

Health and Safety Policy

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Associated Health and Safety Policy documents

Annex	Title
Annex A	Risk assessment guidance
Annex B	Violence at work
Annex C	Guidance on the issue, use and storage of personal protective equipment
Annex D	Risks to new and expectant mothers at work
Annex E	Incident action guide
Annex F	Safety and environmental requirements of contractors and sub-contractors
Annex G	Safe driving guidance
Annex H	Fire risk assessment guidance
Annex I	Working from home risk assessment
Annex J	Working at height guidance
Annex K	Induction safety checklist for work placement students
Annex L	Personal safety – a guide for councillors
Annex M	A guide to organising safe events
Annex N	Hot works permit
Annex O	Work permit for external and internal roof work
Annex P	Customer alert list (CAL) Policy
Annex Q	Lone worker guidance
Annex R	Example lone worker risk assessment
Annex S	Confined spaces guidance
Annex T	Confined space permit to work

Part 1: Introduction

General

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA 74) places statutory responsibilities on both employers and employees for health and safety at work.

HSWA 74 requires that the employer protects, 'as far as is reasonably practicable', the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees. A further requirement is the provision of such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the health and safety at work of their employees. The employee, in turn, is required to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and not to endanger that of others by their acts or omissions at work. They are also required to cooperate with their employer to enable any health and safety measures that are necessary to be implemented.

This document has been prepared by the Service Manager (Health and Safety) in response to HSWA 74 and is published following consultation and agreement with senior management, the health and safety committees, Unison and other staff representatives of West Suffolk Council.

Breach of (or refusal to comply with) this policy, safe systems of work written to support this policy or other health and safety legislation may result in disciplinary action, which, if it constitutes an act of gross misconduct, may lead to dismissal.

Aim

The aim of this publication is to state West Suffolk Council's policy on health and safety and to give direction and guidance to:

- all employees
- outside contractors and visitors

about health and safety matters and to delegate responsibility in order that the council's Health and Safety Policy is implemented in a structured and effective manner.

Method

The layout of this publication is as follows:

- Parts 1 to 4 are the main sections of the publication and cover the formal policy statement, responsibilities and organisational arrangements for the implementation of West Suffolk Council's Health and Safety Policy and mandatory requirements under HSWA 74.
- Part 5 covers the general arrangements for specific health and safety functions within the organisation.

Although the elements contained within this publication are quite comprehensive, they are not to be taken as the authoritative regulations in isolation but should be read in conjunction with other regulations and publications. The Service Manager (Health and Safety) is available for advice should any employee, contractor or visitor need further guidance.

Part 2: Policy statement

West Suffolk Council recognises its responsibility to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all its employees and to conduct its undertaking in such a way as to prevent the public and others not employed by the council from being exposed to risks to their health and safety.

West Suffolk Council acknowledges that an effective health and safety policy contributes to a better business performance by reducing injuries and ill health, protecting the environment and reducing unnecessary losses and liabilities. The council will take all steps within its power to meet these aims and, in particular, will pay attention to:

- the regular assessment of risks arising from the conduct of its activities and the monitoring of measures designed to control those risks
- safe plant equipment and systems of work
- safe places of work and safe access to and from them
- all information, instruction and training necessary to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees
- the provision of competent advice including technical advice on health and safety matters to all staff throughout the council
- the provision of effective consultation with its employees on health, safety and welfare matters and the promotion and development of health and safety at work
- the award of contracts for goods and services to persons or organisations able to demonstrate full compliance with health and safety legislation
- the monitoring and review of this policy.

Ian Gallin, Chief Executive
West Suffolk Council

Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Council
West Suffolk Council

(The policy is signed and dated after each annual review.)

Part 3: Object and intent

It is the intention of West Suffolk Council to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees by:

- providing and maintaining equipment and plant, systems and working environments that are safe, without risk to health and provide adequate welfare arrangements
- making arrangements for ensuring safety and absence of risk to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of equipment and materials
- providing appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision
- conducting operations in such a way as to ensure that persons not employed by the council are not exposed to risk to their health and safety
- observing all the approved relevant statutory provisions, rules, regulations and codes of practice relevant to workplaces and persons at work
- establishing procedures to ensure that health and safety factors are taken fully into account in the introduction of new processes, methods, plant, equipment and materials
- consulting with representatives of the workforce prior to introducing any new processes, methods, plant equipment and materials to ensure that health and safety factors are taken fully into account
- ensuring that all levels of management and supervision are aware that they are responsible for the health and safety of all persons under their control and for actions taken by them, and for the health and safety of third parties who could be endangered
- ensuring that all employees are made aware of, and are encouraged to accept, their individual responsibilities to care for the safety of themselves and others
- ensuring that all new employees are given instruction in accident prevention and safe working generally and, in particular, any known hazards within their own duties
- providing and maintaining provision for fire prevention, firefighting and fire protection
- ensuring that all employees are conversant with fire evacuation procedures and means of escape in case of fire from their place of work and that all employees are instructed in the use of basic firefighting equipment
- ensuring that all employees are conversant with means available to alert others in the vicinity of a fire and of alerting the fire and emergency services

- ensuring that all employees are conversant with means of obtaining first aid medical treatment and obtaining assistance in the case of accident or sickness
- ensuring that all employees are aware of the means of notification and action to be taken in the event of an emergency
- providing adequate protective clothing relative to the extent of duties and requirements of persons employed
- providing adequate first aid and medical facilities and staff trained to meet first aid requirements and ensuring the ready availability of such staff and facilities
- ensuring that safety training is incorporated in all job training
- ensuring that all personal injury accidents, non-injury accidents, near accidents, accidental damage, fires, explosions and spillage of chemicals or substances which may be hazardous are reported immediately for effective action to be taken, the incident recorded and investigated
- ensuring that all accidents, near misses, damage, fires, explosions, spillages and dangerous occurrences are investigated for the purpose of establishing the cause so that preventative action may be taken
- providing the means for establishing and maintaining records of all accidents and incidents for the purposes of monitoring the effectiveness of the policy
- ensuring employees are aware of, and have access to, the Health and Safety Policy and all safe systems of work and codes of practice that are relevant to their work.

Part 4: Organisation

Responsibilities

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has ultimate responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of all people who are affected by the work of the council, whether that work is carried out by its own staff or by contractors.

Health and Safety Director

The director nominated for health and safety will lead on all operational health and safety issues and is appointed as the Health and Safety Director. They will:

- ensure competent people are appointed to provide advice and guidance on health and safety
- inform Leadership Team (LT) of any significant or emerging health and safety issues

- ensure health and safety remains on the corporate agenda
- ensure arrangements are in place to monitor, inspect, audit and review health and safety activities
- ensure there are effective arrangements for consulting with employees on health, safety and welfare issues and for promoting collaborative working with trade union appointed health and safety representatives
- ensure that a suitable training programme is maintained that addresses the needs of staff at all levels.

Strategic directors and directors

Strategic directors and directors play a strategic role in supporting the Chief Executive to meet their responsibilities. However, they are also responsible for ensuring that robust health and safety management systems exist in their respective services, such as:

- ensuring that the council's overall Health and Safety Policy objectives are achieved within their areas of responsibility
- ensuring that their managers are adequately trained to carry out their health and safety functions
- carrying out all the health and safety duties of a line manager in respect of staff reporting directly to them.

Service Manager (Health and Safety)

The responsibilities of the Service Manager (Health and Safety) are to:

- maintain an up to date awareness of all new health and safety legislation and review the safety policy and its codes of practice to reflect these developments and current best practice
- keep managers informed of changes in safety law and practice which directly affect them and advise on the implications and implementation
- assist service heads in the preparation of local safety procedures
- provide a day-to-day safety advisory service to all managers
- answer safety questions from staff in an impartial manner
- assist managers to identify safety training requirements
- visit periodically all locations within the council, in the company of the relevant manager, to carry out safety inspections

- meet periodically with individual managers and carry out an audit of the safety function within their section(s)
- receive reports of all accidents, near misses and so on and investigate as appropriate
- maintain the accident database and report all accidents and dangerous occurrences as per the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, Dangerous Occurrence Regulations
- monitor accident trends and instigate appropriate action to reduce accident numbers
- when necessary, issue instructions as to what action should be taken and when
- offer advice on the operational safety of such design proposals before construction commences
- act as lead officer for the Health and Safety Group and Health and Safety Sub-Committee
- advise and assist in the assessment of potential contractors.

Service managers, line managers and supervisors

Service managers, line managers and supervisors are responsible for:

- the health and safety of their staff
- ensuring that their staff are aware of, and have access to, the Health and Safety Policy and all safe systems of work and codes of practice that are relevant to their work
- ensuring that their staff follow all the Health and Safety Policy, safe systems of work and codes of practice
- ensuring that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are undertaken, recorded and regularly reviewed for all work-related activities within their area
- having identified the risks within the risk assessment, implementing control measures to reduce the risks to an acceptable level
- ensuring that the risk assessments and subsequent safe systems of work and codes of practice are communicated to their staff
- ensuring adequate financial provision is made within their budgets for the resources needed to meet their health and safety responsibilities (this includes training)

- identifying the health and safety training needs of their staff and arranging such training with advice and assistance from the Health and Safety Manager and learning and development consultant
- monitoring the activities of their staff to ensure compliance with the Health and Safety Policy
- preparing such additional safety procedures as are required within the section to ensure a safe system of work for their staff
- following accident and incident reporting procedures
- ensuring staff (where necessary) have appropriate personal protective equipment.

Employees

It is the duty of all employees, while at work, to take reasonable care for their health and safety and that of other persons who may be affected by their activities, including colleagues, contractors and members of the public.

Each employee must, in addition to any specific responsibility delegated to them:

- familiarise themselves with this Health and Safety Policy
- familiarise themselves with, and follow, all health and safety safe systems of work, codes of practice, general procedures and local procedures which their manager has indicated are relevant to their work
- use correctly all work items, including personal protective equipment, in accordance with the training and instructions which they have received
- inform their supervisor or manager of all accidents, near misses, safety hazards or potential hazards – this will include machine defects, protective clothing defects and damage to plant equipment and property
- inform their supervisor or manager of any aspects of their health or medical treatment, which may affect their ability to carry out their duties safely. For female staff, this includes pregnancy and the early months of motherhood. Employers have specific statutory duties to assess the risks to these staff and to make appropriate arrangements to protect the health of mother and child.

Safety representatives

Proper consultation with employees on health and safety matters can make a significant contribution to creating and maintaining an effective health and safety culture within the organisation. Information on council nominated safety representatives can be found next to the health and safety law poster in your building or by contacting the Service Manager (Health and Safety).

The role of safety representatives is to:

- be consulted by colleagues on matters relating to local health and safety at work issues
- make representations to management on potential hazards and dangerous occurrences at the workplace that affect, or could affect, the group of employees they represent – these representations should be copied to the Service Manager (Health and Safety)
- attend Health and Safety Group and Health and Safety Panel meetings.

Committees

Health and Safety Group (HSG)

The membership of this group is made up of:

- non-management representatives to broadly reflect:
 - trade union membership across the authority
 - adequate representation of non-union employees
- management representatives as nominated by services – this number does not exceed the actual number of representatives from the trade union and non-union group.

The main function of the group is to consider and make recommendations on all matters relating to health and safety of all employees and, where appropriate, members of the public.

The Health and Safety Group reports up to the Health and Safety Sub-Committee.

Health and Safety Sub-Committee

The Health and Safety Sub-Committee comprises members of elected councillors and employees who are members of the Health and Safety Group.

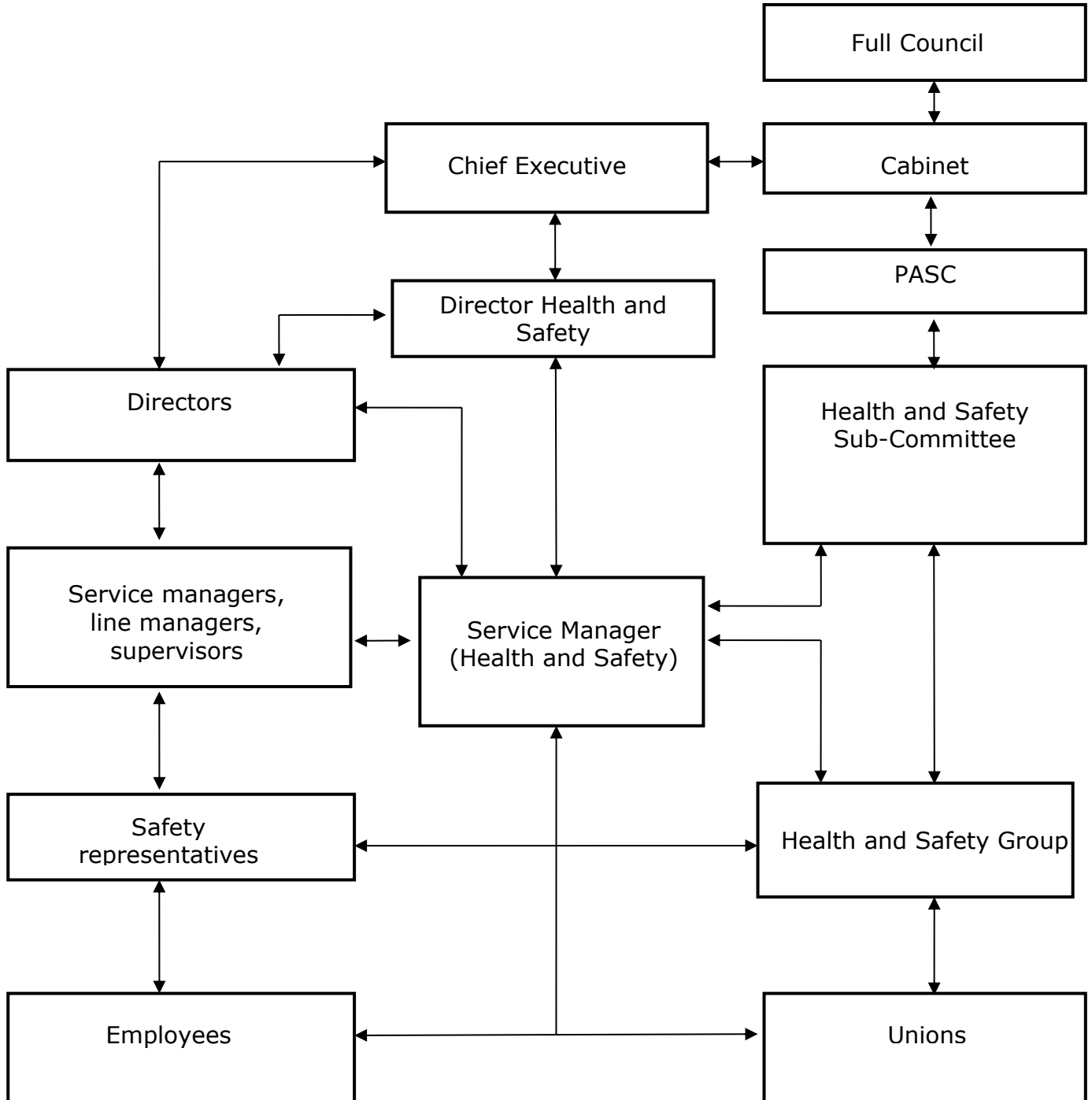
The sub-committee's role is to review all matters relating to health, safety and welfare of the council's employees and the protection of other persons against risks arising out of the work activities of the employees and of persons working under contract.

In particular, the panel shall:

- study accidents and incidents, especially those reportable to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- consider and make recommendations in respect of items submitted by the HSG
- consider reports from safety representatives.

Communication channels

The following flow chart shows the channels of communication between Council, Cabinet, health and safety groups, unions and council officers.



Part 5: General arrangements

This part of the policy contains general information and guidance for all staff.

Some services will have additional health and safety information and guidance. It is important that employees working within such a service are familiar with that information.

