



Health and Safety At Work Policy

General Statement and Legal Basis

As an employer, Woodbridge Town Council recognises and accepts its responsibilities for providing a safe and healthy workplace and working environments for all employees and volunteers in accordance with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (referred to as "the 1974 Act") requires an employer:-

'To prepare and, as often as may be appropriate, revise a written statement of general policy with respect to the health and safety at work of its employees, and to bring the statement and any revision of it to the notice of all employees'.

Statement of Intent

Woodbridge Town Council will take all steps within its power to meet this responsibility, and in particular pay attention to:-

- a. the provision and maintenance of plant and systems of work that are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health;
- b. arrangements for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances;

- c. the provision of such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of their employees;
- d. so far as is reasonably practicable as regards any place of work under the employer's control, the maintenance of it in a condition that is safe and without risks to health and the provision and maintenance of means of access to and egress from it that are safe and without such risks;
- e. the provision and maintenance of a working environment for their employees that is, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe, without risks to health, and adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for their welfare at work.

Organisation and Responsibilities

The Council as a corporate body accepts its responsibilities to fulfil the requirements of the law, and the Safety Policy will:

Periodically examine health and safety issues, including any problems and future programmes relating to health and safety issues.

The Town Clerk is directly responsible for the Council's overall health and safety policy, and discharges the Council's duties as an employer.

The Deputy Town Clerk will co-ordinate and supervise general health and safety matters, including training and communication.

All staff will be made fully aware of the hazards involved in the work undertaken. They have the primary duty of ensuring that safe systems of work prevail in their particular areas of activity.

The Deputy Town Clerk will be responsible for ensuring that adequate arrangements are made to maintain fire safety.

All employees, in addition to any specific responsibilities delegated to them, will:

- Observe all safety rules at all times
- Take care of their own safety and that of other persons (both employees and visitors)
- Wear any protective clothing provided and use any safety equipment and devices at all times.
- Report to the Town Clerk all accidents, machine defects, damage or other hazards or potential hazards.

Councillors are required to report to the Town Clerk and/or Mayor any failures by the Council or its staff to comply with the policy.

Arrangements for Health and Safety

The Reporting of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences

An accident report form is available from the Town Clerk. Employees must record without delay accidents/ occurrences when they result in:

- a minor injury to an employee or any other person
- an employee being incapacitated for work for more than three consecutive days
- when there is a dangerous occurrence as defined by the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR), or any successive legislation. The Town Clerk will notify the Health and Safety executive by the quickest practicable means and confirm in writing within seven days.

Fire Precautions

Instructions on what to do on discovering a fire or hearing the fire alarm are clearly displayed in the Shire Hall. All employees must be familiar with these instructions and with the location of the Fire Exits and Alarm Points. The Deputy Town Clerk will organise a yearly fire drill and following the

evacuation of the Shire Hall all staff, volunteers and hirers should report to the assembly point, which is outside on the Market Square.

All staff are trained in the use of Fire Extinguishers.

The Deputy Town Clerk will undertake tests of the fire alarm panel and call points on a weekly basis and the details of the tests will be recorded, together with any defects found and the remedial action taken.

Fire extinguishers will be tested and serviced on a yearly basis and fire alarms every six months by a qualified contractor, with the results noted as above and certification filed in the relevant folder (hard and electronic).

Fire specific Risk Assessments are reviewed every two years.

The Town Clerk will notify the Fire Authority of any alterations or proposed alterations to the buildings.

All flammable materials will be stored in compliance with statutory requirements.

Woodbridge Town Council has a standalone Fire Policy as directed by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

First Aid

An appointed first aid person and first aid box will be available at the Shire Hall. Hirers are responsible for providing any required first aid cover.

Safety Training

Initial safety awareness for new recruits is undertaken by the Town Clerk as part of the induction process. No employee shall carry out his/her duties unless the Town Clerk has been satisfied that employees are able to perform the job without risk to themselves or others.

