

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

1. Course Information

This self-directed learning course is applicable to every member of the dental team. It is structured as a workbook that necessitates reading and studying. Additional reading on the subject is recommended. It is crucial for learners to continue updating their knowledge on this topic after finishing the course.

1.1 Aim

The aim of this course is to equip learners with an understanding of RIDDOR and its significance in the context of a dental workplace.

1.2 Objectives

Throughout this course, learners will be able to:

- Acknowledge the importance of addressing health and safety concerns through reporting.
- Understand the protocols used by dental facilities for reporting, as well as how such organisations utilise the compiled information to support risk control.
- Contemplate their individual responsibilities in reporting work-related injuries, health concerns, and near misses.

1.3 Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, participants will gain an understanding of the following:

- The significance of implementing health and safety protocols in dental settings.
- The regulatory function of the HSE in overseeing workplace health and safety standards.

- Key statistical data on workplace injuries and illnesses, along with their impacts.
- The essential guidelines outlined in RIDDOR, a crucial UK regulation that demands strict compliance.
- The obligations that employers must fulfil in accordance with RIDDOR.
- The duties that employees are required to uphold under RIDDOR.
- The procedures involved in reporting incidents under the RIDDOR framework.
- Strategies for organisations to effectively utilise the information gathered on workplace incidents, accidents, or illnesses.

1.4 GDC Development Outcomes

- **A** - Effective communication with patients, the dental team and others across dentistry, including when obtaining consent, dealing with complaints, and raising concerns when patients are at risk.
- **B** - Effective management of self and effective management of others or effective work with others in the dental team, in the interests of patients; providing constructive leadership where appropriate.
- **D** - Maintenance of skills, behaviours and attitudes which maintain patient confidence in you and the dental profession and put patients' interests first.

1.5 Relevant Legislation

- The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
- RIDDOR 2013 (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013).
- The Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1979.

1.6 Relevant Regulations

1.6.1 General Dental Council (GDC) - Standards for the Dental Team

- Principle 1: put patients' interests first.
- Principle 6: work with colleagues in a way that is in patients' best interests.
- Principle 7: maintain, develop and work within your professional knowledge and skills.
- Principle 8: raise concerns if patients are at risk.
- Principle 9: make sure your personal behaviour maintains patients' confidence in you and the dental profession.

1.6.2 Care Quality Commission (CQC) - Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations

- Regulation 12: safe care and treatment.
- Regulation 15: premises and equipment.
- Regulation 17: good governance.

2. Why are Health and Safety Measures Important in Dental Workplace Settings?

- The configuration and arrangement of dental facilities, the various techniques and procedures performed, and the specialised equipment and materials used, all present risks to individuals across the dental team.
- It is a legal requirement for employers to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their staff, as well as other parties within the dental team such as patients, visitors, and support staff.
- Employees must be confident that their work environment is safe and free from any potential hazards that may jeopardise their health and safety.
- Employers are responsible for actioning health and safety measures, such as risk assessments, to mitigate any potential risks to the entire dental team.
- Employers must establish health and safety protocols, like incident reporting procedures, to identify errors, learn from mistakes, implement necessary improvements, and prevent harm to the entire dental team.

- Both employers and employees should be proficient in executing appropriate health and safety measures to ensure the wellbeing of patients and themselves.
- Employers can prevent health and safety breaches to avoid unnecessary stress, distress, and injury to members of the broader dental team.
- By preventing accidents, injuries, and decreased productivity through compliance with health and safety regulations, employers can significantly reduce costs.
- Many of the aforementioned points are supported by the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations.

3. What is the Role of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)?

- The regulation of occupational health and safety in the UK is under the purview of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
- The primary objective of the HSE is to mitigate work-related injuries, diseases, and fatalities by conducting inspections, investigations, enforcement measures, and levying sanctions.
- Compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 is rigorously monitored by the HSE to ensure adherence to legal requirements by employers.
- Collaboration between the HSE and other regulatory bodies in the healthcare sector, such as the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and local government authorities, is commonplace to jointly oversee health and safety standards as co-regulators.

4. Some Statistics

- The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) states that on an annual basis, over one million workers in the UK suffer injuries or illnesses due to their employment.
- This not only has serious implications for the affected employees and their families but also for employers, the government, and society at large.

- Recent estimations reveal that, each year between 2022-2023 and 2024-2025, an average of 623,000 employees encountered work-related injuries, while an additional 679,000 workers reported new instances of ill health linked to their job or aggravated by it.
- During the fiscal year 2023-2024, the total costs related to self-reported workplace injuries and health problems reached £22.9 billion.
- The majority of these expenses, around 72% (£16.4 billion), are attributable to ill health, with injuries accounting for approximately 28% (£6.5 billion) of the overall expenditure.
- Poor health issues often result in increased absenteeism, leading to heightened financial burdens for organisations.