Instruction 1: Safe place of work

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations (as amended)

Introduction

- 1.1 Legislation requires all workplaces within the local authority to be kept clean, tidy and in a safe condition. Managers and supervisors are responsible for conducting regular checks to ensure that 'good housekeeping' is maintained. Safety representatives should conduct random checks to ensure that their service's housekeeping is in order.
- 1.2 Below are guidelines on how to reduce potential hazards:
 - Within work sites, walkways, gangways, paths and roads are clearly marked, in good condition and unobstructed.
 - Arrangements are in place for the removal and clearing up of hazards such as spilt fluids (especially oil and lubricants), snow and ice.
 - Tripping and falling hazards are identified and removed, wherever possible.
 - Safe access and egress exist throughout the workplace.
 - Staircases, landings and floor openings are guarded to prevent falls of stores and personnel.
 - Heavy items are not stacked on top of racking as this presents both a manual handling and working at height hazard.
 - Stores are kept tidy with safe and easy access. Individual items are held in or on correct storage systems.
 - The storage of flammable, toxic and corrosive substances conform to current regulations and presents no risk (note: refer to instruction 10 of this policy).
 - Emergency equipment is prominently located and clearly identified.
 - Warning signs and notices are clearly displayed.
 - Caution is taken when operating in areas where there is vehicle movement.
 - The correct personal protective equipment is used.
- 1.3 The above list is not exhaustive, but common sense and a keen eye for potential problem areas should enable the majority of hazards to be identified

and resolved. Employees at all levels are encouraged to adopt a 'prevention is better than cure' philosophy.

Instruction 2: Risk assessment

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)
- Risk assessment form on the Health and Safety Portal
- Annex A: Risk assessment guidance

Introduction

- 2.1 A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your workplace. The identification of hazards and the assessment of risk is a key part of the council's policy for health and safety. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) require employers to identify and record significant hazards and put into place effective control measures to control the risk.

Definitions

- 2.2 Hazard – a hazard is anything that may cause harm. These can be hazards to physical health (such as chemicals, electricity, working from ladders or an open drawer) or to mental health (for example, if the common causes of work-related mental ill health due to demands, control and support for individuals are not properly managed in the workplace).
- 2.3 Risk – the risk is the probability or likelihood that harm (the result of a hazard) will occur, linked to its consequences. A risk is a relative concept – a means of judging the priority in which hazards should be addressed. This involves both the scale of the hazard and the likelihood of it occurring.
- 2.4 The aim of the risk assessment process is to identify and implement control measures, to reduce the hazard and risk to a level that is reasonably practicable. This must either reduce or eliminate the level of risk to a suitable and sufficient level. The hierarchy of risk control is as follows:
- Elimination – redesign the job or substitute a substance so that the hazard is removed or eliminated.
 - Substitution – replace the material or process with a less hazardous one.
 - Engineering controls – for example, install or use additional machinery to control risks from dust or fumes or separate the hazard from operators by methods such as enclosing or guarding dangerous items of machinery or equipment. Give priority to measures which protect collectively over individual measures.

- Administrative controls – these are all about identifying and implementing the procedures you need to work safely (for example, reducing the time workers are exposed to hazards, such as by job rotation).
- Personal protective clothes and equipment – only after all the previous measures have been tried and found ineffective in controlling risks to a reasonably practicable level must personal protective equipment (PPE) be used. If chosen, PPE should be selected and fitted by the person who uses it. Workers must be trained in the function and limitation of each item of PPE.

- 2.5 When employees are given a task which is not covered by normal operating procedures, an assessment of the hazard and risks involved must be conducted. If it is a one-off task with no hazard, it is not necessary to record this risk assessment, but should it be a process which might be repeated, or there are hazards involved, a risk assessment must be carried out and recorded. As a result of the risk assessment, a 'safe system of work' may need to be introduced and further developed to reduce risk, which must be brought to the employees' notice and the fact recorded.
- 2.6 The assessment of risk is nothing more than a careful examination of what, in this task, could cause harm to people (including contractors, visitors and members of the public) so a determination can be made as to whether enough precautions have been taken.
- 2.7 Risk assessments are carried out on an ongoing basis and, to be effective, it is essential that all employees cooperate wherever they can in the risk assessment process. The findings of the assessments must be communicated to relevant staff. Risk assessments are undertaken, reviewed and held by relevant supervisors or managers in each department.

Risk assessment guidance

- 2.8 Guidance on how to conduct a risk assessment can be found at Annex A. The council's risk assessment form is to be completed via the Health and safety portal (visit the intranet Health and Safety page).

Instruction 3: Accident, near miss, ill health, dangerous occurrence reporting

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) (as amended)

Introduction

- 3.1 All work-related ill health, accidents, near misses or dangerous occurrences, regardless of whether they result in an injury or damage, must be reported to the supervisor or manager as soon as possible. This includes all temporary or agency staff, contractors and visitors. All incidents need to be investigated by the supervisor or manager and remedial action taken to prevent recurrence. In some cases, accidents or incidents need to be reported in accordance with RIDDOR and within 15 days of the accident or incident.
- 3.2 A simple incident action guide has been produced, identifying subsequent actions to be taken in the event of an accident or incident. This guide is at Annex H to this policy.

Procedure for reporting injuries

- 3.3 The person affected (or making the report) must report the incident via the Health and Safety portal (visit the intranet Health and Safety page).
- 3.4 A notification of the incident report is sent to the Health and Safety Team for viewing, along with any relevant supervisor or manager. All investigations are also to be recorded via the Health and Safety portal (visit the Health and Safety page). More information on how to log onto the portal is also available on the intranet Health and Safety page.

Accidents requiring notification under RIDDOR

- 3.5 Supervisors or managers must notify the Service Manager (Health and Safety) or the Health and Safety Team immediately of any accident which results in an injury or the death of any person as listed below:

All deaths to workers and non-workers, with the exception of suicides, must be reported if they arise from a work-related accident, including an act of physical violence to a worker.

Definition of a major injury

- Fractures, other than to fingers, thumbs and toes
- amputations

- any injury likely to lead to permanent loss of sight or reduction in sight
- any crush injury to the head or torso causing damage to the brain or internal organs
- serious burns (including scalding) which:
 - cover more than 10 per cent of the body
 - cause significant damage to the eyes, respiratory system or other vital organs
- any scalping requiring hospital treatment
- any loss of consciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia
- any other injury arising from working in an enclosed space which:
 - leads to hypothermia or heat-induced illness
 - requires resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours.

Employers must also report diagnoses of certain occupational diseases where these are likely to have been caused or made worse by their work. These diseases include:

- carpal tunnel syndrome, severe cramp of the hand or forearm, hand-arm vibration syndrome, occupational asthma, tendonitis or tenosynovitis of the hand or forearm
- any occupational cancer or any disease attributed to an occupational exposure to a biological agent
- injuries which result in a member of staff being unavailable to work for more than seven continuous days (this includes the weekends).

The supervisor or manager must inform the Service Manager (Health and Safety) or the Health and Safety Team immediately if an employee who continues to work after an accident is subsequently absent from work (next day).

Accident investigation, follow up procedure

- 3.6 Where supervisors or managers have reported an injury, dangerous occurrence or occupational disease under the above procedures, they are to carry out an investigation and record their initial findings via the Health and Safety portal (visit the intranet Health and Safety page). Where necessary, the Service Manager (Health and Safety) or the Health and Safety Team shall carry out an investigation; the depth of such investigation will depend on extent of injury or potential injury and damage or potential damage. Action might include:

- isolating the incident site
- making the incident site safe
- taking photographs to be used as evidence
- taking statements from supervisors, managers, staff and any witnesses
- inspection of equipment or plant by a qualified person – a written report must be produced, highlighting modifications and defects.

The purpose of the investigation is primarily to prevent a recurrence. It is important that staff clearly understand this is the reason, not to apportion blame. An incident action guide is at Annex H.

Procedure for reporting dangerous occurrences or near misses

- 3.7 If something happens which does not result in someone being injured but which clearly could have done, it should be considered as a dangerous occurrence or a near miss and reported as per paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4.

Procedure for reporting cases of occupational disease

- 3.8 If a manager or other responsible officer receives a written diagnosis of a work-related disease or condition for an employee, made out by a doctor, they should notify the Service Manager (Health and Safety) or the Health and Safety Team immediately.

Procedure for reporting accidents involving members of the public

- 3.9 Accidents to members of public on the highway – that is, slips, trips and falls – should be reported by telephone to the relevant authority. It is important to obtain as much information as possible about the accident, including the injured person's details and location of accident. If a member of the public has an accident while on council property, it must be reported via the Health and Safety portal (visit the intranet Health and Safety page) by the injured party or an appropriate council employee (a custodian or relevant officer). If the injured party is taken directly from the scene to hospital for treatment, this should also be recorded on the form.
- 3.10 The Health and Safety Team will report all incidents reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

Record retention

- 3.11 Regulations require that a record of an incident be kept for a minimum of three years from the date on which the record is made. The Health and Safety Team will arrange appropriate storage for these records.

Instruction 4: Fire safety arrangements

References

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work (as amended)

General instructions to staff and members of the council

- 4.1 All employees are to be aware of the location of the nearest fire alarm, fire extinguishers, assembly point(s) and all possible escape routes from their normal place of work (this should be covered by their manager on induction – see paragraph 4.7).

Alarm

- 4.2 The fire alarm will sound automatically:
- on the activation of a break glass point
 - if smoke is detected by a smoke detector
 - if sufficient heat is detected by a heat detector.

Fire extinguishers

- 4.3 If you are confident, and **if it is safe to do so**, tackle the fire using the appropriate extinguisher. When tackling a fire, ensure that the correct extinguisher for the particular type of fire is used. Modern fire extinguishers are red but have different coloured labels depending on their contents.



- Red – water – for wood, paper, textiles and other solid material fires
- Black – CO₂ – for liquid and electrical fires
- Cream – foam – for liquid fires
- Blue – powder – for liquid and electrical fires
- Yellow – wet chemical – for cooking oils, wood, paper and textiles

Fire Risk Assessment (FRA)

- 4.4 Current legislation requires a fire risk assessment to be undertaken. This will initially be undertaken by the Health and Safety Team who will issue the FRA to the building manager or responsible person(s) via the Health and Safety portal (visit the intranet Health and Safety page).

Responsibilities

Director (Operations)

- 4.5 The Director responsible for Property Services, is classed as the 'responsible person' and, therefore, is to ensure that suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment is undertaken, with findings being recorded and remedial actions being implemented in a reasonable timescale.

Service Manager (Health and Safety)

- 4.6 The Service Manager (Health and Safety) is responsible for:
- advising on fire policy
 - advising on personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs)
 - writing and reviewing evacuation procedures (West Suffolk House, Haverhill House, depots and Mildenhall Hub)
 - ensuring fire drills are undertaken.

Building Manager

- 4.7 The Building Manager is responsible for ensuring that:
- fire alarm and emergency lighting tests are undertaken and recorded as per current legislation
 - regular checks are made on fire extinguishers and emergency exits
 - there are sufficient emergency evacuation wardens in our main buildings.

Managers and supervisors

- 4.8 Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that:
- their employees are aware of the recorded fire hazards and that the fire risk assessment is amended when the risk increases or decreases
 - employees receive the appropriate training as part of their induction process – it will need to cover the following:

- emergency exits – at least two
 - location of assembly point(s)
 - specific fire precautions for their place of work (if any)
 - use of fire extinguishers
 - fire or emergency procedures
 - introduction to fire emergency evacuation wardens at their place of work
- employees complete the fire safety training module (at induction and then annually) on the council’s intranet (a requirement of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order)
 - employees with disabilities have the appropriate Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) in place to ensure safe evacuation of the building and that this plan is passed to both the Health and Safety Team and Facilities Management.

Senior receptionist, emergency evacuation wardens, emergency controller

4.9 On the activation of the fire alarm, the senior receptionist, emergency evacuation wardens and the emergency controller are responsible for ensuring that they follow their instructions as laid out in the procedures in the event of a fire.

Employees

4.10 All employees are to:

- follow the emergency procedures as published
- complete the fire safety training module annually on the council’s intranet.

Instruction 5: First aid

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations (as amended)

Introduction

- 5.1 People at work can suffer injuries or fall ill. It does not matter whether the injury or illness is caused by the work they do; it is important that they receive immediate attention and that an ambulance is called in serious cases.
- 5.2 The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations place a general duty on the council to make adequate first aid provision for all employees should they be injured or become ill in the workplace. If first aiders are needed in their workplace, then those that are identified to be first aiders undertake appropriate training. The council may also identify some other level or standard of training that is more appropriate to the specific requirements of an individual department or team.

Definitions

- 5.3 A person trained in First Aid at Work (FAW) – a person who holds a current first aid certificate issued following attendance at a training course approved by the Health and Safety Executive. This person can apply emergency first aid to someone who is injured or becomes ill at work. They can also apply first aid for a range of specific injuries and illnesses, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- 5.4 A person trained in Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW) – a person authorised and trained to take charge of a situation if there is a serious illness or injury and to oversee first aid arrangements generally where no first aider is appointed. This person can give emergency first aid to someone who is injured or becomes ill at work but is not trained on specific injuries or illnesses.

First aider provision

- 5.5 The extent to what first aid assistance is required in each service area varies with the degree of risk present in each location. First aid boxes are provided as needed in each service or building, and these boxes are in the care of an appointed person who may or may not be a qualified first aider. In high risk areas, at least one person qualified in first aid should be readily available to render immediate help, to look after the first aid equipment and to supervise the first aid room if one is provided.
- 5.6 Where a service or building is occupied out of normal working hours, the building manager or the facilities management team must make arrangements to provide adequate and suitable first aid cover for potential accidents or

injuries, taking into account the type of activities being carried out during these times.

- 5.7 Where a building is shared with other services or agencies, agreement must be reached on first aid arrangements with the other parties to ensure suitable and sufficient first aid provision for the whole premises and all staff. Such agreements should be properly documented.

Responsibilities

Service Manager (Health and Safety)

5.8 The Service Manager (Health and Safety) is responsible for:

- assessing the first aid needs of the council
- organising the provision of first aid training
- organising recall of first aiders for refresher training
- arranging counselling (in conjunction with the HR team) for staff who have witnessed or have been subject to a traumatic incident or require stress counselling
- arranging monthly payments to employees responsible for first aid within their workplace and who hold a current first aid certificate
- ensuring that the first aid policy and procedures are reviewed from time to time
- ensuring that suitable and sufficient assessments are carried out to ascertain first aid needs.

Manager and supervisors

5.9 Managers and supervisors are responsible for:

- ensuring they have sufficient first aid cover within their area
- organising provision and replenishment of first aid equipment, appropriate to the risks of injuries that could arise from service activities, and for placing this equipment in the care of an appointed person or qualified first aider
- recording any joint cover arrangements with other services
- liaising with the Service Manager (Health and Safety) or their deputy on first aid issues

- ensuring that notices, giving the names and locations of the qualified first aiders, appointed persons and the locations of the first aid boxes, are up to date
- ensuring that there is a suitable allocation of funds from the service's budget for the training and retraining of first aiders
- bringing to the attention of all employees, particularly at induction, the first aid arrangements – that is, names of first aiders, appointed persons and locations of first aid boxes.

First Aid at Work (FAW) trained persons

5.10 FAW trained persons are responsible for:

- responding promptly to calls for assistance within their area
- taking control of an emergency situation and giving appropriate first aid in line with their training and, where necessary, delegating members of staff to undertake the following tasks:
 - ring emergency services
 - obtain a first aid kit and, if required, a defibrillator
 - wait for ambulance
 - direct paramedics to the scene of incident
- in a serious emergency, clearing the area of people not involved in the incident to ensure that they are not subjected to further personal stress
- checking the contents of first aid boxes and ensuring that there is an adequate supply of materials, and that those supplies have not passed any expiry date, and advising the Health and Safety Team on deficiencies
- ensuring that the first aid administered is recorded on the Health and Safety portal (visit the intranet Health and Safety page).

Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW) trained persons

5.11 EFAW trained persons are responsible for:

- taking control of a situation when a first aider is either not appointed or not available and giving appropriate assistance in line with their training and, where necessary, delegating members of staff to undertake the following tasks:
 - ring emergency services
 - obtaining a first aid kit and if required a defibrillator
 - wait for ambulance
 - direct paramedics to the scene of incident.

Reporting of accidents

5.12 All accidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences must be reported, as laid down in Instruction 3 and Annex E, via the Health and Safety portal (visit the intranet Health and Safety page).

Indemnity

5.13 All first aiders who are in receipt of a valid first aid at work certificate regarding emergency first aid training will be covered by the council's public and employer's liability insurance. Such insurance covers:

- first aiders for injury to self or the first aider's property, providing negligence on the part of the council or its employees can be established
- claims of negligence made by individuals against the first aider.

Instruction 6: Violence at work

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)
- Instruction 14: Lone workers
- Annex L: Personal safety – a guide for councillors

Definition

- 6.1 The council accepts that any actions by members of the public, which result in staff experiencing fear for their or their relative's personal safety, arising from them carrying out their official duties, constitutes Violence at Work (VAW).
- 6.2 The following non-exhaustive list illustrates some of the more common forms of VAW that occur:
- a threat to physically assault a member of staff
 - actual physical assault of a member of staff
 - a threat directed towards the relative of a member of staff
 - deliberate damage of council property in the presence of a member of staff
 - the possession of weapons and the unspoken threat which that implies (for example, bringing a baseball bat into an interview)
 - behaviour or language which could be construed as being intended to intimidate a member of staff.

Statement of intent

- 6.3 The council will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure a safe system of work for its staff in the context of VAW. If a member of staff is injured in a VAW incident, the council will provide ongoing support including counselling, if required, and will consider financial support if this is appropriate. This policy applies to all council employees, including temporary and agency staff, volunteers, students and those on work experience.

Responsibilities

- 6.4 The council's safety policy lists the general responsibilities of officers, but the following are the more specific responsibilities in the context of VAW:

Health and Safety Team

- 6.5 The Health and Safety Team will:
- advise the Leadership Team on the standards appropriate for the design and construction of interview rooms, counters and reception areas and ensure that agreed standards are implemented

- agree with services using these facilities, and guidelines for the use of them, and carry out monitoring to ensure that these guidelines are being followed
- investigate all incidents of VAW
- maintain the VAW Customer Alert List (CAL).

Managers and supervisors

6.6 Managers and supervisors will:

- carry out and regularly update risk assessments for all activities which bring their staff into face-to-face contact with members of the public
- devise such additional local procedures as are appropriate for the specific circumstances in which their staff find themselves and discuss and agree these with the Service Manager (Health and Safety)
- inform their staff of the contents of this policy and supply them with up-to-date copies of all relevant guidelines and procedures
- ensure that the VAW guidelines and procedures are followed both by themselves and by their staff as laid down in Annex C
- ensure that staff have the necessary training required to undertake their work dealing with potentially aggressive customers
- issue Peoplesafe lone worker devices to those staff who are likely to be exposed to a higher risk than normal.

Employees

6.7 Employees will make themselves familiar with and follow all relevant VAW guidelines (Annex B) and any other local procedures laid down for their safety.

6.8 All incidents must be reported promptly via the Health and Safety portal (visit the intranet Health and Safety page). Managers and supervisors will do all initial investigations and, where necessary, the Health and Safety team will investigate incidents that have been promoted to them – this will be with relevant managers or supervisors and staff.

Training

6.9 It is the responsibility of all managers to ensure that their staff receive the suitable training appropriate to the degree of risk to which they are exposed.

Guardian Angel System

- 6.10 The council operates a 24-hour 'Guardian Angel System' for employees who undertake work tasks outside of normal office hours and where it has been identified that they may be at risk. They must use this system for their safety.
- 6.11 The employee must ring 01284 763252 and give the operator the following details:
- who they are
 - their service area
 - their line manager
 - a person to contact (if different to line manager above)
 - their contact mobile telephone number
 - where they are visiting (address)
 - their vehicle registration
 - who they are visiting or what they will be doing
 - duration of their visit or stay.
- 6.12 At the end of their visit, the employee must call in to report that the visit is complete.
- 6.13 In the event that the employee does not call in to say their visit is complete, the operator will take the following action:
- ring the employee on their mobile telephone
 - if there is no response, contact the line manager or the person listed, passing on the information the employee passed to the operator.
- 6.14 More details regarding lone workers can be found at Instruction 14.

Instruction 7: Display screen equipment (DSE) and agile working

References

- Chartered Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors (CIEHF), Mobile Working Risk Management Guidance
- Annex I: Working from home guidance

Introduction

- 7.1 The use of display screen equipment (DSE) or visual display units (VDU) is widespread throughout the organisation. Working with DSE is not generally high risk and most associated health problems and musculoskeletal risks do not arise directly from the display screens themselves, but from the way in which they are used.
- 7.2 These problems can be overcome by good ergonomic design of equipment, furniture, the working environment and the tasks performed. Although the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations apply to 'users', the following guidance and best practice should be adopted by all staff who use DSE.
- 7.3 The Chartered Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors has recognised that mobile working and the revolution of how we are now working can cause a high number of occupational health issues. The speed of change in how we work and the devices we use could mean the scale and health implications could have shorter or longer effects.

Definition of agile working

- 7.4 Agile working relates to the working practices that are deemed different each day. It is how we physically interact with mobile devices, whether these are laptops or mobiles and so on, how we carry and transport these mobile devices and how our work affects how we use the mobile devices. Agile or flexible working allows the physical workplace to support people to work to their best ability, whether it is occasional or routine. Remote working is away from the employee's main office base – for example, working from home or in other supported organisations where other DSE requirements may not be available.
- 7.5 Laptops are often used in comparison to desktop computers. This allows flexible working patterns and out-of-office hot desking. As well as this, smart phones also count as work equipment. If mobile working is occasional (for example, once or twice a week), this can still create musculoskeletal strain if the working arrangements are poor.
- 7.6 Sustained work – a period long enough to trigger risk control measures (for example, laptop risers and external keyboards). The CIEHF recommends this time as 15 minutes or longer of continuous DSE work.

Legal duties of employees and employers

- 7.7 Employers have a legal duty under The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to manage and reduce risks that they may be exposed to when working. Employers have a duty of care for their employees. If risks are identified through a risk assessment, these should be managed and mitigated. Employees also have a duty to comply with instructions that the employers put in place.
- 7.8 For mobile working to be 'reasonably practicable', CIEHF views this as:
- carrying out a risk assessment, identifying concerns and solutions
 - providing equipment to reduce such risks
 - training employees in how to use equipment safely and knowing what the risks are
 - monitoring how employees work and providing that equipment is used correctly.

Hazards associated with DSE work – muscular discomfort

- 7.9 Hand, wrist and arm discomfort – long periods of typing are often associated with wrist and arm problems. Arm placement and hand position can cause cramp and irritation. 'Text thumb' is a musculoskeletal disorder where the tendons in the fingers and hand become irritated by repetitive use (often associated with mobile phone use). This restricts the function in the hands and causes extreme pain and discomfort.
- 7.10 Neck pain and head and back posture – the use of laptops, tablets or smartphones often makes the user look downwards. In the short term, this leads to fatigue and stress on the neck and back. In the longer term, poor neck posture can lead to chronic pain in the shoulders, neck and back, as well as extremely poor shoulder posture issues. As well as this, forward head posture puts strain on the neck and shoulders which can cause chronic headaches.
- 7.11 Eye strain – looking after our eyes is particularly important when using DSE equipment. Employees should avoid working in direct sunlight both up to and behind a screen. If the screen itself is too bright, they should adjust it and keep the screen as clean as possible.

Early signs of musculoskeletal problems

- 7.12 There is a challenge to tell the difference between aches and pains compared to musculoskeletal problems. Some early signs can be:
- dull aches in joints
 - recurrent pain during work and outside work

- sleep disturbance
- swelling, pins and needles and stiff joints
- pain lasting for more than 24 hours after the associated activity has finished.

7.13 If an employee experiences any of these symptoms, they should inform their line manager, Health and Safety or HR, or visit their GP.

How to reduce the risks – avoidance of muscular discomfort

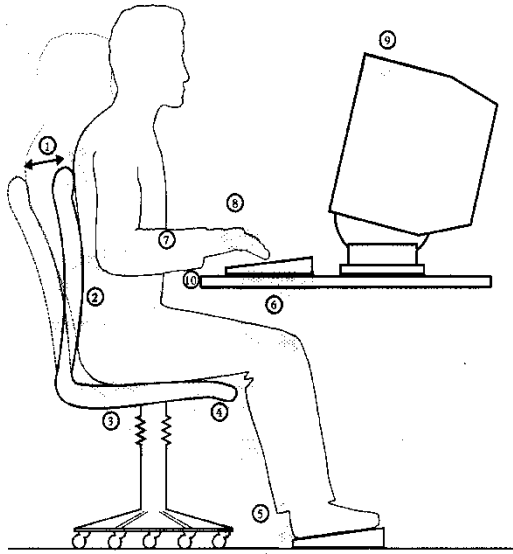
7.14 Good ergonomically designed seating arrangements and posture can help avoid discomfort when using the keyboard or mouse (see the diagram at 7.16 below). Frequent breaks or carrying out alternative work, provided it does not involve the use of muscles and joints, like keyboard use, also can help avoid strain.

7.15 There are five key areas that an employee should consider when mobile working:

- avoid or minimise unnecessary tasks when working in non-ergonomic arrangements
- plan the travel of where they can work most comfortably and any equipment needed
- control where they work and how they work
- rest frequently if mobile working
- use technology (for example, voice commands to avoid typing), an external keyboard or stylus pen.

7.16 Hierarchy of risk control for agile or mobile working:

- Good mobile working – laptop or tablet with external keyboard, raised using a stand or riser device if possible. This is suitable for daily use with a rest break of two to five minutes every half an hour.
- Moderate mobile working – laptop on table, no external keyboard or input device and screen angled but not raised. This is suitable for short term use, no longer than 30 minutes without a rest break of five minutes.
- Poor mobile working – laptop on knees or continuous use on a smart phone. This is suitable for very short-term use and no longer than 15 minutes without a rest break of five minutes.



The diagram above shows the correct posture when sitting at a desk working on display screen equipment:

- seat back adjustability
- good lumbar support
- seat height adjustability
- no excess pressure on underside of thighs and backs of knees
- foot support if needed
- space for postural change, no obstacles under desk
- forearms approximately horizontal
- minimal extensions, flexion or deviation of wrists
- screen height and angle allowing comfortable head position
- space in front of keyboard to support hands and wrists during pauses in keying.

Fatigue and stress

- 7.17 The avoidance of long periods of unbroken work with DSE will reduce the risk of eyestrain, headaches and muscular discomfort. The types of work undertaken with DSE are so varied that it is difficult to recommend time limits which could be generally suitable.
- 7.18 However, as a guide, short frequent breaks are preferable when working with DSE. A 10 to 15-minute break after one hour of continuous screen or keyboard work is advised.
- 7.19 Informal breaks (that is, time spent not viewing the screen, such as on other tasks) appear from study evidence to be more effective in relieving visual fatigue than formal rest breaks. However, formal rest breaks are still required.

Eye strain

- 7.20 If defective vision is suspected, users are entitled to an eyesight test every year.
- 7.21 Taking appropriate rest breaks will also reduce the risk of eye strain.

Provision of payment towards eye testing and special equipment

- 7.22 Under the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations, the provision of eyesight tests and special equipment (for example, spectacles for display screen work) are at the expense of the employer. Currently, West Suffolk Council employees can claim up to £25 for one eye test each year and up to £55 for prescribed glasses for VDU use only.
- 7.23 The above applies only to those members of staff who work with display screen equipment. Staff should pay for the service provided and obtain a receipt. A claim for reimbursement should be made through the MiHR platform.
- 7.23 If staff wish to order more expensive frames, special coatings and so on, they may do so at their own expense, but reimbursement will be limited to the agreed rate.
- 7.24 The optician must provide evidence through a certification or report detailing what corrective equipment is required, stating that the glasses are for 'VDU work only'.

Workstation assessments

- 7.25 All staff who are classed as DSE users are required to complete the DSE awareness training and risk assessment modules that are located on the West Suffolk Council online training. Managers and supervisors are to ensure that their staff complete this at induction and then annually.

Travelling

- 7.26 If working and travelling, employees should avoid any unnecessary tasks that last a prolonged amount of time. Travel should be planned to optimise how they work. They should try to work where a table is available (for example, table seats on trains). When visiting other offices, they should check what facilities are available and take all equipment that they may need. If they are not a designated homeworker, they should have necessary risers and devices for small amounts of ad hoc working.

Agile working

- 7.27 If an employee chooses to work at home for a significant period with the employer's agreement, reasonably practical risk controls are needed to be provided by the employer. This will be an external keyboard, mouse, laptop

stand and laptop bag. In some cases, the Health and Safety Team may check the home working DSE set up to make sure it is appropriate.

- 7.28 Staff are required to complete the agile working risk assessment. They must ensure that their working environment is safe to use, and all hazards are eliminated.

DSE assessment – this can be found on the [Health and Safety e-learning platform](#)

Instruction 8: Manual handling

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations (as amended)

Introduction

8.1 The term 'manual handling' refers to the handling of loads by human effort (that is, lifting, carrying, pushing or pulling). These injuries can happen as a result of a single incident or a gradual build up over a period of time when bad handling techniques are repeatedly used. The manual handling regulations set out a clear hierarchy of measures employees must follow to prevent and manage the risks from hazardous manual handling:

- avoid hazardous manual handling operations, so far as reasonably practicable
- assess the risk of injury to workers from any hazardous manual handling that can't be avoided
- reduce the risk of injury to workers from hazardous manual handling to as low as reasonably practicable.

8.2 The most common injuries resulting from manual handling are:

- disc injuries
- ligament and tendon injuries
- muscular and nerve injuries
- hernias
- fractures, abrasions and cuts.

8.3 These injuries can occur as a result of a single incident of lifting, pushing, pulling and carrying or the accumulative effects of manual handling over a period of time.

Risk assessment

8.4 Manual handling tasks cannot be avoided. If required, a manual handling risk assessment is to be carried out on each task where there is a risk of injury. The council's risk assessment form is to be completed via the Health and Safety portal (visit the intranet Health and Safety page). As a result of that assessment, the risk of injury must be reduced for each task identified, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Risk assessment guidance

8.5 It is important to remember that what is initially required is not a full assessment of each of the tasks, but an appraisal of those manual handling

operations which involve a risk that cannot be dismissed as trivial, to determine if they can be avoided.

- 8.6 The aim of the full assessment is to evaluate the risk associated with a particular task and identify control measures which can be implemented to remove or reduce the risk (use of mechanical aids and/or training).

Training

- 8.7 All employees who have daily or regular access to a computer or laptop must undertake the manual handling training located on the council's [Health and Safety e-learning platform](#). Managers and supervisors are to ensure that their staff complete this at induction and then every three years. More advice and assistance on manual handling assessments and training is available from the Health and Safety Team.

Reducing the risk of injury

- 8.8 Employees involved in manual handling should take note of the following, to reduce the risk of injury:
- Before lifting anything, check to see whether it is of a size and shape that is within their capabilities and that it is in a stable condition before lifting or moving. Think TILE (Task, Individual, Load, Environment – what is the task, am I able to move the item safely, how heavy or large is it, what is the environment like (cold/hot/slippery) for the task from the start to the end destination point)?
 - Never lift or move anything which is too heavy. Check the weight to make sure it won't be too much by trying to lift one corner or rocking the item. If in doubt, **get help**.
 - Look for any protrusions or sharp edges that could cause injury. Wear relevant personal protective equipment (for example, gloves, steel toe capped shoes or boots).
 - Before lifting or moving the object, make sure that there is room to manoeuvre with the object and that the route to the destination is clear and check that there is a clear place to set down the load at destination.
 - When lifting from floor level, place one foot slightly forward and to the side of the object as this gives better balance and control. Bend knees, keeping feet the same distance apart as the hips. Keep head up and back straight (but not necessarily upright).
 - Take a firm grip of the load using the whole length of the fingers.
 - Use the thigh muscles to lift the object and keep the back straight (but not necessarily upright) the moment the load is taken.