Codes of Good Working Practice and Updates on Legislation

These will be issued from time to time. They will be produced following appropriate consultations and will be appended to, and form part of this Safety Policy. Current appendices cover:

- Appendix A – Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 2002
- Appendix B – Electricity at work Regulations 1989
- Appendices C1 – C6

Machinery, Plant, Lifting Equipment etc

The Deputy Town Clerk is responsible for the maintenance and inspection of any machinery used by staff such as ladders and lifting equipment.

All items will be regularly inspected, tested and maintained to ensure safe operation and use, and suitable documents will be kept to record such inspections.

Contractors

Work undertaken on the Council's behalf by contractors will be monitored by the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk to ensure that nobody is endangered.

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:

- 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 1974 Act. Contractors will be asked to supply Risk Assessments and Method Statements detailing their methods and understanding of current legislation.
- Any safety non-compliance will be brought to the notice of the contractor immediately and recorded.

- Where non-compliance with safety rules could cause danger to any person, the contract works shall be suspended until remedial works are complete.

Protective clothing

The Council will provide protective clothing and equipment to meet the requirements of Section 2 of the 1974 Act. Employees must co-operate by using/ wearing these items to enable the Council to comply with the law. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action and could result in prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive.

It is the responsibility of the Deputy Town Clerk to ensure protective clothing is issued to employees when required. The legal duty of employees to co-operate in this area must be brought to their notice.

Appendix A

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)

Introduction

The Statement of Intent (Section 2 item iv) makes reference to:-

‘Safe arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances’.

This appendix amplifies the Statement in the light of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (2002).

1. The COSHH regulations require the employer to:

- Make an inventory of all substances used by employees during the course of their work.
- Obtain hazard data for all these substances.
- Assess the risk to health of those employees who use these substances.

- If a risk to health is found to exist, then institute suitable control measures.
- Continually monitor the efficiency of these control measures.
- Keep adequate records of control measures and health checks.

2. Definitions

Substance – for the purpose of the regulations a substance is defined as ‘any vapour or artificial material whether in a solid or liquid form or in the form of gas or vapour’.

Hazard – the hazard presented by a substance is the likelihood that it will cause harm in the actual circumstance of use.

3. The Assessment

The assessment of the risk to health from hazardous substances will be the responsibility of the Town Clerk.

4. The Control of the risk can take several forms:

- Substitution for a less hazardous substance.
- The issue of Personal Protective Equipment.

5. Monitoring and Health Surveillance are on-going activities.

6. Training

There is no specific call for training for these regulations. However, Council employees who regularly use or are exposed to hazardous substances such as pesticides, herbicides and chemicals should be properly trained.

The Deputy Town Clerk will organise any training where it is felt relevant, or a member of staff requires it.

7. Employees also have specific duties under the Regulations. These are:

- To use in a proper manner all Personal Protective Equipment issued to them.
- To co-operate with their employer in complying with the Regulations.

Appendix B

Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

These Regulations are designed to protect employees from the danger inherent in, and the possible risk of injury from badly managed or unsuitable electrical equipment.

The Regulations are complex and of a very technical nature, but in general they call for all electrical equipment of whatever voltage to be checked at suitable intervals by a 'competent person'. The Deputy Town Clerk will be responsible for organising yearly PAT testing of all electrical appliances by qualified electrical contractors.

Equipment checks and repairs will be carried out by a qualified electrician. Regulation No. 16 states:

'No person shall be engaged in any work activity where technical knowledge or experience is necessary to prevent danger or, where appropriate, injury unless he/ she possesses such knowledge and experience'.

Appendix C (1)

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992

These Regulations apply to almost all work activities and are aimed at improving health and safety management. They set out broad general duties which are designed to encourage a more systematic and better organised approach toward health and safety at work. The regulations require employers to:

- Assess the risks to the health and safety of employees, and to other persons not in their employment, arising from the work activities which are carried out.
- Make arrangements for putting into practice the health and safety measures that follow on from their risk assessments.
- Provide appropriate health surveillance for employees where necessary.
- Set up emergency procedures.
- Provide employees with information regarding health and safety matters.
- Ensure that employees have adequate health and safety training appropriate to their jobs, and are capable at their jobs to avoid risks.

