liaison with occupiers will be important, and the sales and construction staff need to work closely together. The location of the show houses, view homes and associated sales office can help keep purchasers and prospective purchasers away from the construction work.

The perimeter between the construction site and the occupied area will usually change as the work progresses. Arrangements for maintaining the perimeter and other precautions need to reflect the speed of change within the site and the risks. There are very strict legislative requirements for the protection of the public and the measures incorporated within the site by the construction team must not be compromised.

VISITING PUBLIC

In general, the public should not need to be allowed to view houses under construction on their own unless the unit is at the pre-decorating stage, i.e. the

building work is completed and the risks of injury are no more than they would be in a showhouse.

Until that stage is reached, permission to enter any area/plot within the construction area must be obtained from the Site Manager. Sales Staff must, at all times, liaise with the Site Manager to establish access to partially completed areas/plots. All prospective customers must be accompanied at these times by either the Site Manager or a member of the sales team. All visitors entering the construction area are, where necessary, to be provided with suitable and appropriate PPE that must be worn. Any customer who fails to adhere with the site sales area PPE rules must not be allowed to visit any properties under construction.

VISITING PARTIALLY COMPLETED PROPERTIES

From time to time, it may be considered necessary for prospective clients to inspect properties which are partially completed or still under construction. This obviously increases the risk and, during weekday site operations or prior to weekend working by sales an area/plot specific assessment must be carried out by the Site Manager to ensure the safety of all visitors is not compromised.

The assessment should allow for the relative lack of construction experience of clients and should identify areas where risk has been significantly increased. Consideration should also be given to the different building methods and property types employed during the various stages of either traditional or timber frame construction, as these may create different hazards/risks which determine when it is considered safe to allow client access.

Only by carrying out such an assessment, can suitable controls be established to mitigate additional risks, before allowing clients to access.

The following items, although not exhaustive, must be assessed by the Site Manager and relayed to site based Sales Staff on Form PHG/HS/:054

- Which area/plots are available for access and, specifically to cover weekend viewing, for what period.
- Which member of staff (Site Manager/Sales Advisor) should accompany clients on visits to said area/plots. (This is particularly necessary when establishing weekend access arrangements and where necessary a joint inspection of areas/plots should be carried out on a Friday in order to finalise arrangements.)
- Area/plot access restrictions i.e. children.
- Are all footpaths to the area/plot are of a sound flat surface to reduce the risk of slip/trips and suitable?
- Are all other areas under construction, including service trenches, en-route to the area/plot suitably fenced off?
- Are additional measures needed for visiting during inclement weather e.g. salting of paths etc?
- Has scaffold been removed/adapted to improve access and reduce client contact or the risk of falling materials?
- Is general housekeeping within the designated area/plot to a standard that removes the risk of slips and trips and materials that are required to be stored in the plot being kept in a safe and tidy condition?

- Have first fix services such as electric cables or pipes been isolated and/or restrained to walls or floors?
- Are staircases, landings etc. fitted with adequate edge protection systems to remove risk of falls?
- Is suitable and sufficient lighting available?
- Is adequate PPE available for clients? (Note : Clients are to be reminded to wear stout/robust footwear.)
- Has the accident and emergency plan been completed and discussed?

In addition to the above when assessing the availability of apartments for viewing by prospective purchasers the following items must be considered:

- Are stairwells secured and handrails installed
- Are all concrete landings screeded and level to prevent trips
- Has the emergency plan been completed
- Is the fire alarm system functional
- Is the emergency lighting functional
- Is there sufficient fire fighting equipment available

INDUCTION

Prior to entering the construction site to view partially completed plots, a short induction should be carried out with visitors to identify key areas of concern. The prospective purchasers' must sign to confirm they understand and will adhere to all health and safety rules brought to their attention via the induction and public safety notices displayed within the sales office.

CHILDREN

Children are not allowed into the construction area at any time – this must be explained to parents wishing to view partially completed properties under the assessment process detailed above.

If local children have gained unauthorised access into the site (i.e. to play) the following action should be taken:

- Approach them and ask them to leave immediately.
- If this approach fails, or they become aggressive, phone the police stating “children have broken into the site and we are concerned about their safety”.
- Contact the site manager and inform him of the breach in his perimeter fencing. You may also contact the safety department.

VEHICLES

All potential purchasers must be directed to the designated car parking area. The driving of private vehicles into the construction area is to be strongly discouraged, and

Persimmon Homes cannot accept any claims for damage to private vehicles if the purchaser persists in doing so.

The unauthorised parking of contractors vehicles in the sales area car park must be reported to the site manager and if the problem persists, contact your sales manager.

14. VISITS TO PRIVATE HOMES

PERSONAL SAFETY PROCEDURES

Your personal safety is of the utmost importance and priority. You should never place yourself in any dangerous situation. Whether you are a Sales Director, Sales Manager or Sales Adviser the following measures should be taken to protect yourself and your staff.