5. What is RIDDOR?

- RIDDOR is an abbreviation for the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.
- It is a legislation concerning health and safety in the UK, which stipulates that employers, certain self-employed individuals, and those responsible for worksites, have a legal obligation to formally report and keep records of each of the following incidents:
 - workplace accidents resulting in specific severe injuries to employees, such as a dental receptionist falling over exposed wires and fracturing a limb.
 - workplace accidents causing an employee to be absent from work for more than seven consecutive days, like a dental therapist suffering a severe needlestick injury from a contaminated tool, developing an infection requiring medical treatment, and preventing them from performing their usual duties for eight days.
 - diagnosed cases of occupational diseases specified in RIDDOR, for example, a dentist developing occupational asthma due to inhaling volatile organic compounds from dental bonding agents unknowingly.
 - work-related fatalities, for instance, a dental hygienist tragically succumbing to a fatal electric shock due to faulty electrical wiring.

- certain dangerous occurrences, such as accidental malfunction of dental x-ray equipment resulting in unnecessary exposure to ionising radiation.
- events with the potential to cause harm (near misses), like a malfunction in a dental chair's lifting mechanism posing a risk of severe injury to patients and staff, although no injuries actually occurred.
- workplace injuries to non-employees (i.e., members of the public) leading to their hospitalisation, for instance, a caregiver slipping on a recently cleaned wet spot in the waiting area without warning signs, resulting in a broken limb.
- Employers are required to report the aforementioned incidents to the relevant enforcing authority (either the HSE or local authority).
- Dental clinics and hospitals must report the outlined incidents to the HSE.
- Non-industrial settings such as retail stores, eateries, and places of worship, among others, would report such incidents to their local authority.
- Accidents arising from dental examinations or treatments are not covered under RIDDOR but are to be reported under different regulations.

6. What are the Employer's Responsibilities?

- According to RIDDOR, employers are required to promptly submit their report, using the quickest and feasible method possible.
- Within a period of 10-days, such reports must be accompanied by formal written notification.
- Employers need to be completely conscious that an employee is incapacitated if they cannot carry out their regular job responsibilities, which are reasonably anticipated of them.
- For an over-seven-day injury, where an employee or self-employed individual is unable to work for more than seven days consecutively (excluding the day of the incident but including weekends and rest days), there is no need for immediate reporting; nonetheless, the incident must be reported within 15 days of the accident.

- For an over-three-day injury, when an employee or self-employed individual is unable to work for over three days in a row (excluding the day of the incident but including weekends and rest days), reporting to the HSE is unnecessary, but these incidents must be formally recorded.
- The Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1979 legally requires a thorough, accurate, and current accident book to be maintained.
- In NHS trusts, Datix is the primary, web-based risk management software used by staff to securely report adverse events, near-misses, and safety concerns.
- Employers need to foster a culture of transparency and accountability, and be receptive to, and act on feedback, to encourage employees to share their concerns, which might help prevent accidents.

7. What are the Employee's Responsibilities?

- In dental workplaces, the conditions can be challenging and constantly changing, therefore, it is essential for employees to prioritise their health and wellness.
- Employees should be ready to participate in all training and programs related to their positions, including compulsory training related to health and safety, infection control, manual handling, basic life support, medical emergencies, and more.
- Employees need to know the process for raising issues, and the appropriate individuals to inform; it is crucial to raise concerns promptly to prevent accidents.
- Employees who experience a work-related injury or illness need to know the procedure for reporting it, and the appropriate person to report it to.

8. Who Must Report Under RIDDOR?

- In a workplace organisation, only a 'responsible person' can submit a report.
- Under RIDDOR, a responsible person is one with duties, and they might be:
 - The employer (e.g., practice principal)

- Some self-employed individuals (e.g., associate dentist)
 - A person in charge of the workplace premises when the accident has occurred (e.g., a practice manager).
- Non-responsible people (e.g., the injured person who is not self-employed, a member of the public, and those who do not have duties under RIDDOR) cannot submit a report.
- A quick, practicable approach to submitting a report can be via online channels.
- The responsible person must select the most relevant form for the report:
 - Injury.
 - Dangerous occurrence.
 - Case of disease.
 - Flammable gas incident.
 - Dangerous gas fitting.
- It is a statutory requirement for the responsible person to make a report under RIDDOR, and additionally, under the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 and Data Protection Act 2018, the responsible person has a lawful basis to process the injured person's (data subject's) personal data.
- The responsible person must, without a doubt, retain a copy of the report for the organisation's records.

9. What Occupational Diseases Must be Reported Under RIDDOR?

- The responsible person (e.g., employer or self-employed person) must report cases of certain diagnosed reportable diseases.
- The certain diagnosed reportable disease must be correlated with the exposure to specified workplace hazards.
- An occupational disease is one probable to being caused or exacerbated by their work.
- Reportable diseases can only be diagnosed by a doctor who can differentiate between new symptoms or a significant deterioration of current symptoms.
- Employees must submit the diagnoses in writing to their employer.

- A self-employed individual can rely on a doctor's verbal diagnosis of a reportable disease.
- Reportable diseases include:
 - Carpal tunnel syndrome.
 - Cramp of the hand or forearm.
 - Occupational dermatitis.
 - Hand-arm vibration syndrome.
 - Occupational asthma.
 - Tendonitis or tenosynovitis of the hand or forearm.
 - Occupational cancer.
 - Disease caused by occupational exposure to a biological agent.
- Non-reportable conditions include:
 - Those involving a body part other than the hand or forearm.
 - Those not caused by work involving physically demanding activities and frequent, repetitive movements.