Employers with five or more employees must record the significant findings of their risk assessment, and details of the arrangements for putting their health and safety measures into practice.

The Regulations also place duties on employees to:

- Carry out work activities in accordance with their training and the instructions they have received; co-operate with their employer in all matters relating to health and safety; and report potentially dangerous situations.

Appendix C (2)

Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

These regulations aim to ensure that workplaces meet the health, safety and welfare needs of each member of the workforce. Employers must ensure that any workplace within their control complies with these Regulations.

General requirements are set out in four broad areas:

- Working environment
- Safety
- Facilities
- Housekeeping

Appendix C (3)

Provision and Use of Work Equipment (PUWER) 1998

The prime objective of this set of Regulations is to ensure the provision of safe work equipment and its safe use. The Regulations are designed to pull together the laws governing equipment used at work, by placing general duties on employers, and by listing the minimum requirements for work equipment to deal with selected hazards whatever the industry.

'Work Equipment' is defined as including everything from hand tools through to machines of all kinds.

'Use' is defined as any activity involving work equipment and includes starting, stopping, repairing, modifying, installing, dismantling, programming, setting, transporting, maintaining, servicing and cleaning.

The general duties of these Regulations require employers to:

- Ensure work equipment is suitable for the use that will be made of it
- Take the working conditions and related hazards into consideration when selecting equipment
- Ensure equipment is used only for operation which, and under conditions for which, it is suitable
- Maintain equipment in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair
- Provide adequate information, instruction and training in the use of the equipment

Appendix C (4)

Personal Protective Equipment at Work (PPE) Regulations 1992

These Regulations set out principles for the selection, provision, maintenance and use of personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE is defined as all equipment designed to be worn or held in order to protect against a risk to health and safety.

The Regulations stress that PPE should only be relied upon as a last resort. However, where risks cannot be adequately controlled by other means, employers have a duty to ensure suitable PPE is provided.

Employers have duties under the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulation to:

- Assess the risks and the PPE which is intended to be used, to ensure that it is suitable
- Maintain, clean and replace PPE as necessary
- Provide storage for PPE when not in use
- Provide training, information and instruction in the correct use of PPE, and how to look after it.

Appendix C (5)

Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

The incorrect handling of loads causes large numbers of injuries and can result in pain, time off work and even permanent disability. Manual handling operations which may cause injury at work include not only the lifting of loads but the lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving them by hand or other bodily force.

The manual handling Operations Regulations outline a clear hierarchy of measures which should be followed:

- Avoid hazardous manual handling operations where reasonably practicable – by redesigning the task or mechanising the process;
- Make a suitable and sufficient assessment of any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided, consider the weight, size and shape of the load; the way the task is carried out; the working environment and individual's capability.
- Reduce the risk of injury so far as is reasonably practical, consider the provision of mechanical assistance but where this is not practical explore improvements to the task, the load and the working environment.

Appendix C (6)

Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992

These Regulations were brought in to cover a new area of work activity for the first time. They apply to display screens where there is a 'user' that is an employee who habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal work.

The definition of a 'user' is a person who uses the screen for a minimum of 1 hour per day.

Work with display screen equipment is generally not high risk and most associated health problems do not arise directly from the display screen themselves but from the way in which they are used. These problems can be overcome by good ergonomic design of equipment, furniture, the working environment and the task performed.

Health problems associated with the use of display screen equipment include: temporary visual fatigue, headaches, aches and pains in the wrists, arms, neck, shoulders or back (musculoskeletal system) and stress.

Employers have duties under the Display Screen Equipment Regulations to: Perform a suitable analysis of 'Users' workstations for the purpose of assessing the health and safety risks to which they are exposed:

- Ensure that workstations satisfy minimum requirements which are set for the display screen, keyboard, desk and chair, working environment and task design and software.
- Plan display screen equipment based work so that there are breaks or changes in activity.
- Provide a free sight test once a year and provide a contribution towards lenses where needed to carry out display screen equipment work.