- (a) Always make an appointment.
- (b) Ensure you record the name of the client, address and telephone number of houses you are visiting and which is available to other staff. Always inform the sales department at your local office of your movements including anticipated time of arrival at the property and return to the office.
- (c) NEVER accept a lift in a potential buyer's car.
- (d) If carrying a mobile phone, call an imaginary person to tell them of your arrival at the address. Be aware of any agreed distress code, so that any sales Adviser reporting in can request help without comprising safety.
- (e) A report back system should be operated so that a sales Adviser reports back to the office as soon as possible after completion of the viewing, if the venue is changed, or if another property is to be visited.
- (f) Personal alarms will be issued to all staff. Replacements should be requested via your Sales Manager. These alarms must be carried at all times.
- (g) Always feel comfortable and in control. You should trust your instincts. If at any time you feel uncomfortable or in danger then leave immediately and get away.
- (h) Be aware of potential risks and never underestimate the threat.
- (i) Get the person to walk in front of you.
- (j) Be aware of all exits to the property that could be used as an escape route.
- (k) If a member of staff has any doubts they should discuss them immediately with their Sales Manager.
- (l) No matter how well you feel you get on with the person, avoid continuing the discussion into the social scene, over drinks, dinner, etc.

- (m) NEVER give a home telephone number or address to a customer.
- (n) Use your skills to control aggression:
- (o) Do not respond aggressively as this will probably escalate the aggression.
- (p) Talk things through by reason and compromise
- (q) Do not raise your voice, use soft and slow speech.
- (r) Make an excuse to move, e.g. go to the toilet.
- (s) Keep your distance.
- (t) Wherever possible, and if there is the slightest apprehension of risk, take another person along.
- (u) If there have been any problems, or even feelings of unease, these facts should be part of the visit report.
- (v) When viewing the property, the customer should be followed through the front door. Keep between the door and the customer, thus ensuring there is always a means of escape. If you have to climb stairs in the property, then let the customer go first. Let the customer enter rooms first so that they are not behind you (even if they are trying to be polite).
- (w) Sit nearest to the doorway so that you always have an escape route.
- (x) Wear comfortable but “safe” clothing and shoes. Avoid wearing a scarf.

REMEMBER

Being AWARE, ALERT and AVOIDING trouble are sensible precautions and help reduce the risks.

15. MAINTIANING YOUR SECURITY

GENERAL

It is important, even if someone is trying to provoke you, not to respond in kind. Meeting aggression with aggression leads to confrontation and someone could get hurt.

- Stay calm, speak gently, slowly and clearly. Do not argue or try to outsmart the person verbally. Breathe slowly to control your own tension.
- Avoid body language which may be misinterpreted, such as looking down on the aggressor; hands on hips/folded arms; raised arms; any physical contact. Keep your distance.
- Compromise: offer the aggressor a way out of a situation.

CURTAILING AGGRESSION

To protect yourself and others from repeated aggressive behaviour you must take action. Report the incident to your Sales Manager/Director and ensure that your complaint is taken seriously and receives a fair hearing.

If you cannot deflect or diffuse the situation, get away.

Sometimes it is not possible to contain and defuse the threat of violence.

Trust your instincts and do not underestimate the situation. Things can get out of control very quickly.

BE PREPARED

- While talking, assess possible ways you can escape if the situation worsens.
- Try to prevent the aggressor blocking any possible escape route.
- Never turn your back. If you are trying to get away, move gradually backwards.

REDUCING THE RISKS

You can do a great deal to reduce the risks to your personal safety and that of others. Knowing what to do gives you the confidence to respond positively in times of stress – to assess the situation and automatically choose the most appropriate course of action.

COMMUNICATE

Effective communication can greatly reduce the risk of aggressive, or potentially violent, situations developing.

- Remember that communication is not just verbal – up to 90% of communication between individuals is non-verbal.
- If customers focus their aggression on you, work to placate rather than provoke them.
- Talk your way out of problems.
- Learn relaxation and tension control techniques: obvious stress or fear may increase the other person's aggression.

PROTECT YOURSELF

A few sensible precautions:

- Do not give your home telephone number or address to customers.
- Avoid unnecessary after-hours meetings if you are on your own.
- Do not enter a house if the person you are expecting to meet is not there.
- Wear clothes which give out the signal you intend; you can dress to please yourself, but bear in mind that society has unwritten rules about appropriate dress for most occupations.
- No matter how convenient, do not get into a car with someone you do not know and trust.

PHYSICAL ATTACK

If you are threatened, you must:

Avoid

- Get away as fast as you can. Aim towards a place you know where there will be people.
- Do not look back.
- Report the incident immediately. Someone else might be attacked and might not be able to get away.

If you cannot get away, protect yourself!

- Shout or scream – your voice is your best defence.
- Give the command “Phone the Police” or similar positive instruction – people are more likely to react when given a call to action.
- Use an alarm to shock and disorientate your assailant.

