

Lesson 2.1: Working Safely

Health and Safety Law
What you need to know

All workers have a right to work in places where risks to their health and safety are properly controlled. Health and safety is about stopping you getting hurt at work or ill through work. Your employer is responsible for health and safety, but you must help.

What employers must do for you

- 1 Decide what could harm you in your job and the precautions to stop it. This is part of risk assessment.
- 2 In a way you can understand, explain how risks will be controlled and tell you who is responsible for this.
- 3 Consult and work with you and your health and safety representatives in protecting everyone from harm in the workplace.
- 4 Free of charge, give you the health and safety training you need to do your job.
- 5 Free of charge, provide you with any equipment and protective clothing you need, and ensure it is properly looked after.

What you must do

- 6 Provide toilets, washing facilities and drinking water.
- 7 Provide adequate first-aid facilities.
- 8 Report major injuries and fatalities at work to our Incident Contact Centre on 0845 300 9923. Report other injuries, diseases and dangerous incidents online at www.hse.gov.uk
- 9 Have insurance that covers you in case you get hurt at work or ill through work. Display a hard copy or electronic copy of the current insurance certificate where you can easily read it.
- 10 Work with any other employers or contractors sharing the workplace or providing employees (such as agency workers), so that everyone's health and safety is protected.

If there's a problem

- 1 If you are worried about health and safety in your workplace, talk to your employer, supervisor, or health and safety representative.
- 2 You can also look at our website for general information about health and safety at work.
- 3 If, after talking with your employer, you are still worried, you can find the address of your local enforcing authority for health and safety and the Employment Medical Advisory Service via HSE's website: www.hse.gov.uk

Fire safety
You can get advice on fire safety from the Fire and Rescue Services or your workplace fire officer.

Employment rights
Find out more about your employment rights at: www.gov.uk

Your health and safety representatives

Other health and safety contacts:

HSE **Health and Safety Executive**

Before operating an industrial sewing machine, you must ensure you are prepared to work safely; this includes wearing the right kind of clothes. Your company will provide information on the right attire, and in some cases a uniform or overall may be provided. Companies will expect clean hands and short nails and you must:

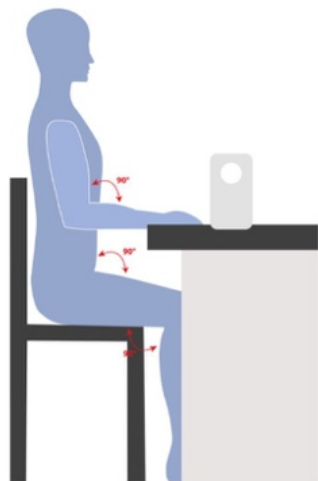
- Wear tight fitting sleeves
- Keep hair tied back
- Wear full, flat shoes
- Not wear scarfs
- Wear ear protection if your hearing is sensitive
- Not wear long necklaces, large rings, or bangles
- Wear flat, closed shoes

There are numerous general health and safety rules you must follow when working in a production environment. These regulations can be found in Lesson 7.4 along with information on appropriate Health and safety legislation.

This lesson focuses on the safety aspects of operating industrial sewing machines only, after making sure what you are wearing is safe you must consider how you are set up to work at your machine.

Position yourself correctly

Sitting position



Before starting to sew you must ensure you are sitting at your machine correctly. Adopting the correct posture will prevent fatigue and muscle aches and promote efficiency. Also, bad habits at the start are difficult to remedy, so follow the guidance below to ensure you positioned yourself correctly before you start work.

- Your chair is important, industrial sewing machine chairs can be stable or have wheels, so you can move around without standing up. Whichever type of chair you use, it should be adjustable in height and have back support. You need to adjust the seat height to suit your body; too low can cause cramp and backache, too high can cause strain on your legs.
- When seated, your back should be straight and your nose in line with the take up lever and the needle.
- Position both feet on the pedal, the right foot is slightly forward, so it can be used to increase machine speed and the left foot slightly back to act as a brake. The position of your feet can be reversed if that's your preference.



Standing position

Some industrial machines can be operated standing up. If you are a standing operator a regular change of posture and short breaks to stretch are recommended, or the use of sit/stand stool and anti-fatigue mats. These mats promote better circulation and reduce fatigue in the lower extremities.



Ensure you are working safely

Before you operate the machine and during sewing, you must ensure:



- You only use the machines you have been trained to operate.
Why? You will not be aware of the dangers when using the machine
- The needle guard is in place.
Why? You may be in danger of sewing your own fingers
- The machine and work area are clear and clean.
Why? Hazards may cause accidents, dirt may contaminate products

- The needle is set correctly and tightly.
Why? Loose/ incorrectly fitted needles can hit the throat plate and shatter or fly out
- The Bobbin/spool/or bobbing spool case is correctly inserted.
Why? The case can fall out or move and cause the needle to shatter



- The eye guard is in place on relevant machines.
Why? To protect the eyes should the needle hit the bed and shatter whilst sewing.
- You know the location of the main power emergency stop button.
Why? So, you can stop the machine immediately as required
- Report tool and equipment faults and break downs and breakages to the appropriate person.

Why? to ensure machines and equipment's are maintained and are safe

- Wipe/clean any spillage immediately
Why? To ensure there is no danger of slipping or product contamination
- Only make machine adjustments that you have been trained to do.
Why? To ensure adjustments are carried out correctly and machines remain safe to use
- Use both hands to raise and lower the machine bed.
Why? The machine is heavy and must be handled carefully to prevent accidents
- You have turned the machine off and taken feet off the treadle when setting or threading the needle.
Why? to ensure the machine does not sew if the pedal is touched accidentally
- Turn motor off when you are not stitching.
Why? to ensure the machine does not sew if the pedal is touched accidentally
- Turn the motor off before cleaning, oiling, or adjusting the machine.
Why? to ensure the machine does not sew if the pedal is touched accidentally
- Keep your attention on your work and hand position.
Why? to prevent accidents due to lack of concentration
- Do not remove any safety devices from the machines.
Why? to ensure the machines are safe and accident are prevented
- All waste is disposed of promptly and properly.
Why? to ensure the work area is free from hazards

Watch the video below to see the key aspects of working safely on an industrial sewing machine in the workplace.



Unit 2.1 Working Safely

Knowledge Challenge 2.3

1. Select three key things you must ensure before operating an industrial sewing machine.
 - Needle guard is in place, flat shoes are worn, the chair is set at the right height
 - Loose clothes are worn, guards are taken off the machine, hair is tied back
 - The eye guard is lifted, the needle is set tightly, long scarfs are worn

Knowledge Challenge 2.4

1. It is important to work safely when operating an industrial sewing machine. What five things can you do to help prevent an accident or injury at your machine.
 - Ensure the brakes are on the machine and it cannot roll
 - Wear rings and long necklaces when working
 - Ensure the needle guard is on the machine correctly
 - Always keep the machine on
 - Keep the work area tidy and free from hazards
 - Leave cleaning any oil or liquid spillages until the end of the day
 - Behave sensibly around the machine
 - Wear tight fitting clothes with no scarfs, drawstrings, or loose sleeves

You will find reference to health and safety across the Production Sewing Machinist programme. This lesson has covered the basic safety aspects of operating an industrial sewing machine, so now let's go onto Lesson 2.2 which focuses on the machines' purpose, functions, and features.