- Keep arms close to the body and do not twist the body when lifting or carrying. Hold the item as close to the body as possible when carrying any item.
- Make sure they can see where they are going – if not, **get help**.

Instruction 9: Electrical safety

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Electricity at Work Regulations (as amended)
- The Provision of Work Equipment Regulations (as amended)
- IEE Wiring Regulations (as amended)

Introduction

- 9.1 Of all the hazards encountered by personnel employed within the council, the greatest threat to life is arguably that from electricity and its various sources.

Responsibilities

- 9.2 The Property Services Team is to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that all electrical tools, test equipment and portable electrical appliances used within the workplace are given a portable appliance test (PAT).
- 9.3 Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all electrical equipment within their areas is maintained and tested and only used for its intended purpose.
- 9.4 Managers, supervisors and employees are to ensure that all electrical equipment that is brought into the workplace or used on council property has been inspected and recorded on the electrical appliance register held by the Property Services Team.
- 9.5 Employees are to ensure that they check prior to using any electrical piece of equipment that the equipment is not damaged and has been electrically safety inspected by a competent person and that this is in date. Faults are to be brought to the immediate attention of the manager, supervisor or Property Services Team and the equipment is to be immediately removed from service.
- 9.6 Any items that are faulty or suspected of being faulty are to be clearly marked as such and quarantined until such time as they can be repaired. Unauthorised diagnosis or repair of any piece of electrical equipment by untrained employees or persons is forbidden.

Visitors and contractors

- 9.7 Employees who are responsible for visitors and contractors are to ensure that electrical equipment bought onto council property by the visitor or contractor has been portable appliance tested and in date with records available to verify this fact.

Maintenance of electrical systems

- 9.8 It is the policy of the council that all work on or near exposed live conductors is not acceptable, no matter what the voltage.
- 9.9 Before any work commences, a competent person is to be satisfied that a safe system of work is in force, which will reduce the risk of electrocution. This will most certainly involve the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and the isolation or lock off from the electrical system. All work is to conform to the latest Institution of Electrical Engineers (IEE) wiring regulations.

Inspections

- 9.10 All inspections are to be recorded on both the appliance itself and the council's electrical appliance register (held by the Property Services Team) and the test must only be conducted by a competent person commissioned via the Property Services Team.
- 9.11 Inspections must be conducted as per the manufacturer's instructions and as directed in the documents at Instruction 9 References.

Inspections – home workers

- 9.12 Home workers will have power adapters for either a laptop or router. They must check that the adapter has a current safety sticker stating that the equipment was tested less than 12 months ago. If it does not, they must arrange a portable appliance test through the Property Services Team immediately.
- 9.13 Home workers will be required to bring in any adaptors for inspection during the annual testing period. This will be publicised well in advance to allow for periods of leave and so on.

Protection

- 9.14 All employees are to be encouraged whenever possible to use a total protection system such as a residual current detector (RCD), if deemed necessary, where no protection circuit is an integral part of equipment or an appliance. The need for these devices should be established and a safe system of work procedure issued where applicable.
- 9.15 Equipment that is used in an outside environment must have its voltage stepped down through a converter to 110 volts.

Instruction 10: Control of Substances Hazardous to Health

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations (as amended)
- EH 40/2005 Workplace Exposure Limits (as amended)
- Annex E: COSHH assessment (template) (Health and Safety portal – visit the intranet Health and Safety page)
- Instruction 27: Occupational health
- Instruction 16: Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Introduction

- 10.1 What is COSHH? The occupational use of nanomaterials is regulated under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH). COSHH is the law that requires employers to control substances that are hazardous to health and includes nanomaterials. These substances can be manmade or occur naturally in the environment. For this reason, a high level of control must be exercised to minimise the hazards to those employees and others who come into contact with them.
- 10.2 The COSHH regulations require the employer to assess the risk to health of those employees and others who encounter these substances. It is vital that these hazards are identified and brought to the attention of employees by means of assessment by managers and supervisors.
- 10.3 Employees should therefore familiarise themselves with the COSHH assessments and adhere to instructions contained within them.
- 10.4 It should be noted that even the most seemingly harmless of substances (for example, motor oil) can induce an injury over a period of time and that individuals should be encouraged to seek guidance from their line manager, supervisor or the Health and Safety Team if they feel that a hazard exists, no matter what the level of potential.

Responsibility

- 10.5 Each manager or supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the service has a working COSHH system in operation. This should include:
- arranging suitable training for staff in COSHH assessment, with competency being recorded
 - COSHH assessments being undertaken and reviewed at least annually
 - COSHH registers being in use and updated regularly

- substances being correctly stored
- supplying and maintaining relevant personal protective equipment (PPE) or respiratory protective equipment (RPE) as per current PPE regulations (see Instruction 10 References).

Hazardous substances

10.6 Hazardous substances may be identified by pictorial images such as:

- classification – compressed gas, corrosive, dangerous to the environment, explosive, flammable or highly flammable, long term health hazard, oxidiser, toxic or very toxic, warning
- being listed as a Health and Safety Executive Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL)
- a substantial amount of dust
- a micro-organism causing illness
- any other substance, which causes similar potential effects.

Assessments

10.7 It is the council's policy that COSHH assessments are reviewed at least annually or after being provided with updated information on the product or the introduction of a new substance.

10.8 COSHH assessments are to be carried out in accordance with the COSHH Regulations and entered on the Health and Safety Portal (visit the intranet Health and Safety page). Copies must be held by the line manager or supervisor and brought to the attention of employees as required and at the point of use.

10.9 COSHH assessments are completed by extracting the relevant information from the safety data sheets of the hazardous substance. Safety data sheets are to be kept clean, readily available and checked for validity at regular intervals by managers or supervisors.

Safety

10.10 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) should only be considered as a last resort or, ideally, as an interim measure until a permanent solution or control measures can be introduced.

10.11 It should be noted that COSHH regulations also cover the provision, maintenance and inspection of all local exhaust ventilation (LEV) systems.

Health surveillance

10.12 COSHH regulations require the council to ensure that employees at risk are under suitable health surveillance (see Instruction 27).

10.13 The topics listed below are subject to their own regulations. If in doubt, contact the Service Manager (Health and Safety) or their deputy:

- lead
- asbestos
- substances that are only hazardous when extreme conditions, such as high temperature, are reached
- medical research or treatment substances
- substances found in mines or quarries
- micro-organisms which do not arise in connection with work, such as the common cold
- asphyxiates
- any requirement imposed by food or hygiene legislation.

Instruction 11: Noise

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Control of Noise at Work Regulations (as amended)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)
- The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations (as amended)

Introduction

- 11.1 Noise has been described as unwanted sound, which may be distracting, annoying or cause physical damage to the body (for example, temporary or permanent hearing damage). The Control of Noise at Work Regulations are intended to protect against risks to health and safety from exposure to noise, risk of hearing damage and other risks such as interference with the employee's ability to hear instructions or warnings.
- 11.2 Where employees or others are exposed at or above the second action value, that is 85dB(A), services must draw up a planned program of noise control measures. The immediate risk can be managed by the provision of hearing protection. However, services should identify short- and long-term targets to reduce noise exposure, draft a timetable for implementation of the noise control measures and assign responsibilities to individuals to deliver relevant parts of the plan. Typical examples are when working within the vicinity of:
- highway machinery and plant
 - running generators
 - hedge and grass cutters
 - running vehicle engines when fixing or fault finding
 - printing equipment.

Assessment of exposure

- 11.3 'Noisy' areas, work activities or processes where there is likely to be risk from noise exposure must be assessed by a trained person. An assessment will also be required where noise becomes intrusive which makes it necessary to shout to talk to someone one metre away for more than about half an hour per day in total, or for more than about six hours per day in total where employees have to raise their voices to hold a normal conversation two metres away from each other, or if employees raise concerns about noise levels at their workplace.

Protection methods

- 11.4 Where necessary and reasonably practicable, services must put in place appropriate noise control measures that are to eliminate the risks. Where this is not possible, risks should be reduced to as low as reasonably practical by engineering means and management controls:

- separation of noisy areas by segregating machines and processes and so on
- provision of screens and partitions
- soundproofing of the area
- high standards of maintenance on silencers and exhaust systems
- enclosure of the noise
- good maintenance of machinery and soundproofing.

Control of exposure to noise must not be via hearing protection alone.

Signage – hearing protection zones

11.5 Hearing protection zones should be designated in any area for which hearing protection is required – that is, in areas where exposure to noise is above the upper action value of 85dB(A). The area must be clearly marked 'Ear protection zone' and suitable signs posted to indicate that hearing protection is mandatory in these areas. Provision must be made for the personal protection of authorised visitors.

Labelling noisy machines

11.6 Where machine operators are required to wear ear protection because noise exposure is at or above 85db(A), a sign must be posted on the machine or close by.

New machinery, equipment or plant

11.7 All new machinery, equipment or plant must be designed and constructed to ensure that the noise produced is as low as possible, with a 'Declaration of conformity' to show that it meets the required health and safety requirements.

11.8 Suppliers should be asked to provide information about noise emissions under actual working conditions, as well as any specific instructions for installation and assembly that reduce noise.

Hearing protection

11.9 Where employees are exposed to noise levels at or above 80db(A), but below 85db(A), they are entitled to request ear protection. Information, instruction and training on the risk of damage to hearing from the equipment, a process or activity should be provided by the service and should include information about any hearing protection provided, where and how it should be used and the proper way to clean, store and maintain it.

11.10 Hearing protectors must be suitable for the environment, comfortable for the wearer and compatible with other personal protective equipment such as hard hats, respirators or eye protection. More information and advice on ear protection is available from the Health and Safety Team.

11.11 When hearing protection is issued for personal protection, there is a legal responsibility for the employee to wear and use it as instructed.

Occupational health surveillance

11.12 Employees regularly exposed to noise levels at or above the second action value will automatically be included in a health surveillance program. Managers and supervisors are to ensure that employees are given time away from work to attend these appointments.

Documentation

11.13 Records of audiometric tests are to be retained by the occupational health provider. Any concerns will be notified to the employee, the Health and Safety Team and to the Human Resources (HR) Team.

Instruction 12: Machinery, plant and tools

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (as amended)
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (as amended)
- Instruction 24: Hand arm vibration syndrome (HAVS)
- Pressure systems

Introduction

12.1 All machinery and plant have inherent dangers and should be treated with due care and attention. Only trained and competent personnel are to operate such machinery, plant and tools. This equipment is to be checked and inspected prior to use as per their training. The council will endeavour to ensure that all machinery, plant and tools used in the workplace are safe and suitable for the purpose for which they are used.

Responsibilities

12.2 Managers and supervisors are to ensure that:

- employees receive appropriate training and, where necessary, continuation training
- employee training records of qualifications and competency are recorded
- risk assessments have been conducted and are current on the use of all machinery, plant and tools and that the employees have read and understood them and this has been recorded
- safe systems of operation or work are in place and employees have read and understood them and this is recorded
- personal protective equipment (PPE) has been identified, made available and used by employees and this does not interfere with the operation of the machinery, plant or tools
- all machinery, plant and tools are inspected and maintained as per the manufacturer's recommendations and these inspections and maintenance are recorded
- new machinery, plant and tools are inspected and checked by a qualified person prior to their use
- all work equipment will be clearly marked with health and safety warnings where appropriate

- appropriate storage facilities will be made available for machinery, plant, tools and PPE.

12.3 Employees are to:

- operate machinery, plant and tools as trained, abiding by the risk assessments and safe systems of operation or work
- wear appropriate and relevant PPE
- check all equipment and tools before use, reporting and withdrawing from service any equipment or tools found to be in an unserviceable or unsafe condition
- ensure all equipment and tools are properly and safely stored when not in use
- ensure that equipment and tools are only used for the purpose for which they were intended.

Hand arm vibration (HAV)

12.4 All machinery and plant must be tested annually; equipment must then be labelled to show maximum exposure limits – refer to Instruction 24 for further details. Employees who are exposed to HAV must be reviewed by our occupational health provider.

Modifications and misuse

12.5 No modification is to be made to any machinery, plant, tools or lifting equipment unless it is undertaken by a qualified person and remains within its design parameters. Misuse of equipment could not only result in injury to the employee and others but could lead to disciplinary action against the employee which may result in dismissal.

Guards

12.6 All ancillary equipment is to be left in place (this includes safety guards, rails, screens and so on) and no attempt is to be made to operate the equipment without them.

Lifting equipment

12.7 Lifting equipment is to have adequate strength and stability for its proposed use and the equipment is to be tagged to indicate its safe working load and date of last inspection. Under no circumstances are safe working loads to be exceeded. They are only to be used by a trained and competent person.

New machinery, equipment or plant

- 12.8 All new machinery, plant and tools must be designed and constructed to ensure that: the noise produced is as low as possible, with both a CE mark and a Declaration of Conformity published in English to show that it meets the required health and safety requirements.
- 12.9 Suppliers should be asked to provide information about noise emissions and vibration levels under actual working conditions, as well as any specific instructions for installation and assembly that reduce noise and vibration effects.

Alcohol and drug abuse

- 12.10 The operation of machinery, plant and tools while under the influence of alcohol or an illicit drug is forbidden. The council will take disciplinary action against any employee found to be under the influence. Employees must tell their manager or supervisor that they have been prescribed or taken drugs (this includes legal highs) that may affect their ability to operate plant and machinery.
- 12.11 The council reserves the right to undertake random alcohol and drug testing on employees undertaking safety critical work (see drug and alcohol testing procedure located on the council's intranet).

Instruction 13: General office safety

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (as amended)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)
- Health and Safety (Manual Handling Operations) Regulations (as amended)

Introduction

13.1 The potential hazards to be found in the office environment cannot be over emphasised. They range from electrical hazards to slip and trip hazards to display screen equipment issues (see Instruction 7).

Responsibilities

13.2 Office managers and supervisors have the responsibility within their own areas for office safety and are to ensure that unsafe practices such as overloading of electrical sockets, dangerously laid electrical cables and incorrect use of office furniture are eliminated.

13.3 In turn, all employees are responsible for their own safety and the safety of others in the office environment by adopting good housekeeping practices:

High level access

13.4 If you find it necessary to obtain something from a shelf or cupboard, ask a colleague who is taller to help you or use a set of kick steps or a step ladder. Do not obtain something from a high height if it is too heavy to hold.

Desk and chairs

13.5 Do not swing back on your chair. Close drawers after use so that you and your colleagues do not walk into them.

Filing cabinets

13.6 Most filing cabinets have safety devices to prevent staff from opening more than one drawer. Those that are not fitted with these devices should be secured to the wall. Nevertheless, it is good practice to never open more than one drawer at a time. If possible, place heavier objects in the bottom or lower drawers.

Corridors and staircases

13.7 All corridors form part of the means to escape in the event of fire. These must be kept clear at all times and free from obstruction.

13.8 When natural light is insufficient, ensure that electric lights (where available) are switched on.

Doors

13.9 Do not use fire extinguishers to hold or wedge doors open. Ensure all fire doors are shut after use and not wedged open.

Floor coverings

13.10 Watch out for loose or turned up floor coverings. Report any hazards to the supervisor in Property Services or the facilities manager for the building.

Spillages

13.11 If you spill something on floors or stairs, ensure that it is wiped up immediately. Likewise, if you discover spilt fluid, don't just leave it there for your colleagues to slip on.

Wires, cables and flexes

13.12 Tripping over loose wires is one of the major causes of accidents in offices. Ensure that all cables are securely fastened and kept well away from any area where people may walk. Also ensure all cables under desks are secured away from the floor space. If you discover a cable issue, report this to ICT or Property Services.

Shredding machines

13.13 Ensure all loose items of clothing (such as a tie), long hair and loose sleeves are away from the shredding machine opening prior to operation.

