



**AN BILLE OIFIGI (COINNIOLLACHA FOSTAIOCHTA), 1956.  
OFFICES (CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT) BILL, 1956.**

**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM.**

1. This Bill sets out to give office workers the general kind of protection which the Factories Act, 1955, gave industrial workers.

2. The obligations sought to be imposed by the Bill will apply to all premises in which more than five persons are employed to do clerical work. " Clerical work " includes book-keeping, sorting and filing, typing, document reproduction, machine calculating, drawing, the handling of mail, telephone and telegraph operating and the handling of money.

Premises occupied by the Defence Forces, or used substantially as a private residence, or used only at irregular intervals and for short periods, are excluded.

Government offices and the offices of Local Authorities will come within the application of the Bill.

3. The Bill provides that the occupier of an office must make sufficient and suitable provision for each of the following matters :—

- |                 |                                              |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Cleanliness,    | Washing facilities,                          |
| Overcrowding,   | Seating,                                     |
| Heating,        | First-Aid,                                   |
| Lighting,       | Sanitary conveniences,                       |
| Ventilation,    | Fire safety,                                 |
| Drinking water, | Soundness of floors, stairs<br>and passages. |

In relation to nearly all of these provisions the Minister for Industry and Commerce may make regulations fixing a standard of suitability. The regulations may be made to apply to all offices or to defined classes of offices.

4. Regulations may be made also for different classes of offices requiring (Section 23) the provision of welfare facilities additional to those named in the Bill or requiring (Section 16) special precautions to be taken for places or occupations likely to give rise to special health risks.

5. Enforcement of the law in Government offices and in offices attached to factories is entrusted to the Minister for Industry and Commerce. In relation to other offices enforcement is entrusted to the sanitary authority. Provision is made for the appointment of inspectors who are given wide powers for the discharge of the duties which the Bill assigns to them.

6. The obligation to comply with the law will rest primarily on the occupier of the office but certain of the obligations are transferred to the owners of the premises when separate parts of the premises are let to different occupiers, and when common facilities and services are provided for the separate offices (Sections 31 and 35).

7. Where compliance with the provisions of the Bill would necessitate structural alterations to the premises and where there is dispute between an owner and the occupier of office premises regarding the right to carry out alterations or regarding liability for the cost of the alterations either party may ask the Circuit Court to adjudicate on the matters in dispute (Sections 43 and 44).

8. Provision is made for the setting up of an Advisory Council with the general duty of advising the Minister for Industry and Commerce on any matters arising in relation to the execution of the Act (Section 24). The Council will have the particular duty of advising the Minister on every proposal to make regulations (Section 30 (2)). The Council members will include persons representative of sanitary authorities, of organisations of workers and of organisations of employers.

*An Roinn Tionscail agus Tráchtála.  
Eanáir, 1957.*

In relation to nearly all of these provisions the Minister for Industry and Commerce may make regulations fixing a standard of suitability—the regulations may be made to apply to all offices or to defined classes of offices.

Regulations may be made also for different classes of offices in relation to the provision of welfare facilities additional to those named in the Bill or required (Section 18) special provisions to be taken for places or occupations likely to give rise to special health risks.

Enforcement of the law is Government officers and in offices attached to factories is entrusted to the Minister for Industry and Commerce. In relation to other offices enforcement is entrusted to the sanitary authorities. Government inspectors are given wide powers for the purpose of the Bill to enter premises and to inspect them. The Bill requires that the occupier of the office but certain of the obligations are transferred to the owner of the premises when separate parts of the premises are let to different workers and when certain facilities and services are provided for the separate office workers.

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Drinking water.  
Ventilation.  
Lighting.  
Heating.  
Disinfectants.  
Cleanliness in general.  
Welfare facilities.  
Soundness of floor, stairs and passages.  
Fire safety.  
Sanitary conveniences.  
First Aid.  
Seating.  
Welfare facilities.