10. Accidents or Incidents?

- According to the HSE, an 'accident' is "a separate, identifiable, unintended incident, which causes physical injury."
- For an injury to be considered an accident, it must have been caused by an identifiable, external incident (e.g., the surgery's computer screen collapses on the dentist's hand).
- So, just suffering a sharp pain on its own would not be classified as an accident.
- Events involving non-consensual violence towards individuals in the workplace are applicable.
- An injury which is attributable to the steady and cumulative exposure to a hazard (e.g., repetitive lifting of boxes of dental supplies) is not deemed an accident, as per RIDDOR.
- Under RIDDOR, only work-related accidents "out of or in connection with work" are reportable.

- Regardless of whether an accident happens on the work premises, it is only reportable if a work activity actively contributes towards it.
- An accident is work-related if:
 - it relates to how the work was performed.
 - it relates to any machinery, plant, substances, or equipment utilised for work.
 - it relates to the condition of the workplace where the accident occurred.
- An incident may be:
 - An undesired circumstance, which includes a group of conditions or circumstances with the propensity to inflict injury but no accident or near miss actually happens (e.g., untrained dental nurses are using a hoist to transfer certain patients without any negative outcome).
 - A near miss, which is an occurrence with the propensity to cause injury, but does not cause this (e.g., a dental water line malfunctions, leading to a significant release of Legionella bacteria into the environment, without causing immediate infection in any staff or patients).
 - A dangerous occurrence, which is a specific, reportable, adverse event (e.g., a gas leak in a dental practice).
- High potential near misses with the possibility to cause serious dangerous outcomes must be reported under RIDDOR.
- Undesired circumstances are not reportable under RIDDOR, but must be recorded as per the workplace's protocol.
- Dangerous occurrences must be reported under RIDDOR.

11. **How Might Organisations use the Information they Collect on Incidents and Accidents?**

- The process of recording and reporting incidents and accidents is a part of the Risk Management pillar of clinical governance; this component assures that dental care organisations consistently recognise, document, and gain insights from negative occurrences or close calls to reduce potential dangers to patients and employees in the future.

- Information pertaining to work-related incidents, accidents, illnesses, and the affected individual (data subject) gives the HSE and co-regulators a deeper insight into the risks present, and helps determine if these events necessitate a formal inquiry.
- Such information enables HSE and co-regulators to focus their efforts, and offer guidance on preventing work-related fatalities, injuries, sickness, and unintentional harm.
- Information regarding accidents, incidents, and poor health should serve as a tool for evaluating risks, assisting employers and employees in creating strategies to address potential risks identified within specific areas.
- Employers can use findings from records to avoid injuries and sickness, thereby, cutting expenses from any unforeseen losses.

12. Further Reading

- HSE - How HSE regulates risks to health and safety from work activities
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/enforce/how-hse-regulates/index.htm>
- HSE – Leadership of health and safety at work
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/leadership/index.htm>
- HSE - Health and safety training: A brief guide
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg345.pdf>
- HSE – Health and safety statistics
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/index.htm>
- HSE – Reporting accidents at work
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg453.pdf>
- HSE – RIDDOR
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/>

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/contents>
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/2936/contents/made>
- The Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1979
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1979/628>
- GDC Standards for the Dental Team
<https://standards.gdc-uk.org/pdf/Standards%20for%20the%20Dental%20Team.pdf>
- CQC Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations
<https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-regulation/providers/regulations-service-providers-and-managers/health-social-care-act>
- NHS England – Governance, patient safety and quality
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/mat-transformation/matrons-handbook/governance-patient-safety-and-quality/>
- Medical Education in Lothian – What happens when I submit a Datix?
<https://www.med.scot.nhs.uk/trainee-doctors/learning-from-datixes/what-happens-when-i-submit-a-datix>
- GDC CPD Guidance
<https://www.gdc-uk.org/docs/default-source/education-and-cpd/cpd/cpd-scheme/cpd-guidance-for-professionals.pdf>

13. Assessment

13.1 Reflection

- We appreciate your participation in the course, and we trust you found it to be enlightening.
- The purpose of reflection is to deliberate the results of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) endeavours.
- Reflection is a personal undertaking, and it is advisable to engage in it in a manner that aligns with your preferences.
- While the General Dental Council (GDC) does not mandate a specific method for conducting reflective learning, it is recommended to reflect on your most recent CPD training.
- The GDC stipulates the following steps:
 - Assess your activity.
 - Deliberate on the effects on your daily practice and patients.
 - Document your reflections.
 - Modify your Personal Development Plan (PDP) as necessary.
- Key Points for reflection:
 - What new insights did you gain from this course?
 - In what ways do you intend to implement the knowledge acquired from this course into your professional practice?
 - How do you plan to sustain this knowledge in the long term?
 - What strategies will you employ to further progress in this particular area of expertise?