Display screen equipment (DSE)

13.14 Equipment should only be maintained by those who are competent. If you have any problems with equipment, see ICT as the first point of contact. See Instruction 7 for further DSE instruction.

Instruction 14: Lone workers

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)
- Instruction 6: Violence at work (VAW)
- Annex L: Personal safety – a guide for councillors
- Annex Q: Lone worker guidance
- Annex R: Example lone worker risk assessment

Introduction

14.1 The Health and Safety Executive defines 'lone working' as: 'Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. They are found in a wide range of situations'. For the context of this instruction, lone working may be any combination of, or one of, the following examples:

- working out of hours alone at the council's offices or facilities
- home workers
- routine visits to other people's homes or houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs) during normal working hours
- routine out-of-hours visits to meetings or sites, people's homes or HMOs
- emergency call outs
- remote or hazardous sites
- empty, derelict or abandoned premises or sites
- dark or confined premises
- unmade ground or building sites
- home visits or meeting the public off site
- driving on council business.

14.2 This policy applies to all council employees including temporary and agency staff, volunteers, students and those on work experience.

Responsibility

14.3 When it is considered essential that work has to be carried out by a lone worker, it is the responsibility of managers and supervisors to ensure that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment has been carried out and all steps possible have been taken to ensure that employee's safety by:

- including violence at work, manual handling, the medical suitability of the individual to work alone and whether the workplace itself presents a risk to them
- including requirements for training, levels of experience and how best to monitor and supervise
- including systems to keep in touch with them so an immediate action can be taken in response to any incident.

The risk assessment is to be provided to the employee to read and understand and this must be recorded. This may include the issue of a lone working device such as Peoplesafe.

Arrangements

14.4 Frequent and regular checks are to be carried out by a supervisor or co-worker by phone. Otherwise, adequate arrangements are to be set in place by that service for the lone worker to check in at set intervals with another co-worker or team to confirm that nothing is untoward. No lone work is to be carried out if it involves:

- suspended loads
- working under vehicles or equipment raised on jacks
- working with heavy lifting equipment
- working in a vehicle inspection pit
- working with toxic fumes or gases
- visiting sites where there is a history or threat of violence.

14.5 Peoplesafe lone working devices have been issued to some key staff. These are to be used by the lone worker (as per the Peoplesafe training – also see Annex B) in the case of an emergency. Mobile phones must be issued to employees as a means of communication if there is no other alternative.

Out of hours

14.6 Lone workers who are required to work outside of normal working hours are to have frequent and regular checks carried out by a designated person (duty officer) or co-worker by phone. Otherwise, adequate arrangements are to be set in place by that service for the lone worker to check in at set intervals with another co-worker or team to confirm that nothing is untoward – that is, use of the council's guardian angel system. Whatever system is used, there must be a clear plan of escalation to enact if the lone worker fails to make contact.

Guardian angel system

14.7 The council operates a 24-hour guardian angel system for employees who undertake work tasks outside of normal office hours and where it has been identified that they may be at risk. They must use this system for their safety. Ring 01284 763252 and give the operator the following details:

- name
- service
- line manager
- a person to contact (if different to above)
- mobile telephone number
- where they are visiting (address)
- vehicle registration
- who they are visiting or what they will be doing
- duration of the visit or stay.

At the end of their visit, the employee must call in to inform the operator that their visit is complete. In the event of the employee not calling in to say their visit is complete, the operator will ring them on their mobile telephone. If there is no response, the operator will then contact the line manager or the person listed, passing on the information that the employee passed to them.

Guidance for councillors

- 14.8 It is important that councillors keep in touch with their communities. This includes helping individuals with problems they might have. Often, councillors meet members of the public on their own. Therefore, Annex L to this policy provides guidance for councillors on personal safety.

Instruction 15: Health, safety and environmental requirements for contractors

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (as amended)
- Annex F: Safety and environmental requirements for contractors and sub-contractors

Introduction

15.1 Anyone engaging contractors has health and safety responsibilities, both for the contractors and anyone else who could be affected by their activities. Contractors themselves also have legal health and safety responsibilities. As employers, the council has a duty to ascertain, so far as is reasonably practicable, whether the operations of contractors on its premises are likely to give rise to any hazards which could affect its own employees, other contractors and their employees or any other authorised persons on site.

Responsibility and control

15.2 The appointed supervising officer will monitor work undertaken on the council's behalf by contractors.

15.3 The appointed officer will ensure that the contractor's and council's employees and members of the public are not endangered.

15.4 The legal obligation of the council in relation to the health and safety aspect of all contracts is clear and compliance with the following points will be expected:

- awards of contracts will take the health and safety performance of the organisation into account
- tender documents will stipulate that all works are to be carried out to a safety standard compliant with current legislation
- each contractor will appoint a competent person to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- contractors who are required to have a written health and safety policy must forward a copy of this to the council with the returned tender documents. This requirement may be waived if the tendering company has submitted a copy of the policy within the previous 12 months or is currently on the council's approved list of contractors
- any breach of health and safety compliance will be brought to the notice of the contractor in accordance with the Conditions of Contract and appropriate action taken to ensure that it is not repeated

- where non-compliance with health and safety rules could cause danger to any person, that part of the contract works shall be suspended until remedial actions are complete
- the provisions of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations will apply to appropriate contracts for new buildings, site clearance, demolition, alteration, maintenance or renovations to a structure, temporary works and so on.

15.5 Contractors and sub-contractors have a responsibility to comply with the council's health, safety and environmental policy, a summary of which can be found at Annex F: Safety and environmental requirements for contractors and sub-contractors.

Other persons or visitors

15.6 Other persons or visitors are responsible for the health and safety of themselves and other persons at the place of work. Every person visiting the premises for whatever reason is considered to be a 'visitor' for the purposes of this policy, irrespective of their job title. The visitor is responsible for ensuring that:

- they and any persons under their control comply with statutory and council regulations, rules, codes of practice and safe systems of work relating to matters of health and safety at work
- third parties are not put at risk by any process or activity under their control
- the system of work and instructions provided by the council, or by any agents thereof, appertaining to health and safety at work are complied with
- persons under their control are conversant with the safe system of work and have received instructions
- all machinery, plant, equipment and tools under their control are in good order and safe to use
- any defective or unsafe machinery, plant, equipment or tools are taken out of service and reported to the appropriate responsible person
- the council is kept informed of any hazards relating to their visit or any work in progress and, where necessary, working procedures are arranged to minimise any risk to health and safety
- all personal injury accidents, non-injury accidents, near misses, accidental damage, fires, explosions, spillages of chemicals or substances which may be hazardous are reported immediately to the Health and Safety Team and effective action is taken to render the incident safe

- where guards are provided or fitted to equipment or machinery, they are in position during the equipment's operation. Equipment that has missing or defective guards should be taken out of service
- in any process or condition where personal protective equipment is required to be worn, such equipment is made available for the persons involved and that the items are correctly worn and used
- they assist in the carrying out of any investigation into any accident, dangerous occurrence or any incident which may have resulted in injury occurring within their area of responsibility
- they inform the Health and Safety Team of any condition or incident noted or reported to them, which may constitute an unsafe act or condition
- they observe and obey road traffic signs and symbols on all roadways within the premises
- they observe and obey directional and instructional signs, notices and symbols exhibited in working areas
- they do not work in or enter any area to which they are prohibited
- they do not work in or enter any area until they are conversant with the safety rules applicable thereto
- they protect the environment and meet the council's environmental requirements.

Accidents and incidents

15.7 All accidents, incidents or near misses involving contractors and sub-contractors are to be reported to the supervising officer or Health and Safety Team using the accident reporting form located on the portal (Health and Safety) without delay (see Instruction 3). This is to include environmental issues.

Instruction 16: Personal protective equipment (PPE)

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations (as amended)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)
- Annex C: Guidance on the issue, use and storage of personal protective equipment (PPE)

Introduction

- 16.1 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is legally defined as 'all equipment (including clothing affording protection against the weather) which is intended to be worn or held by a person at work and which protects the user against one or more risks to their health or safety'.

This instruction lays down guidance and direction to those persons whose responsibility it is to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) as part of their job requirement. It also provides general guidance and instruction to all employees in what to expect from the council regarding the provision of PPE. It is by no means a definitive document that covers every aspect of PPE. Where there is doubt or uncertainty as to what equipment is required, managers and staff should seek advice from a specialist adviser, the Health and Safety Team.

- 16.2 PPE is equipment that will protect the user against health or safety risks at work. It can include items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment (RPE). The different types of PPE include:

- head and scalp protection
- respiratory protection
- eye protection
- hearing protection
- hand and arm protection
- foot and leg protection
- body protection
- height and access protection.

PPE is the last line of defence and should only be provided when all engineering controls and safe systems of work have been exhausted. When issued, it is to be stored separately from the hazard for which it has been provided.

- 16.3 All PPE that is provided by the council must comply with current UK legislation (British Standards) and or the PPE Regulations. It must display the CE mark and be provided with a Declaration of Conformity with accompanying instructions in English.

Responsibilities

Managers and supervisors

16.4 Before any PPE is provided, the manager or supervisor must carry out a suitable risk assessment to see if the PPE they are providing is suitable for the risks involved and for the circumstances of its use. It must:

- be appropriate for the risks and for the working environment
- take account of the user's health, ergonomics and fit factors and be compatible with other items of PPE required to be worn
- adequately control the risk presented by the hazard without increasing overall risk experienced by the worker – for example, goggles which are to be used in a hot environment and therefore steam up, making it difficult to see
- be supplied free of charge if supplied for work-related health and safety reasons
- be properly maintained and suitably stored (in practice, for mobile workers, it may be necessary to supply a holdall or other container to prevent damage to PPE in transit).

If in doubt, seek further advice from a specialist adviser or the Service Manager (Health and Safety) or their deputy.

16.5 Managers and supervisors must provide suitable protective storage for PPE, situated in static locations, which should prevent the equipment from becoming damaged or dirty.

Inspection and records

16.6 Managers and supervisors are to ensure that all PPE is inspected at regular intervals as laid down by the manufacturer's instructions. PPE is to be maintained in a clean and serviceable condition to ensure its efficiency and an acceptable standard of hygiene. It is recommended that services maintain a register for accountability purposes. Where necessary inspections are required by legislation, the findings must be recorded and records kept.

Training

16.7 Managers and supervisors must ensure that all employees and non-employees who are issued with PPE to wear, receive information, instruction and training on how to make effective use of the equipment. Information must include how to correctly fit and wear it and what its limitations are. The extent of instruction and training will vary with the complexity and performance of the equipment. Never allow exemptions from wearing PPE for those jobs that 'only take a few minutes'.

Employees

- 16.8 Employees have a legal duty to use or wear the PPE provided and to report its loss or destruction or any fault in it. PPE must be maintained in a good condition and stored in a safe place when not in use. Equipment, such as items that come into contact with the skin (such as coveralls, ear protectors and the sweatband of safety helmets) should be washed regularly to prevent skin disease or infection.

Guidance on the issue, use and storage of PPE

- 16.9 Managers, supervisors and employees are responsible for ensuring that PPE is used correctly when undertaking any work requiring its use. Guidance can be found at Annex C and should be displayed in a prominent place within the workplace.

Instruction 17: New and expectant mothers

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)
- New and expectant mothers at work (as amended)
- Annex D: Guidance on new and expectant mothers at work

Introduction

17.1 On initial risk assessments, managers and supervisors must take into account the risks to new and expectant mothers within the workplace. If there is still a specific risk to the mother, child or prospective child, the following is to be adopted:

- temporarily adjust her working conditions and/or hours of work
- if it is not reasonable to do this, or if it would not avoid the risk, offer her suitable alternative work if any is available
- if none is available, give her paid leave for as long as is necessary to protect her safety and health or that of the child.

17.2 This is laid down in two stages: stage 1 – initial risk assessment; stage 2 – on notification of pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding (see tables below).

Stage 1 – Initial risk assessment

Question	If answer is yes	If answer is no
Are there any hazards present?	If yes, assess risks, remove or reduce where possible. Inform employee of the risk and the need to notify the manager or supervisor of pregnancy or if they are breastfeeding or have given birth in the past six months, as early as possible.	If no, inform employee of outcome.

Stage 2 – On notification of pregnancy, birth or breast feeding

Carry out specific risk assessment based on initial assessment.

Question	If answer is yes	If answer is no
Has a risk been identified?	If yes, can the risk be removed?	If no, monitor and review.
Can the risk be removed?	If yes, remove the risk.	If no, Action 1: Can the mother's working conditions, or hours of work be adjusted?
Action 1: Can the mother's working conditions, or hours of work be adjusted?	If yes, adjust conditions or hours.	If no, Action 2: Can she be given suitable alternative work?
Action 2: Can she be given suitable alternative work?	If yes, give suitable alternative work on the same terms and conditions.	If no, Action 3: Suspend her from work on paid leave for as long as necessary to protect her health and safety, or that of her child.

17.3 Further guidance on the risks to new and expectant mothers at work is at Annex D.

Instruction 18: Stress management

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of the Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)
- The Management Standards
- Tackling Work-Related Stress using the Management Standards Approach WBK01 (as amended)

Introduction

18.1 The council is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees and recognises that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

Definition of stress

- 18.2 The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them'. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can and is detrimental to health.
- 18.3 In some cases, however, where pressures are particularly intense and prolonged, the effects can be far more damaging and long term. Stress has been associated with a number of serious ill health conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease, anxiety and depression.
- 18.4 Stress affects people differently – what stresses one person may not affect another. Factors like skills and experience, age or disability may all affect whether an employee can cope or not. This also depends on the pressures outside of the workplace and it can include family, marriage and other interpersonal problems. Line managers will wish to be aware of such pressures affecting their staff in order to provide support and be aware of the possibility of stress.

Action to be taken to reduce stress

18.5 Eliminating pressure from work is not necessarily desirable or even possible within the council environment but controlling the unnecessary and harmful levels of it will help keep staff healthy, maintain productivity and promote corporate spirit.

You've got mail!

18.6 Employees checking email outside of normal working hours have been linked to higher levels of stress and pressure. Therefore, the council does not expect employees to look at or reply to emails outside of normal working hours; it recommends that email notifications are turned off during non-work periods.

Responsibilities

18.7 The council will:

- identify all workplace stressors by adopting the management standards approach so as to reduce, eliminate or control the risks from stress
- consult with trade union representatives on all proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress
- provide training for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices
- provide confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors as far as reasonably practicable
- provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the council's agreed stress management strategy.

18.8 Managers and supervisors will:

- work within the guidelines of the management standards, identifying potential stressors, deciding who will be harmed, discussing the issues and practical solutions, recording the findings within an action plan, implementing, monitoring and reviewing the action plan
- ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural change
- ensure that employees are fully trained to discharge their duties
- ensure that employees are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities
- monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded
- monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that employees are not overworking and monitor holidays to ensure that employees are taking their full entitlement
- attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety
- ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their jurisdiction
- be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work – for example, through bereavement or separation
- ensure employees with access to display screen equipment complete the stress awareness training module, located on the council's intranet, as part

of their initial induction and then at least annually via the [Health and Safety e-learning platform](#).

18.9 The Service Manager (Health and Safety) will:

- give guidance to managers on the stress policy
- provide specialist advice and support managers in implementation of the management standards
- carry out, in conjunction with an occupational health specialist (when necessary), a stress risk assessment with the individual
- refer to workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required
- monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress
- inform the council and the health and safety group of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.

18.10 The Human Resources (HR), Health and Safety and Learning and Development Teams will:

- assist in monitoring the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics
- support individuals who have been off sick with stress and give advice to both them and management on a planned return to work
- advise and provide managers and individuals on training requirements
- provide continuing support to managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to occupational workplace counsellors where appropriate.

18.11 Employees will:

- raise issues of concern with their safety representative, line manager, HR, Health and Safety Team or occupational health provider
- accept opportunities for counselling when recommended
- complete the stress awareness training module, via the [Health and Safety e-learning platform](#) as part of their initial induction and then at least annually.

