



UKMHA Safe Working Area Charter - Working together to stay safe

This Charter has been written by the UKMHA in conjunction with its members who engage in on-site maintenance and repair of Materials Handling and Plant Equipment for customers. It is essential that whilst these visiting engineers are working at a customer's premises that the customer supports them to do this safely and they are afforded a 'Safe Working Area.'

To help give clarity to the definition of a 'Safe Working Area' the UKMHA has created this Safe Working Area Charter to outline the minimum requirements of what our industry would deem to be a 'Safe Working Area' for visiting engineers.

We invite and encourage UKMHA members and non-members who have engineers attending their sites to sign up to this charter to help demonstrate their support and cooperation to this ambition. By working together in this way, we will improve standards, maintain legal compliance, and reduce injuries and ill health both to our employees and yours.

Minimum Requirements of a 'Safe Working Area':

Note: Certain tasks may require additional support/measures in line with the maintenance provider's and customer's respective risk assessments. Similarly, engineers who are classed as 'Resident' on site may require additional facilities beyond what is outlined below.

To be deemed a 'Safe Working Area' the designated work area should be:

- Of an appropriate size, giving sufficient space for the engineer to safely manoeuvre around the equipment with tools, etc;
- In close proximity to the engineer's van to minimise manual handling travelling distances with tools, spares, etc;
- Appropriately and safely segregated from:
 - Vehicle or plant movements - either completely or with suitable barriers;
 - Pedestrians, including customer employees, third parties and members of the public;
 - Any hazard from customer products, materials, machinery or suspended loads;
- Sufficiently well-lit for the intended work activities;
- On ground that is solid, firm, smooth, level and appropriately load bearing for activities required;
- Free from:
 - Slip or trips hazards (e.g. poor housekeeping, obstructions, potholes, spillages, puddles, ice, etc.);
 - Dusts, fumes, chemicals, residues or biological agents that could be harmful or hazardous to health;
 - Adverse levels of noise, magnetic field, UV light, radiation, vibration or temperature;
 - Explosive dusts, vapours or explosive atmospheres – for this reason battery charging areas do not generally make suitable safe working areas;
 - Exposure to biological hazards, e.g. sewage, animals, birds, vermin and their excrement
- Appropriately clear from any high voltage electricity services and overhead powerlines or obstructions.

If anticipated work activities may include fluid systems, such as LPG or hydraulics, then the work area should be clear of drains.

The following should be notified, available and introduced to the visiting engineer as part of site induction:

- Site specific PPE requirements
- Safe and adequate means of escape in the event of a fire or other emergency that requires evacuation;
- Access to:
 - First Aid provisions, should the visiting engineer require them;
 - A clean functioning toilet facility with adequate washing facilities
 - An indoor or covered work area where reasonably practical;
- Support with establishing a buddy system if lone working on site – where the engineer is working in a remote area.

Whilst the above list of criteria outlines what our industry would consider the minimum requirements of a 'Safe Working Area', it is not exhaustive. If something is not on this list, it does not mean it is acceptable, unimportant, or not required.

As an industry that predominantly employs mobile staff who work on customer sites, we encourage our employees to proactively highlight any situation or environment where they feel unsafe. We ask that they cooperate with customers safe working practices whilst on site and if there is any situation where they feel unsafe that they highlight this to their site contact to achieve a suitable resolution. If they are still not comfortable that the area is safe for them to work in, we encourage them to stop and contact their Line Manager.