

The average employee spends around 40 hours per week in the office, therefore it is important that the environment they are working in is safe and fit for purpose. As an employer, it is your legal obligation to ensure your workplace meets all the necessary health and safety requirements, therefore if you are undergoing an **office fit out** soon, make sure you consider your employees' wellbeing at the heart of everything you plan, as well as the aesthetics.

The Health and Safety at Work Act

The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) specifies that it is 'the duty of every employer to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare at work of all his employees'. In simple, you should ensure that your office is free from health risks and that sufficient training, proper storage of articles and substances, and reasonable maintenance of the workplace is upheld at all times.

Fire Assessment

Your office is required to have a risk assessment carried out to identify and remove any fire hazards that may be found. A good starting point would be to consider all areas of the office space and record any hazards you can think of. It is essential that the necessary steps are taken to reduce these fire hazards, and to provide adequate fire safety systems to allow all employees to evacuate the building safely and in plenty of time in the case of a fire. You should ensure that fire doors are placed throughout the building with no obstructions and provide the appropriate fire safety equipment such as fire extinguishers where necessary. Kitchens or storerooms containing flammable goods or combustibles are key areas to place extinguishers and fire alarms.

Lighting

Lighting in an office space is an extremely important consideration when designing your commercial interior fit. Dark, poorly lit rooms, as well as flickering or blown bulbs, can contribute to poor health, eyesight issues, and decreased motivation. Designing your office so that the major light source is natural lighting through windows can improve employee morale, and keep the space well-lit throughout the day. **LED panel lights** have been proven to provide an effective, stable and safe complimentary solution in addition to natural light, and is a preferred option for many offices and places of work.

Office layout

The layout of your office is a highly important decision when planning your office fit out design. The office layout can have a direct impact on the productivity of employees as well as the overall aesthetics of your workplace. Whether you are having a **mezzanine floor** installed, or **glass partition walls** created, make sure you liaise with your office fitters or refurbishment specialists to ensure that the proposed layout is in accordance with health and safety regulations, and also make sure the flow of the office is unobstructed, so that every desk has easy access to a fire door or escape route should employees need to evacuate.

Hygiene

To maintain a hygienic office space for all your employees, you need to make sure that enough office toilet cubicles are provided to meet the needs of the number of employees in the building. Toilets and bathroom areas, as well as kitchen and fridge facilities, should be frequently cleaned to ensure they are free from bacteria, with hand washing facilities equipped with soap and a hand-dryer or clean towels.