Instruction 19: Smoking

References

- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (as amended)
- The Management of the Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations (as amended)
- Health Act 2006
- Instruction 27: Occupational health

Introduction

- 19.1 This policy has been developed to protect all employees, members, customers and visitors from the exposure to passive smoking, in compliance with current legislation and to provide them with a pleasant and healthy environment.
- 19.2 Exposure to passive smoking increases the risk of lung cancer, heart disease and other serious illnesses.
- 19.3 This policy also promotes the health and welfare of its employees by giving encouragement and support to employees who wish to give up smoking.

Policy

- 19.4 This policy applies to all employees, members (referred to as employees), consultants, contractors, customers and visitors (referred to as non-employees).
- 19.5 All employees have a right to work in a smoke free environment. Smoking (including vaping and the use of e-cigarettes) is prohibited in all enclosed premises in the workplace and vehicles.

Premises

- 19.6 Smoking (including vaping and the use of e-cigarettes) is not currently permitted within some site boundaries of the council's premises, unless a designated smoking area has been provided.
- 19.7 Upon occupation of West Suffolk House, smoking is not permitted within its site boundary.

Transport

- 19.8 Smoking (including vaping and the use of e-cigarettes) is not permitted in any work vehicle, either by employees or by any non-employee.
- 19.9 Where an employee is using their car or pool car on council business to transport either employees or non-employees, smoking (including the use of e-cigarettes) is not permitted for the duration of the journey.

Home visits

19.10 Employees are prohibited from smoking (including vaping and the use of e-cigarettes) in the home of anyone they are required to visit in the course of their employment.

19.11 Employees must not be exposed to passive smoking while making a home visit and, where necessary, employees will refuse to enter properties that pose such a risk.

Breaks

19.12 No additional breaks are permitted for employees. Employees wishing to smoke (including vaping and the use of e-cigarettes) may only do so in their own time.

Responsibilities

19.13 Line managers are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy within their service area.

19.14 Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Help to stop smoking

19.15 The NHS offers a range of free services to help smokers give up. Visit <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/> or call the NHS smoking helpline on 03001 231044 for detail. Additionally, you can get advice from the Occupational Health Adviser (see Instruction 27: Occupational health).

Instruction 20: Mobile telephones

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)
- Highway Code (as amended)

Introduction

20.1 The use of mobile phones at work offers a convenient and efficient way of communication. In some circumstances they can have safety benefits in terms of security and for use in emergencies.

Potential health risks

20.2 There is no current evidence that health risks are posed to mobile phone users from such low level exposures to microwaves.

Other hazards

20.3 Using a handheld phone while driving severely limits the driver's ability to physically control the vehicle in a safe manner. The law requires a driver to have proper control of their vehicle at all times. Even with hands free phone sets in vehicles, it is safer not to use them while driving as conversations can distract attention from the road.

20.4 The potential for mobile phones to interfere with sensitive electronic equipment means that their use is forbidden in aircraft, hospitals and petrol filling stations. It also has implications for persons fitted with cardiac pacemakers or other medically implanted electronic equipment. Mobile phones, unless specially designed for this purpose, can pose a fire risk if used in potentially flammable atmospheres.

Council policy on the safe use of mobile phones

20.5 The following must be followed when using mobile phones for council business. You should also refer to any specific manufacturers' safety information supplied with your phone.

- Unless there is an operational reason for you to leave your mobile phone on, ensure your phone is switched off before driving.
- Never use a mobile phone while driving. If, for any reason, your mobile phone does ring while driving, allow the message service to take the call, or allow a passenger to answer. This includes the use of hands-free equipment.
- On a long journey, take regular breaks to check for messages and to make necessary calls.

- Switch off your phone when at a petrol refuelling station or when near any other potentially flammable atmosphere – for example, paint spraying or bottled gas storage. Please note that a mobile will continue to transmit responses if left on stand-by.
- We recommend that a mobile phone should only be used where necessary. Where possible, use an ordinary landline phone instead. Encourage callers to use answer phone and message taking services and to contact you on the mobile only when the call is urgent.
- When you have to use a mobile phone, use it for a short duration only.
- Do not press the phone tight against your ear. Leave a slight gap between the phone and ear to reduce the concentration of absorbed energy.
- If you have to make an unavoidably lengthy call, change the phone periodically from ear to ear in order to minimise localised concentration of noise in one ear.
- In some buildings and locations, the use of a mobile phone is prohibited (for example, chemical plant, hospital, in an aircraft). Employees should switch off a phone when visiting such sites and should also check before entering a site that there is no restriction on the use of mobile phones.

Instruction 21: Information, training and instruction

References

- Health Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)

Introduction

21.1 The council is committed to providing the necessary information, training and instruction to enable all employees to undertake their work without risk to themselves or others.

Information

21.2 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) health and safety law poster is displayed in all premises in a location readily accessible to all employees. The telephone number and address of the HSE area office have been entered onto the poster.

21.3 Basic health and safety information is on display in all premises and must be brought to the attention of employees during induction. This explains:

- means of escape in an emergency
- fire procedures and Emergency Evacuation Wardens
- assembly points
- first aiders
- first aid equipment
- emergency contact numbers.

Training and instruction

21.4 External training and instruction may be required for certain roles, but generally all managers should have a good understanding of health and safety issues and, where necessary, be able to:

- identify hazards
- undertake:
 - risk assessments
 - manual handling assessment
 - control of substances hazardous to health assessments
- introduce safe systems of work or safe working procedures

21.5 Managers and supervisors are to ensure that all employees receive general health and safety training, as identified in the induction pack, and that more specific training for job specific tasks (for example, COSHH assessments and risk assessments) is arranged at the earliest opportunity.

21.6 All employees who have access to a computer are required to undertake the following health and safety training that is located on the council's intranet:

- general health, safety and environmental awareness
- display screen equipment (DSE)
- DSE risk assessment
- fire awareness
- manual handling
- stress management
- safe driving.

Managers and supervisors are to ensure that their staff complete this as part of the initial induction and then annually.

21.7 No employee shall carry out their duty until such time as their manager or supervisor is satisfied that they are able to perform the job without risk to themselves or others.

Records

21.8 Records of training and competence must be maintained within the services. Additionally, copies of an employee's qualifications should be uploaded to the individual's training record via the health and safety portal.

21.9 Records of training and competency are to be readily available to managers in the areas they are responsible for, to ensure that, in the event of an accident or incident, the competency of those involved can be ascertained.

Instruction 22: Records

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as amended

Introduction

- 22.1 There are mandatory requirements to keep records in accordance with current legislation. When a specific retention time is not given under specific regulations, all records should be retained for a period of five years. Those appointments responsible for maintaining the various records have been detailed in each specific instruction.
- 22.2 Specialist officers may have a requirement to keep records in their own discipline, in which case they should issue their own instructions for this purpose.

Responsibilities

- 22.3 Managers and supervisors must maintain the records listed below, in accordance with current legislation and the council's policy:
- risk assessments
 - manual handling assessments
 - fire risk assessments
 - fire drill records
 - emergency evacuation wardens
 - COSHH assessments
 - copies of material safety data sheets
 - DSE assessments
 - safe systems of work
 - electrical appliances register
 - asbestos register
 - violence at work reports
 - completed accident, disease, dangerous occurrence reports
 - RIDDOR reports
 - accident investigations
 - first aiders
 - noise audits/assessments
 - hand arm vibration (HAV) records
 - occupational health records
 - induction training
 - individual training records
 - health and safety audits and inspections
 - register of lifting equipment and operation
 - copies of other local health and safety policies, procedures or guidance given to staff, work experience students and volunteers

- student placement checklists (six months)
- work in confined spaces
- inspection and statutory examination reports relating to equipment or plant (or at least a reference to what other records is kept and where these can be found).

22.4 All records must be maintained in an organised and good condition.

22.5 Inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive and health and safety representatives from trade unions have a legal right to inspect health and safety records at any time.

22.6 It should be noted that, in cases of potential civil litigation, records might be requested by solicitors acting on behalf of claimants many years after the statutory need to keep records has expired. (The advice of the insurance officer and the Information Governance Officer should be sought as soon as possible if a service is approached directly in such a regard). Where records include personal data that would allow an individual to be identified, the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) apply.

Instruction 23: Driving at work

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)
- Driving at Work – Managing work related road safety (as amended)

Introduction

23.1 This policy applies to all employees involved in work-related driving activities, including drivers of the council's vehicles, leased vehicles and owner drivers. It forms an integral part of the council's Health and Safety Policy and applies along with specific local guidance on work-related driving and the management of occupational risks. The policy applies to all work-related driving arising in connection with duties and activities of the council's staff.

Policy aims

23.2 This policy aims to:

- ensure that the council complies with current legislation listed under References above
- increase staff awareness of safety issues associated with work-related driving risks
- ensure that risk in relation to work-related driving is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk as far as is reasonably practicable
- ensure that appropriate training is available to staff in all areas, that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on preventing and managing occupational road risks
- ensure that appropriate support is available to staff involved in work-related driving incidents
- encourage full reporting and recording of all incidents arising in the course of work-related driving
- reduce the number of incidents and injuries to staff resulting from work-related driving.

Responsibilities

Fleet Manager

23.3 The Fleet Manager will undertake periodic checks of the items listed below for all drivers who drive fleet vehicles, pool and lease cars.

Managers and supervisors

23.4 Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that:

- their employees are aware of and follow this policy
- risk assessments are adapted to suit the needs of each journey
- employees complete the council's driving awareness training module annually
- any additional training is provided.

Employees

23.5 Any person driving a vehicle on behalf of the council must:

- hold a valid driving licence for the class of vehicle being driven
- tell the council about any changes in their licence (including endorsements or pending prosecution), insurance or ill health that could affect their continued driving
- complete the council's driving awareness training module annually on the [Health and Safety e-learning platform](#)
- give permission via the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) website for the council to check the status of their licence
- have a valid MOT certificate (private vehicles)
- have a valid insurance certificate (private vehicles)
- can read a number plate be read at 25 metres?).
- comply with this policy.

23.6 The following people are specifically excluded from driving at work:

- anyone who does not hold a valid UK driving licence for the category of vehicle being driven (or who does not have a relevant foreign or international licence that allows them to drive in the UK)
- anyone who suffers from a condition that would disqualify them from holding or getting a relevant current driving licence
- anyone who has a current conviction for a motoring offence in the following categories:
 - dangerous driving, causing death by dangerous driving, or manslaughter

- driving under the influence of drink or drugs
- failing to stop after an accident
- any other offence (or combination of offences) which will or might result in an individual being disqualified from driving.

23.7 If the organisation becomes aware of any pending prosecutions it can exercise the right to suspend employees from driving duties whilst awaiting the trial outcome.

Assessing the risk

23.8 A risk assessment must be carried out regarding work-related driving. The risk assessment will involve identifying all potential dangers and the risks associated with specific work-related driving activities. Further details are found at Instruction 2 and Annexes A and B to this policy.

23.9 A generic driving risk assessment can be found at Annex J but must be adapted to meet the needs of the journey.

Driving standards

23.10 Under the Road Traffic Act, drivers are legally responsible for their own actions on the road and for keeping to all traffic regulations.

23.11 Under the Road Traffic Act, it is the driver's responsibility for making sure that any vehicle they drive on public roads is roadworthy. If there is any doubt about a vehicle's roadworthiness, it should not be driven on public roads or on the council's sites until the problem has been rectified.

23.12 All drivers are required to carry out daily visual checks on their vehicles. This will include tyres, oil, water and cleanliness – such as lights and windows.

Alcohol and drug abuse

23.13 Driving on council business while under the influence of alcohol or an illicit drug is forbidden. The council will take disciplinary action against any employee found to be under the influence. Employees must tell their manager or supervisor if they have been prescribed or taken drugs (this includes legal highs) that may affect their ability to drive.

23.14 The council reserves the right to undertake random alcohol and drug testing (see drug and alcohol testing procedure) on employees who drive for work.

Mobile phones

23.15 **No incoming or outgoing calls must be taken or made, or text messages sent or read** while the car is being driven. This includes while

stationary in traffic. For further guidance on mobile phones, see Instruction 20.

Safe driving guidance

23.16 All employees who drive for work must follow the safe driving guidance and journey planner found at Annex G.

Instruction 24: Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS)

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Hand Arm Vibration Regulations (as amended)
- The Management of Health and Safety at a Work Regulations (as amended)
- Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations (as amended)

Introduction

- 24.1 Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) is a widespread industrial disease affecting tens of thousands of workers. It's best known effect is vibration-induced white finger (VWF). Attacks are painful and can result in the loss of the ability to grip properly. Any vibrating tool or process which causes tingling or numbness after five to 10 minutes is suspect. Where people regularly work for prolonged periods with tools and processes likely to be hazardous, there is likely to be a risk of injury.
- 24.2 Examples of common tools and processes likely to create hazardous vibration include pedestal grinders and hand-held portable grinders, chain saws, brush cutters, hand-held or hand-fed circular saws, mowers and strimmer's.

Responsibilities

Occupational health surveillance

- 24.3 The council will provide appropriate health surveillance where the risk assessment shows it to be necessary. The surveillance programme should enable symptoms to be assessed and appropriate control measures and information to be given to individuals.

Managers and supervisors

24.4 Managers and supervisors are to:

- carry out a risk assessment on the tools and equipment being used
- ensure that there is a robust maintenance programme for tools and plant according to manufacturer's instructions. This programme should include the replacement of vibration mounts before they wear out, rotating parts being checked for balance and replaced if necessary
- analyse data from the HAV monitoring system to identify personal vibration exposure levels, using this information to prioritise future work (individual and group) and introduce further controls such as job rotation
- ensure that these controls are written into the safe systems of work (SSOW) communicated and implemented by employees

- ensure that a list of all employees at risk is sent to the Health and Safety Team so they can be included on a health surveillance programme and new employees have had occupational health screening prior to taking up employment.

24.5 Introduce a preventative programme where necessary, incorporating:

- training and information
- vibration control (substitution, low vibration tools, proper maintenance, grip reduction arrangements, training in grip minimisation techniques, proper selection of tools, avoidance of uninterrupted vibration exposure over long periods)
- personal protective equipment (PPE) to help maintain blood circulation (such as gloves to keep the hands warm).

Employees

24.6 Employees are to:

- use equipment correctly – this includes the use of any PPE
- ensure they do not exceed recommended exposure limits
- report equipment faults
- report HAVS symptoms
- attend occupational health screening as required.

Anti-vibration gloves

24.7 Gloves can be helpful in reducing risks from HAVS. In cold conditions, gloves will keep the hands warm, aiding circulation. Gloves are often necessary to protect against other risks and must be able to be used with the tool and task. Various gloves with special soft linings intended to reduce vibration risks are available commercially – these usually provide little attenuation at the most hazardous frequencies and in some cases may increase the vibration reaching the hand. Therefore, unless test data is available for both the glove and the tool, it is best to assume they will not reduce the exposure to HAVS.

Purchasing new equipment

24.8 Under the Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations, suppliers must provide information on vibration levels if hand-held or hand-guided machinery is likely to subject workers to vibration exceeding 2.5 metres per second squared (m/s^2) when the tool is operating. Therefore, when purchasing new equipment, the following questions should be asked:

- Is the vibration of any handle or other surface to be held by the user likely to exceed an acceleration of 2.5 m/s^2 , in normal use?

If **yes**:

- what is the frequency-weighted acceleration:
 - under operating conditions producing the highest vibration
 - under typical operating conditions
 - under other standard conditions?
- under what operating conditions were the measurements made?
- if the tests were in accordance with a published standard, provide details and indicate the extent to which the vibration may differ from the quoted values under normal conditions of use?
- what measures have been taken to minimise vibrations?
- are additional vibration reduction measures practicable? Give details of any design changes, the additional cost and any production penalties
- what is the maximum frequency – weighted acceleration that the tool or equipment can be guaranteed not to exceed?
- what tests would be carried out to confirm any claims made in answer to the question above?
- what other measures are required to minimise the vibration hazard to which employees are exposed when using the tool or equipment in question? Give details of any special maintenance requirements.