As a last resort, the police advice is:

- **“Bash and Dash”** – if you have to fight back, do it quickly. Aim for the knee, solar plexus, elbow joint or little fingers. Then get away.
- It is safer to carry a personal alarm than an offensive weapon that could be used against you.

SELF DEFENCE

Physical self-defence should only be used as the last resort because it limits your options of getting away and will invariably commit you to a fight that you could well lose. Remember also, that if you respond physically you could be legally liable for assault.

Avoiding risky situations is your best form of self-defence.

16. THE KEY TO PERSONAL SAFETY

DEVELOP CONFIDENCE

- Learn how to deal with difficult situations; develop communication skills and assertiveness through training.
- Look confident – not arrogant; a confident person is less likely to be attacked.
- Keep yourself fit – exercise can help you develop posture, stamina and strength.

AVOID RISK

- Avoid confrontation: do all you can to diffuse a potentially violent situation.
- When you are out of the office, inform others of your exact movements and when you expect to finish. Advise or phone with any changes of plan.
- Know where you are going and how you are going to get there.
- Assess risky situations, especially when travelling (consider the time of day, weather/visibility, crowds, etc). What actions can you take to reduce the risks?

ALTHOUGH ASSAULTS ARE THANKFULLY RARE, NEVER ASSUME IT WON'T HAPPEN TO YOU

- Be aware of your surroundings and potential hazards.
- TRUST your intuition. If you feel scared or uneasy, act on it immediately.
- Recognise that fear is natural, but can be channelled into positive action.

TAKE ACTION WHEN IN REAL DANGER

- Your primary aim is to get away fast.
- Remember: avoiding violence is a sign of strength, not weakness.
- Be prepared to help if you see someone else is in danger. Ring 999.

17. BEING IN CONTROL IS THE KEY TO PERSONAL SAFETY

A PERSONAL SAFETY CHECKLIST

You may, unwittingly, be taking risks at work, most of which could be avoided by minor changes to current practices and procedures. This guide suggests some of the skills and strategies you can employ to improve your own safety and that of others at work. They will also help you to ensure that risks to your personal safety when not at work are also controlled. Familiarise yourself with the following checks (and develop some of your own), so that they become second nature.

Out and About

- Does anyone know where you are?
- If your travel plans change, do you tell your supervisor/colleagues?
- Have you made sure you can be contacted?
- Do you know exactly where you are going and how to get there?
- If you are returning home after dark, have you considered possible risks (e.g. where you parked your car, the availability of public transport, etc)?
- Are you likely to be carrying cash or valuable items?
- Are valuable, easily stolen items too visible or accessible (e.g. laptop or portable computer, mobile phone, briefcase or handbag)?
- Do you carry a personal alarm?

At your place of work

- Are you alone at work at all, especially if working late?
- Are there areas where you feel uneasy (e.g. poorly lit entrances, car parks, etc.)?
- Is your office/work area a potential trap (e.g. escape route blocked by a desk, filing cabinet, etc)?
- As your work involves contact with the general public, do you know what to do if someone becomes aggressive?
- Do you report aggressive behaviour from customers?

SALES AREA HEALTH AND SAFETY ASSESSMENT

Site		Date	
Location of sales area:			
No. of sales staff:			
Days/hours worked:			
SALES AREA			
Ref	Item	Yes/No	Action Required
1	Is layout of sales office suitable?		
2	Are CCTV cameras required?		
3	Is there a suitable alarm system in place?		
4	Is external lighting required?		
5	Is an escape route available from sales office?		
6	Is there a secure area to which staff can escape?		
7	Do the showhouses need to be kept locked?		
8	Is the car park suitable?		
9	Are all access routes clearly visible?		
10	Is fencing provided to showhouse/sales area?		
11	Is a telephone available for emergency use?		
12	Are special measures required for lone-working?		
13	Is suitable welfare provided?		
14	Any special fire/first-aid arrangements required?		
15	Sales office doors/locks sufficient?		
16	Has fire fighting equipment been provided?		
17	Has first aid equipment been provided?		
18	Are signs displayed?		
19	Has emergency numbers/contact list been issued?		
TRAINING & INFORMATION			
20	Has Sales Safety Manual been issued?		
21	Has the site sales team had induction training?		
22	Has the site sales team received H&S training?		
ADDITIONAL ACTIONS REQUIRED/COMMENTS			
Ref			
Assessment by:		Date:	
Approved by:		Date:	
Actions Completed:		Date:	

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EMERGENCY TELEPHONE PROCEDURE

When telephoning the Emergency Services, please:

Dial 999. The operator will ask you what service you require - Police, Fire or Ambulance

Stay calm and speak clearly.

The telephone number for this site is:

The access address for emergency services to this site is:

When you have finished making the emergency call, please ensure that you or someone from the site meets the emergency services at the site entrance to give guidance to the incident UNLESS IT IS UNSAFE TO DO SO,

THIS PROCEDURE IS TO BE DISPLAYED IN ALL SALES AND SITE OFFICES

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