

# COMPUTER SOFTWARE

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### Introduction

Computer software will not transform a dangerous workplace into a safe one, nor will it replace the need for people competent in health and safety matters to deal with day-to-day safety issues. What it can do, however, is to enhance health and safety management through more effective control and evaluation of safety data within the workplace.

Computer packages can be divided into two main types of product for use in relation to health and safety at work namely health and safety **information** and **management** systems.

### Information Systems

There are a number of 'electronic' publications relating to health and safety. These are produced either by publishing companies (e.g. Croner, Barbour Index plc amongst others) or on behalf of regulatory bodies such as the Health and Safety Executive (e.g. OSH - CD-Rom). For an annual subscription you receive regular updates to keep you in touch with changes in legislation etc.

### Health and Safety Management Systems (HSMS)

With the current state and extent of health and safety legislation, HSMS may help to reduce the effort required to meet legislative requirements (e.g. accident reporting and recording, risk assessments, COSHH assessments and manual handling assessments) and enhance safety performance by analysing activities and leading to productive solutions.

Packages are available to help you cope with particular health and safety requirements (such as accident reporting, assessments and registers) as stand alone applications. There are also packages which, to varying extents, will cover nearly all issues in a comprehensive, integrated manner. It is vital therefore that in comparing software systems one must consider:-

- the functional elements within the package
- the operating environment
- the flexibility of the system

### Sources of Advice

Computer companies often attend safety trade fairs at the National Exhibition Centre and Earls Court for example and advertise in safety journals and magazines. There are an increasing number of articles in such publications reviewing or offering advice on safety software.

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## **CHECKLIST - COMPUTER SOFTWARE**

### **COMPUTER SOFTWARE**

1. Do you have problems in keeping up to date with health and safety requirements? YES NO
2. Are you able to obtain appropriate information on health and safety from non-computerised sources? YES NO
3. Would your business benefit from a degree of computerisation of the health and safety function? YES NO
4. As your business grows will it continue to be able to monitor, review and improve its health and safety performance using current practices? YES NO

## **REFERENCES/FURTHER DETAILS**

- \*1. Selecting Safety Software - Safety Management (March 1996, pages 37-44)

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\* Available to view by prior arrangement at Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Environmental Health Services, Council House, Coton Road, Nuneaton. CV11 5AA

\*\* Free copy available from Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council at the above address.

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