24.9 Further information can be sought from the occupational health advisor or the Health and Safety Team.

Instruction 25: Homeworking and agile working

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations (as amended)
- Annex I: Working from home risk assessment

Introduction

- 25.1 The council is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its agile and home workers and those affected by home working as far as is reasonably practicable. An agile or home worker is any employee who works at varied locations including the home.
- 25.2 All agile and home working activities will be considered and assessed for risk. Where there is little or no risk to the agile or home worker or others in the environment, no further action will be taken. If a risk assessment indicates the need for action, the council is committed to putting in place appropriate controls to reduce the risk as far as is reasonably practicable. Home workers are covered by existing health and safety law in the same way as any other worker within the council.
- 25.3 The implementation of this policy requires the total cooperation of all members of management and staff.

Arrangements for securing the health and safety of workers

- 25.4 The council will, in consultation with agile or home workers and their representatives:
- provide information, instruction, training and supervision
 - assess all significant risks, including display screen equipment if used (see Instruction 7 to this policy)
 - make adequate arrangements for putting in place control measures and for managing control measures
 - ensure that manual handling loads are appropriate and that appropriate lifting aids and/or training are provided where it is not possible to avoid the risk
 - ensure that all equipment is suitable for the job
 - ensure that all equipment is safe.

Responsibilities

Managers and supervisors

25.5 Line managers and supervisors are responsible for:

- ensuring agile and home workers have received the appropriate training, information and equipment to undertake the tasks at home
- ensuring home workers have completed the home working risk assessment at home annually or at change of conditions – this is found at Annex I to this policy
- taking appropriate action to eliminate concerns highlighted on the home working and display screen equipment (DSE) risk assessments
- ensuring that any employee off sick due to stress, depression or anxiety is temporarily denied access to the council's networks – this will need to be arranged via the ICT help desk
- reviewing risk assessments whenever there are significant changes and at least annually.

25.6 If the line manager or supervisor is unable to deal with problems disclosed in the risk assessment, the line manager should refer these to the Health and Safety Team.

Employees

25.7 Agile and home workers are responsible for their own health, safety and welfare and that of others affected by their work while working at home. This includes:

- reporting any problems (including near misses) directly to their line manager and ensuring that appropriate action is taken
- following all training and instructions, if the employee is not able to do this, ceasing work and reporting the problems to their manager or supervisor immediately
- completing the home working risk assessment annually or at change of conditions – this is found at Annex I to this policy
- completing all the council's health and safety training modules on at least annually
- not accessing the council's networks while off sick due to stress, depression or anxiety
- using personal protective equipment when appropriate

- looking after their own health and wellbeing, not over-working and taking the mandatory 20-minute break if working six or more hours
- making sure that their own wellbeing is considered – making sure they keep in regular contact with other employees to avoid feeling disconnected.

Instruction 26: Work experience

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 197
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)
- Young Persons at Work Regulations (as amended)
- Work experience risk assessment (to be completed with student at least four weeks before placement)
- Annex K: Induction safety checklist for work placement students

Introduction

26.1 Work experience is an important part of the preparation that a young person should make before entering the world of work. It enables students to participate in the practical aspects of working life which are usually very different from school or college.

26.2 Work experience students may be exposed to additional risks at work due to their lack of knowledge, experience and possible immaturity. The following procedures should be implemented to ensure their safety:

- Risk assessments undertaken on any process or procedure when performed by experienced adults should be reassessed in the light of the lack of experience of the young person.
- Additional training, instruction and supervision should be provided until the young person has demonstrated a satisfactory degree of competence.
- Careful attention should be made by both the young person and supervision to any restrictions placed on the type of work which may be undertaken.

Definitions and responsibilities

26.3 At least four weeks prior to placement, managers and supervisors employing work experience students are to follow the guidelines below, depending on the age of the student, to ensure compliance with current legislation.

26.4 For a young person (16 to 18 years of age), defined as any person who has not attained the age of 18 years:

- assess risks by using current risk assessment as the basis
- address any specific factors in the risk assessment
- take into account their inexperience, lack of awareness of existing or potential risks and immaturity

- determine whether the young person should be prohibited from certain work activities. However, if the activities are necessary for their training, ensure that:
 - the risks are reduced so far as is reasonably practicable
 - proper supervision is provided by a competent person
- give a copy of the completed risk assessment to the student
- tell the young person about the risks and control measures in place
- retain the risk assessment for future reference.

26.5 For a child (under 16 years of age), defined as someone who has not yet attained school leaving age:

- assess risks by using current risk assessment as the basis
- address any specific factors in the risk assessment
- take into account their inexperience, lack of awareness of existing or potential risks and immaturity
- determine whether the child should be prohibited from certain work activities. However, if the activities are necessary for their training, ensure that:
 - the risks are reduced so far as is reasonably practicable
 - proper supervision is provided by a competent person
- tell the child about the risks and control measures in place
- give a copy of the completed risk assessment to the student and send a copy to the HR Team so that it can be passed onto parents either directly or via the educational establishment
- retain a copy of the risk assessment for future reference.

26.6 If the placement involves travel, ensure that the vehicle has the appropriate insurance to cover the student in the event of an accident.

First day of placement

26.7 Arrange appropriate relevant training, including any special instructions, as identified in your risk assessment.

26.8 Complete the Induction safety checklist for work placement students (Annex P to this policy), ensuring that student and manager or supervisor sign on completion. The manager or supervisor is to retain this document for six months after the work experience placement has ended.

- 26.9 Give the student the induction pack containing a copy of the confidentiality agreement, disciplinary rules and safety policy, ensuring that the student completes the confidentiality agreement for the supervisor to return to the HR Team.
- 26.10 It is likely that the student's teacher or tutor may contact the supervisor with a view to arranging a visit during the placement. If the supervisor has any queries about the placement, they should contact the HR Team.

Working Time Regulations

- 26.11 Ensure the student is given appropriate breaks in accordance with Working Time Regulations.
- 26.12 If the supervisor is in doubt about the suitability of any work activity for young people, or has any queries relating to health and safety, they should contact the Health and Safety Team for advice.

Safeguarding children

- 26.13 If the supervisor has concerns regarding a child's or young person's welfare, reference should be made to the guidance contained in the council's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

Instruction 27: Occupational health

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations (as amended)

Introduction

27.1 The aim of the council's occupational health service is to promote and maintain the optimum state of mental and physical wellbeing of employees by managing health risks at work and providing proactive health strategies. This includes:

- identifying what can cause and contribute to ill health in the workplace
- determining the action required to prevent people being made ill by work, based on risk assessment
- introducing control measures to prevent ill health arising from working conditions and practices, such as manual handling procedures and display screen equipment awareness

as well as ensuring that:

- people with health problems or disabilities are not unreasonably prevented from taking up job opportunities
- people at work are medically fit to perform the required tasks, by adapting work practices where necessary (the obligation is for reasonable adjustment rather than necessary change)
- people are supported during a period of sickness absence and are rehabilitated back into the workplace.

Functions of the occupational health service

27.2 The council's occupational health service has several functions, including:

- pre-employment and pre-registration health checks
- health surveillance of at-risk employees
- assistance and advice on the management of sickness absence
- advice regarding ill health retirement
- advice on rehabilitation following a period of sickness absence

- lifestyle screening
- health promotion.

Accessing the occupational health service

27.3 The council undertakes occupational health surveillance on all employees exposed in high-risk work tasks. These tasks have been identified and employees at risk are automatically included in the council's health surveillance programme.

Self-referral

27.4 Employees who wish to self-refer can make an appointment by contacting HR.

27.5 The Occupational Health Adviser (OHA) will undertake an initial consultation with the employee. The OHA may recommend at this stage that the employee is referred to the Occupational Health Physician (OHP) and/or their own general practitioner (GP).

27.6 A workplace visit may be required and/or consultation with the employee's line manager, the Health and Safety Manager or other specialist agencies. These will be instigated only after a full discussion with, and at the consent of, the individual.

Management referral

27.7 Employees may be referred to the occupational health service by management or HR. There are various mechanisms that can trigger a referral – these are covered in the council's sickness, absence and ill health policy.

Referral procedure

27.8 A referral request is initially made to HR, who will complete a referral form which will normally include:

- the reasons for referral, as discussed between the individual and their line manager or HR
- any other supporting documents such as job description and sickness record
- signature of the referred, giving their written consent to the referral and agreement to the council requesting an occupational health report
- counter signature by a member of HR.

This is then sent under confidential cover to the occupational health provider.

27.9 An appointment is arranged with the OHA. Following the first appointment, the OHA will send a written report, advising on the individual's fitness to work, to both the individual and HR. Advice may include:

- any reasonable adjustments to facilitate a return to work or continued work
- referral to other specialists
- a request for information from a General Practitioner
- whether further consultations are required with the OHA and at what frequency.

Treatment

27.10 The occupational health service is essentially a preventative and advisory service and will not duplicate treatment services available from a general practitioner and/or the accident and emergency department of a hospital.

Confidentially of records

27.11 The records system within the occupational health service is designed so that the confidential aspects of clinical information will only be accessible to the relevant staff within the service. Such clinical information will not be released to anyone without the written consent of the employee concerned.

Refusal to see occupational health

27.12 An individual may refuse to give consent to be referred to the occupational health service. This refusal may lead to a decision being made about future employment without the opinion of an occupational health specialist.

Instruction 28: Asbestos

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Control of Asbestos Regulations (CAR) (as amended)
- Property Services Asbestos Policy (as amended)
- Construction (Design and Management) (CDM) Regulations (as amended)

Introduction

28.1 This policy has been designed to be read in conjunction with the asbestos policy, the asbestos register held by Property Services and the Control of Asbestos Regulations, which require employers to manage the risks to health arising from asbestos on their premises.

28.2 Many council buildings will have asbestos containing materials (ACMs) in the building fabric, as they were in commonly used until the year 2000. Where these materials are in good condition and remain undisturbed, they do not present a risk to health. When ACMs are disturbed or damaged, asbestos fibres may become airborne and then can be inhaled. This can happen when any work is carried out on or near ACMs, especially where they are broken, sawn, drilled or sanded or are in a poor state of repair.

28.3 Because of their excellent heat resistance, chemical inertness and mechanical strength, asbestos products were widely used in the building industry. For instance, within council owned property, asbestos has been found in:

- thermal insulation – on pipes and boilers
- insulation boards – for fire protection, as thermal and acoustic insulation on walls, ceilings and structural steelwork
- sprayed coatings – for fire protection on structural steelwork
- ropes and yarns – as a sealing material or for filling gaps
- asbestos cement – in wall claddings, partitions, roofing or guttering.

Responsibilities

Property Services

28.4 The director responsible for Property Services is responsible for managing asbestos in the fabric of buildings by:

- ensuring records of asbestos in the fabric of council buildings are maintained and made available on to those that require them

- ensuring that the record (the asbestos register) is the result of a survey carried out by a licensed asbestos contractor and includes an assessment of the condition of the materials
- ensuring that the survey results are updated at least annually and amended whenever asbestos is newly discovered or when it is repaired or removed
- ensuring that appropriate warning labels are attached to ACMs to identify the hazard – there may be circumstances where labelling is considered inappropriate, but the agreement of the Building Manager, Property Services and the Health and Safety Team should be sought in such cases
- when planning for repairs, refurbishments and maintenance the Property Services team should include consideration of the possibility of disturbing previously undiscovered asbestos during the course of the work. In some cases, an asbestos survey will need to be carried out as part of the planning process, especially where any demolition or major refurbishment work is contemplated
- ensuring safe removal or encapsulation of asbestos
- ensuring that asbestos waste is disposed of correctly
- ensuring that relevant employees and contractors have the relevant training and correct PPE.

Building managers

28.5 Building managers are responsible for:

- ensuring that they are aware of the location of known ACMs in their buildings (the asbestos register is available through Technology Forge controlled by Property Services).
- ensuring that staff and contractors are aware of the presence of asbestos, so that those intending to work near it can take proper precautions to avoid accidental damage or disturbance
- when planning for repairs, refurbishments and maintenance, including consideration of the possibility of disturbing previously undiscovered asbestos during the course of the work. In some cases, an asbestos survey will need to be carried out as part of the planning process, especially where any demolition work is contemplated
- notifying Property Services where they suspect asbestos containing materials have been found and consulting the Health and Safety Manager if there is doubt over identification

- checking for damage to, or deterioration of, asbestos within the building and reporting this without delay so that remedial action can be taken
- ensuring that contractors abide by this policy.

Contractors

28.6 Prior to starting work, all contractors must:

- report to the building manager or Property Services point of contact prior to the start of work
- check the council's asbestos register
- check for asbestos labels within the immediate area of work
- check for asbestos hidden in ducts and behind panels
- react to the procedure below if asbestos is disturbed or suspected.

Immediate action on finding hidden ACMs or accidental damage to ACMs

28.7 If, despite taking every precaution, ACMs are discovered during the work, or known ACMs are damaged, the following actions must be taken:

- stop work immediately
- prevent anyone entering the area
- avoid spreading asbestos fibres – any clothing contaminated with dust or debris should be removed and placed in a plastic bag
- report the problem as soon as possible to the person in charge of the project, the Building Manager, Property Services and the Health and Safety Team.

Instruction 29: Construction design management

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (as amended)

Introduction

29.1 The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (CDM Regulations) impose additional duties on the council with regard to good design and good safety management of construction projects. These apply to:

- new building construction, including assembly on site of prefabricated element to form a structure and installation of new services
- alteration, maintenance and renovation of a building, including services
- site clearance or preparation of a site
- demolition and dismantling of structures
- temporary works.

29.2 The regulations are divided into five parts:

- part 1 applies to all construction work
- part 2 client duties
- part 3 duties of principle designer(s) and principal contractor(s)
- part 4 construction sites
- part 5 general.

29.3 This policy statement covers a summary of the responsibilities and duties of the council for compliance with the legislation.

Responsibilities

Client

29.4 The client (including domestic clients) will be the Director Operations, unless designated differently, and they are to:

- provide information relating to the health and safety file to the principal designer and contractor
- ensure that a construction phase plan is drawn up by the principal contractor
- ensure that the principal designer has prepared a health and safety file

- check that the contractor has the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and organisational capability to carry out the work safely
- ensure that there are suitable management arrangements for the project welfare facilities
- allow sufficient time and resources for all stages
- provide pre-construction information to the principal designers and contractor.

Additional duties under part 3 of the regulations: public consultation in progress:

- appoint in writing a principal designer
- appoint in writing a principal contractor (there must be a principal designer and principal contractor until the end of the construction phase)
- make sure that the construction phase does not start unless there are suitable welfare facilities, and a construction phase plan is in place
- notify HSE if the project is to last more than 30 working days, having more than 20 contractors working simultaneously, or exceed 500 person days.

If no principal designer or contractor is appointed by the client, the client takes on those responsibilities.

Principle designer

29.5 The principal designer (part 3 of the regulations) is to:

- advise and assist the client with their duties
- coordinate health and safety aspects of design work and cooperate with others involved with the project
- facilitate good communication between client, designers and principal contractor
- liaise with principal contractor regarding ongoing design
- create a pre-construction file
- prepare and create the health and safety file.

Designer

29.6 Designers are to:

- check that the client is aware of their duties
- eliminate hazards and reduce risks during design
- provide information about remaining risks.

Additional duties under part 3 of the regulations:

- provide any information that is required, enabling the creation of the health and safety file
- when it is complete, liaise with the principal contractor.

Principal contractor

29.7 Principal contractors (part 3 of the regulations) are to:

- plan, manage and monitor the construction phase in liaison with the principal designer and all contractors
- prepare, develop and implement a written plan and site rules (initial plan completed before the construction phase begins)
- give contractors relevant parts of the plan
- make sure suitable welfare facilities are provided from the start and maintained throughout the construction phase
- check competence of all appointees
- ensure all workers have site inductions and any further information and training needed for the work
- consult with the workers
- liaise with the principal designer regarding ongoing design
- secure the site.

