



Monitor the quality and use of supplies and equipment in your business

Having equipment, tools and materials at the right quality is essential for the performance of your business. Receiving a sub-standard batch of materials may make it impossible for you to fulfil an order and finding a cheaper or more efficient supplier may be critical in the longer term.

This applies to any supplies that your business uses and includes equipment, office supplies, furniture, fixtures and fittings and utilities such as electricity, water and gas.

This involves:

1. checking that you continue to have the right equipment, tools and materials for your business
2. improving the use of equipment, tools and materials
3. identifying ways of using equipment and resources more effectively

What you need to do

- check whether the equipment, tools and materials you currently receive are adequate
- check whether or not suppliers provide what you need
- identify when changes that your suppliers make affect your business
- keep suppliers informed about anything that will affect what your business needs from them
- regularly check the quality and cost effectiveness of the equipment, tools and materials of your business
- identify any problems you experience with equipment, tools, materials and suppliers and deal with them in a way that does not affect your business
- work out how your use of equipment, tools and materials may change in the future
- identify any changes to supplies that would enable your business product or service you provide to be improved
- identify any improvements you could make to the way you use supplies of equipment, tools and materials
- keep up to date with any laws and regulations about business supplies



What you need to know and understand

Supplies

- what further information you can gather about your current and future needs for equipment, tools and materials. (For example trends, customers, suppliers, market information, sales forecasts and feedback from staff.)
- how to carry out a complete review of the equipment, tools and materials being used to see if they are still meeting the requirements of your business
- how to forecast changes need to your supplies through your business planning and review
- how to assess the supply of equipment, tools and materials in the light of changes because of new products being introduced or in the context of your business expanding
- what problems there may be with equipment, tools and materials. (For example quality, reliability, fault reporting, health and safety issues and maintenance.)
- how to reduce what is being spent in advance on machinery and equipment
- how to ensure that your business continues to receive equipment, tools and machinery in the most cost-effective way

Suppliers

- how to communicate with suppliers effectively and constructively
- how to ensure that problems with supplies or suppliers are dealt with speedily and effectively
- what to do if your supplier's behaviour changes in a way that effects your business. (For example new prices, different quality or discontinuing products or services, late delivery, different payment terms or withdrawing discounts.)

Laws and regulations

- what laws and regulations you need to follow. (For example health and safety, environment or licences.)