1.0 Introduction

1.1 Inspections are carried out to find out how well part or all of an organisation is performing at the time of the inspection. As far as health and safety is concerned the objectives of carrying out an inspection are:
- to identify hazardous conditions or staff behaviours
- to start the corrective process.
- to improve operations and conditions.

1.2 This guidance is intended to provide an overview of inspections and the techniques that can help to provide a safer working environment by looking at what is being done, how it is being done and using these observations to implement plans to make a safer working environment.

1.3 The local manager must instigate a regular programme of inspection for the area for which they are responsible. A checklist should be produced depending on the type and frequency of the inspection. It might be a weekly check of fire extinguishers in a day care centre or a monthly physical check of the condition of a workshop. It is important that any actions found necessary by the inspection are corrected, and it may be advisable to produce an action plan to monitor progress.

1.4 The frequency of inspections depends on the hazards found in the workplace, higher risk activities or where there is likely to be frequent changes in the hazards within the workplace require more frequent inspections. Each workplace must be inspected at least every three months by local management.

2.0 Types of inspection

2.1 There are a variety of inspections such as:
- Statutory: For compliance with legislation
- External: By enforcement officials, insurers or consultants.
- Internal: Carried out by management, staff or safety representatives.
2.2 This guidance concentrates on the last type of inspection, which can be any one or a combination of different types. These are:
- **Safety Tours.** Tours of the workplace by senior managers used to identify issues that may not be obvious to local management.
- **Scheduled.** Planned at appropriate intervals, usually carried out by supervisors.
- **Introductory.** A check on new, reconditioned or relocated equipment.
- **Periodic.** Carried out by employees or supervisors, which can be formal (written) and pre planned or informal. These are undertaken on a periodic basis.
- **Behaviour based.** Usually inspections which look at the physical aspects of work, such as the condition of buildings, work methods or equipment. These inspections look at the manner in which staff work and the actions that they take which may lead to injury.

2.3 For any inspection, knowledge of the building and the work being undertaken is required, also a knowledge of applicable Regulations, standards and codes of practice. Some system must be followed to ensure that all relevant matters have been considered and an adequate reporting system must be in place so that remedial action can be taken. The results of the inspection should be made available to management and safety committees. They can be used as a measure of safety performance.

3.0 **Principles of inspection**

3.1 Before any inspection certain basic decisions need to be taken about aspects of it, and the quality of the decisions will be a major factor on the quality of the inspection and whether it achieves its objectives. The decisions are reached by answering the following questions:

3.2
- **What are we inspecting?** What is the purpose of the inspection, are we looking to ensure that the whole workplace is safe (general inspection) or are we looking just at one aspect of it such as fire precautions? Are we looking at the way staff behave whilst at work in order to identify dangerous actions.

- **What are we looking for?** The obvious answer is anything that is wrong. Any uncontrolled hazards should be noted, also anything that is in poor condition and will possibly cause harm if allowed to deteriorate further, such as leaks, wear, damage, noise frayed or rusted items. If looking at the behaviour of staff, the actions that could lead to problems, such as not using a safe system of work or lifting above head height when there are suitable steps available.

- **How will it be reported?** Any defects identified will require some sort of corrective action. Who will the results of the inspection be notified to and will it be a verbal summary or by completion of a checklist or report?

- **How often should the inspection be carried out?** If there are statutory requirements these should be met, such as those required under COSHH or...
LOLER. If there are no statutory requirements it will depend on the potential severity of failure of equipment or machinery, or the state of the item at the last inspection. e.g. A door is identified to be in poor condition and is not likely to remain suitable until its next routine inspection it would be sensible to carry out an inspection at a shorter period. As a general guide every low risk workplace should be inspected monthly.

- **Who should carry out the inspection?** Everybody has a responsibility to carry out informal inspections of their workplace, this is usually for items such as damaged seating or frayed electrical cables. Supervisors should plan general inspections and take part in periodic inspections of aspects of the workplace. Under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations Union Safety Representatives may also undertake workplace inspections and they should be encouraged to do so. Management inspections should be made periodically.

### 4.0 Inspection Techniques.

#### 4.1

- Those carrying out inspections must be properly equipped to do so, have the necessary knowledge and experience of statutory requirements and acceptable performance standards. They must also comply fully with local site rules, including the wearing or use of PPE as appropriate, so as to set an example.

- Develop and use checklists, They serve to focus attention and record results, but must be relevant to the inspection.

- Do not rely on memory, notes should be taken either on a separate piece of paper or on the checklist.

- Items found missing or defective or any dangerous situation should be corrected immediately and not wait for formal action.

- Any unsafe behaviour seen during the inspection should be noted and corrected.

### 5.0 Recording.

#### 5.1

The results of any inspection should be recorded, as should details of any actions taken as a result of the inspection. If actions cannot be immediately taken then management needs to develop a plan to ensure that actions are taken in an appropriate and prioritised manner.

#### 5.2

A suitable checklist should be developed that covers the issues to be examined during the inspection. An example of one for a workshop is included as Annex A. There should also be provision for an action plan to implement the corrective actions necessary, either as part of the inspection checklist or as part of the health and safety management action plan of the manager.
6.0 **Taking Action.**

6.1 Every hazard identified will need to be assessed by the manager for the risk it presents. From the risk assessment a prioritised action plan can be developed and implemented. But:

- Any dangerous situation should be corrected immediately, if their existence constitutes a serious risk of personal injury or damage to plant and equipment.

- Any unsafe behaviour seen during the inspection should be noted and corrected.

6.2 If the resources are not immediately available the risk must still be controlled until the risk can be eliminated. e.g. it may not be possible to replace a torn or badly worn carpet, so other methods such as taped repairs or repositioning equipment to prevent access to the damage should be taken, until the risk can be eliminated.

7.0 **Further advice and assistance**

7.1 If at any time during an investigation further advice, assistance or information, is needed contact the Children’s Services Health and Safety Team, Wood Mill Building (extensions 55034, 55035, 55259 or 53808) who will be able to help.