Contractor

29.8 Contractors are to:

- plan, manage and monitor their own work and that of workers under their control

- check competence of all their appointees and workers under their control
- not employ or appoint a person who has not obtained the necessary skills, training and experience
- provide information to their workers under their control
- comply with the specific requirements in Part 4 of the regulations
- ensure there are adequate welfare facilities for their workers.

Additional duties under part 3 of the regulations:

- check client is aware of duties and a principal designer has been appointed and, if required, HSE notified before starting work
- cooperate with the principal contractor in planning and managing work, including reasonable directions and site rules
- provide details to the principal contractor of any contractor they engage in connection with carrying out the work
- provide any information needed for the health and safety file
- inform principal contractor of problems with the plan
- inform principal contractor of reportable accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences.

All others

29.9 Workers and everyone else are to:

- check own competence
- cooperate with others and coordinate work so as to ensure the health and safety of construction workers and others who may be affected by the work
- report obvious risks.

Instruction 30: Legionella bacteria

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations (as amended)
- The Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems Approved Code of Practice (as amended)

Introduction

- 30.1 Legionnaires' Disease or Legionellosis is the term used for infections caused by Legionella pneumophila and other related bacteria. Legionella bacteria are only dangerous in respirable form and generally only to susceptible individuals where inhalation of the bacteria in aerosols or water droplets may cause severe pneumonia and, in extreme cases, death.
- 30.2 Legionella bacteria are widespread and found naturally in many aquatic environments, where they feed on algae and organic matter in sludge, sediment and silt. They tolerate a range of temperatures, although below 20 degrees Celsius and above 50 degrees Celsius they are dormant and above 60 degrees Celsius they will not survive.
- 30.3 When Legionella bacteria enter manmade water systems, they may proliferate under favourable conditions. If water droplets are then created and dispersed into the atmosphere, people in the vicinity may be at risk of inhaling the bacteria. To eliminate or reduce the risk, control measures must be in place to prevent the proliferation of the organism in water systems and to minimise the generation of water droplets and aerosols.
- 30.4 This policy statement sets out the arrangements for controlling Legionella in the council's water systems, plant and specialist equipment, in accordance with the Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems Approved Code of Practice (as amended).

Duty holders

Domestic hot and cold-water systems

- 30.5 The control and management of Legionella in hot and cold-water systems is a corporate responsibility and the role of statutory duty holder rests with the Director Operations. The Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems Approved Code of Practice (as amended) allows the duty holder to obtain assistance from a competent contractor and the council has engaged a specialist water treatment contractor.

Specialist departmental systems or equipment

30.6 Where services possess and operate specialist water systems or equipment, which are independent of the domestic water supply and which present a potential Legionella exposure risk, the service manager must take on the responsibilities of the duty holder (summarised below) and suitable arrangements must be in place to manage the risks. Specialist advice is available and services which require assistance in fulfilling their duties should contact one of assistant surveyors in Property Services or the Health and Safety Manager.

Responsibilities

30.7 The Director responsible for Property Services and managers with specialist water systems are classed as the duty holder and, therefore, are to ensure:

- that suitable formal risk assessments are carried out, with suitable and sufficient documentation of findings, including schematics detailing the water systems under their control
- that ongoing reviews and reassessment of Legionella exposure risk are undertaken at least biannually
- that there is a risk minimisation programme, a prioritisation action plan and a mechanism for escalating remedial work where risk assessment and monitoring data indicate a risk
- implementation and management of the programme
- development of formal procedures for inspection, flushing of, maintenance, treatment, cleaning and disinfection of both hot and cold-water systems according to the guidance set out in the Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems Approved Code of Practice (as amended)
- that staff have the appropriate training
- that suitable records are maintained and kept by Property Services.

30.8 Where risk assessment identifies a significant risk, the duty holder will arrange for the system to be disinfected immediately, either thermally or by chemical means. The system will then be monitored to ensure the efficacy of the treatment regime. If necessary, the regime will be modified until the risk of exposure to Legionella is reduced to acceptable limits.

Instruction 31: Working at height

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended)
- Working at Height Regulations (as amended)
- Annex J: Working at height – operational guidance

Introduction

- 31.1 Working at height means work carried out in any place where, if there were no precautions in place, a person could fall any distance liable to cause personal injury. Statistics show that falls from height are the most common cause of fatal injury and the second most common cause of major injury to employees. The council will take all reasonable steps to provide a safe working environment for all employees who may be affected by work at height activities.
- 31.2 The council will provide a safe system of work that will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the necessary preventive and protective measures to prevent falls of persons or materials from the workplace. It will require employees and any other persons involved in the work activity to cooperate in the implementation of this policy.

Requirements

- 31.3 The regulations require the following:
- all work at height is properly planned and organised
 - those involved in work at height are competent
 - the risks from work at height are assessed and appropriate work equipment is selected and used
 - equipment used for working at height is properly inspected, maintained and records kept
 - the risks from fragile surfaces are properly controlled
 - equipment for work at height is properly inspected and maintained.
- 31.4 There is a simple hierarchy for managing and selecting equipment for work at height:
- avoid work at height wherever possible
 - use work equipment and/or other measures to prevent falls where working at height cannot be avoided

- where the risk of a fall cannot be eliminated, use work equipment and/or other measures to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall should one occur.

31.5 The regulations include a number of schedules giving detailed requirements for existing places of work and means of access for work at height:

- collective fall prevention (for example, guardrails and working platforms)
- collective fall arrest (for example, nets and airbags)
- personal fall protection (for example, work restraints, fall arrest and rope access)
- ladders.

Operational information is summarised in Annex O.

Responsibilities

Managers and supervisors

31.6 Managers and supervisors will:

- ensure that all work activities that involve work at height are identified – this includes working from vehicles
- eliminate the need to undertake work at height whenever reasonably practicable to do so
- undertake risk assessments for those activities where work at height cannot be eliminated and reduce the level of risk so far as is reasonably practicable
- provide all the necessary equipment to allow safe access to and egress from the place of work
- provide all the necessary equipment to ensure adequate lighting and protection from adverse weather conditions
- provide suitable plant to enable all materials used or created in the course of the work to be safely lifted to and from the workplace and stored there if necessary
- ensure that any working platform and its supporting structures are selected and/or designed in accordance with current standards
- make provisions for regular inspections of all equipment required for working at height

- ensure that all persons who are to undertake work at height are trained and competent to do so
- require any contractors from whom they procure services to comply with this policy.

Employees

31.7 Employees will:

- comply with all instruction and training that is provided in work at height activities
- take appropriate steps to ensure that their own health and safety and that of others is not put at risk when working at height
- inspect equipment before use
- report to their line manager/supervisor or to the health and safety team any perceived shortcoming in the arrangements for managing the risks associated with working at height.

Inspection and maintenance

31.8 All work at height equipment must be inspected at least every six months by a competent person. This includes:

- ladders and step ladders
- harnesses
- fall restraints and arrest lanyards
- roof safety systems.

31.9 Inspections and maintenance are to be carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and recorded in an appropriate register.

Instruction 32: Event safety

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Purple Guide (as amended)
- Managing Crowds Safely (as amended)
- Annex M: A guide to organising safe events

Introduction

- 32.1 The council recognises its responsibility to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all its employees and to conduct its undertakings in such a way as to prevent the public and others not employed by the council from being exposed to risks to their health and safety. This extends to all events.
- 32.2 Events covered include large outdoor fêtes, fairs, country and craft shows, car boot fairs, and so on, which are often held at schools or on public or private parkland, in an open field or on a hard standing with little or no facilities.
- 32.3 The responsibilities of the organisers, for the safety of those attending, are just as relevant to smaller indoor events such as jumble sales, presentations or exhibitions, held in a church, school or village hall.
- 32.4 Typically, these events are put on by organisations such as school parent teacher associations, church, community and voluntary groups and charitable societies for fundraising.

As there are so many different types of event, the advice given in this instruction and referenced annex are general.

Event Health and Safety Policy

- 32.5 The health and safety policy used for any council organised events will be the council's Health and Safety Policy. As good practice and guidance, referral to this policy and subsequent parts of it should be applied to third parties who hold events on the council's property.

Responsibility

- 32.6 Council organisers and fellow organisers will be responsible under the law for the safety of everyone at the event – the public, volunteers, members and any employees. The most relevant safety law is likely to be the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and its accompanying guidance: The Purple Guide (as amended) and Managing Crowds Safely (as amended).

- 32.7 To meet the legal requirements, event organisers must carry out a risk assessment to:
- identify all possible hazards (anything that could cause harm to anyone) and decide who might be harmed and how
 - check the risks (the likelihood and effects of a hazard happening) and decide on the action they will take to minimise the risks
 - work out how they will put their planned action into practice and keep a written record of their plans (event management plan).
- 32.8 If an employee is required to organise or help with the organisation of an event, they should follow the guide to organising safe events (Annex M to this policy).
- 32.9 An employee who has been designated as the event manager carries overall responsibility for the event and will therefore need to produce the event management/safety plan.

Events being organised by third parties

- 32.10 The council does hire out its parks and open spaces to third parties. Therefore, it has a duty to ensure that any third party is qualified and competent to undertake such events.
- 32.11 To enable the council to achieve its statutory duties, an application must be submitted to the council along with an event management/safety plan for the event.

Safety Advisory Group (SAG)

- 32.12 SAG was formed in April 2011. The group's objectives are:
- to ensure that there is a consistent approach throughout West Suffolk in respect of event safety planning
 - to ensure that safety is built into the event planning stage
 - to ensure that all agencies have sufficient notification of events due to take place
 - to identify good practice in respect of event safety.
- 32.13 All major events (more than 5,000 attendees or of high risk) must be notified to SAG via the form on its website. Therefore, if an employee is an organiser or receives notification of an event from a third party, this form must be completed and forwarded to SAG.

Instruction 33: Volunteering

References

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Introduction

- 33.1 The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 requires employers to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees and others who might be affected by their work activities. 'Others' includes service users and volunteers as well as the general public.
- 33.2 The council recognises and acknowledges the contribution of volunteers in achieving its goal. As an essential part of its taskforce, the council values and supports its volunteers by providing:
- a safe and supportive environment
 - a duty of care for health, safety and wellbeing
 - adequate resources
 - appropriate training
 - experience as a route to other opportunities
 - ongoing recognition and feedback.

Definition

- 33.3 In order to qualify as a volunteer under the council's insurance policy, no money must be paid by the council to the person volunteering for the activity they carry out.

Responsibilities

Managers and supervisors

- 33.4 All managers and supervisors have the responsibility within their own areas to manage and support volunteers. They are to ensure that volunteers are:
- given a written job description
 - briefed on specific activities to be undertaken
 - provided with necessary information to enable them to perform these activities in a safe manner
 - provided with the correct equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) to undertake the activity safely
 - have completed the volunteer checklist on pages 106-107.

Note: Volunteers are fully protected by the council's insurance cover while engaged in volunteering work with the council.

33.5 Employees, including volunteers, also have a duty to take care of their own and others' health and safety and to cooperate with their employer in doing this. Volunteers must:

- cooperate with the council on all health and safety matters, including the Health and Safety Policy
- take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety, and not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety
- report all health and safety concerns to an appropriate person.

Safeguarding

33.6 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If an employee, volunteer or has grounds to be concerned about the welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, they should act immediately. Speak to one of the designated safeguarding officers.

Volunteer's health and safety checklist

Name	
Start date	
Date checklist started	

Areas to be discussed with supervisor at induction

Volunteer to insert the information below

Who to ask for help	
Facilities location	
Staff room location	
Personal security and valuables	
People and you, speech, dress	
No smoking policy	
Accident and near miss reporting	
First aiders and first aid boxes	

Documents volunteers must read

Volunteer to initial and date each box as the item is read

Health and Safety Policy items	Initials and date
Health and Safety Policy statement	
Health and Safety Policy	
Fire safety	
First aid	
Lone working	
Manual handling	
Risk assessments	
Safe place of work	
Working at height, use of ladders, steps and trestles	
Site specific items	Initials and date
Health and safety procedures	
Welfare facilities	
Fire procedures	
First aid procedures	
Lone working	

Manual handling	
Risk assessments	
Tick bit and Lyme Disease, Toxic Blue, Green Algae Bloom, needle stick injuries, Leptospirosis	
Equality and diversity	

More information can be found in the Health and Safety Policy.

Volunteer’s signature

I confirm that I have read (been read) and understand the information given to me above.

Signature	
Date	

Instruction 34: Confined spaces

References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at a Work Regulations (as amended)
- Confined Spaces Regulations (as amended)
- Annex S: Confined spaces guidance
- Annex T: Confined Space Permit to Work

Introduction

34.1 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines 'confined space' as follows:

'A confined space is a place which is substantially enclosed (though not always entirely), and where serious injury can occur from hazardous substances or conditions within the space or nearby (for example, lack of oxygen).'

34.2 This instruction applies to all confined spaces located in West Suffolk Council properties that pose a risk to employees, contractors and others. The object is to set out procedures that are to be followed for West Suffolk Council to comply with the current regulations relating to working in confined spaces.

34.3 The Confined Spaces Regulations are relevant to all activities carried out on council property or by council employees. This includes:

- any chamber, tank, vat, silo, pit, trench, pipe, sewer, flue, well or other similar space which, by virtue of its enclosed nature, poses a risk from fire or explosion
- the loss of consciousness arising from an increase in body temperature or asphyxiation arising from gas, fume, vapour or the lack of oxygen
- drowning arising from an increase in the level of liquid
- asphyxiation arising from the presence of a free flowing solid.

34.5 Under the regulations, a confined space must have both of the following defining features: it must be a space which is substantially (though not always entirely) enclosed and one or more of the specified risks are present or reasonably foreseeable. Specified risks include but are not limited to:

- flammable substances and oxygen enrichment excessive heat
- toxic gas, fume or vapour which can lead to asphyxia or unconsciousness
- oxygen deficiency
- ingress or presence of liquids
- free-flowing solids which can submerge a person, preventing breathing
- risk of structural collapse which could entrap a person.

General requirements

- 34.6 General risk assessments must identify any spaces which might be considered to meet the criteria outlined above and such spaces must be identified and signed as being confined spaces.
- 34.7 Where there are identified confined spaces, a permit to work system must be deployed to control particularly high-risk activities. Where the space in question is part of a West Suffolk Council property or site (part of a building or a component fixed to or within a building or site), this should only be managed through the Property Services Team.
- 34.8 Priority must be given to avoiding work in confined spaces. If it is not reasonably practicable to carry out the work without entering the confined space, a safe system for working within the confined space must be devised and implemented – a permit to work system must be used to ensure control measures are suitable and sufficient.
- 34.9 Where the need to enter cannot be avoided, steps must be taken to reduce the duration of such entry and to ensure that suitable means of escape and/or rescue are in place and that associated emergency arrangements are documented with the control measures.
- 34.10 Control measures must document the personal protective equipment (PPE) (including any harnesses, atmospheric monitoring devices and breathing apparatus) which might be required for those entering the space and any rescue team(s).
- 34.11 Risk assessments must include the assessment of substances which might be present within the space and what might come into the space while work is underway.
- 34.12 Entry into such spaces must be managed by a suitably trained and competent person. They are responsible for the supervision of the process and issuing the Permit to Work.
- 34.13 Those people entering such spaces and those who form rescue teams must also be suitably trained and competent to carry out such activities.

Property Services responsibilities

- 34.14 The director responsible for property services is responsible for the implementation of this policy regarding identifying, through general risk assessment, any potential confined spaces within the council's properties. The director is also responsible for ensuring that access to such places is controlled.
- 34.15 The service manager responsible for property is responsible for ensuring that all properties which are deemed to have confined spaces have been identified and recorded in a register. They are responsible for controlling the contractor's

activities that occur within the identified confined space, via the Confined Space Permit to Work at Annex T. See Annex S for further guidance.

- 34.16 All Property Services staff and building occupants must be made aware of any confined space within the premise they occupy and ensure they and contractors carrying out work within these areas comply with this instruction and the associated guidance.
- 34.17 The Health and Safety Team is available to provide further guidance and advice on the standards and regulations in order to meet the legal requirements.