

## PUWER – Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

### What is PUWER?

**PUWER** stands for the **P**rovision and **U**se of **W**ork **E**quipment **R**egulations 1998 (1999 in Northern Ireland). The regulations deal with the work equipment and machinery used every day in workplaces and aims to keep people safe wherever equipment and machinery is used at work. **PUWER** replaces the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1992, carrying forward the existing requirements with a number of changes and additions.

### What does PUWER do?

Put simply, the **PUWER** Regulations aim to make working life safer for everyone using and coming into contact with machinery and equipment, including employers, employees, contractors, suppliers, and anyone else who might use or have access to machinery in the workplace. The regulations aim to ensure that all equipment is:

- **Suitable for its intended purpose**
- **Regularly maintained to ensure safety**
- **Only used by people who have received adequate training**
- **Inspected by a competent worker**

### Who does PUWER apply to?

**PUWER** regulations apply to work activities throughout the whole of Great Britain and also to offshore installations such as oil rigs and gas supply platforms. The groups covered by **PUWER** include:

- **Employers**
- **Self-employed people and the equipment they control or use**
- **Those who are employed to supervise or manage the use of equipment operated by others**

It's not just large businesses that are subject to the Regulations – if you use or control work equipment, or if you're self-employed operating for profit or not, then you have a legal obligation to follow them.

However, the regulations do not refer to equipment used by the public, which comes under the **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974**.

It also does not apply to those who have supplied or sold equipment – in this case it's up to the purchaser of equipment to make sure that it is specified, installed and used so that it does not present a risk to those at work.

**There's one piece of safety guidance that you can't afford to confuse, it's **PUWER**. Thankfully, our simple guide tells you everything you need to know about **PUWER** assessment and training to protect your workers, and your organisation.**

### PUWER Training:

As well as the equipment, the Regulations focus on the knowledge, training and experience of the user. For example, with high risk machinery such as power presses, it is required that the equipment is examined and tested by a "competent person", before they are put into use for the first time and then every six or twelve months depending on the types of guard fitted. Machine users are also required to carry out an inspection and test of the safety devices every day the press is used to ensure that it is safe to use.

**PUWER** also requires that all equipment used in the workplace has either been constructed or adapted so that, in the conditions in which it is to be used, it doesn't pose an unacceptable risk to people's health and safety. Questions to ask yourself about equipment include:

- **Will it work and be safe as it is?**
- **Will it have to be adapted in some way to ensure safety?**

### Risk Assessment:

You have a legal obligation to protect yourself and your workers when using machinery or equipment, which should be done by carrying out a risk assessment involving:

- **Identifying hazards and making a note of anything that can cause harm**
- **Assessing risks by considering the chance of harm actually being done (this helps you to work out what action to take to eliminate and reduce those risks)**
- **Eliminating and reducing the risks by asking yourself whether it's possible to eliminate any of the risks, perhaps by working out different ways of doing things**
- **If it's not possible to eliminate all the risks, listing ways to reduce them and identifying the precautions to take.**

**WASTE -  
EQUIPMENT  
SERVICES** 