



Health & Safety

Policy

City of Stoke-on-Trent
Office of the Council Manager

Organisation Relating to Health and Safety

Introduction

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (HASAW) 1974 provides the legislative framework to promote, stimulate and encourage high standards of health and safety at work.

In accordance with Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act and Regulation 4 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the aim of the City Council Health and Safety Policy is to affirm the Organisation's intent to implement positive measures to promote and improve the health and safety at work of its employees including the organisation and arrangements in force for carrying out the policy.

The policy and its associated guidance and procedures must be brought to the attention of all employees along with the appropriate procedural guidelines for a specific area of work or activity. The policy and associated procedures and guidelines seek to ensure consistency of approach to health and safety throughout the whole Organisation.

Local, functional procedural guidelines contain more detailed information on technical matters, safe systems of work and codes of practice.

Responsibilities of Elected Members

Elected Members endorse the Health and Safety Policy statement, which clearly commits the organisation to the principles of good health and safety management.

Responsibilities

In general, it is expected that any employee responsible for managing staff, work processes, buildings or other property will be responsible for compliance with the City Council Policy and Procedures in respect of the activities under their control. Each Manager should therefore, be aware of the implications of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and any other legislation, standards or codes of practice relevant to their workplace.

The Council Manager/Chief Executive

The Council Manager/Chief Executive will be responsible, on behalf of the City Council, for ensuring the implementation, monitoring and review of the Health and Safety Policy and other related Policies.

The Council Manager/Chief Executive will:

Ensure that competent persons are in place to oversee Health and Safety issues across the organisation (Health and Safety Advisers), in line with Regulation 6 and 7 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Continually review the effectiveness of this and other related policies, where necessary by designating appropriate groups or committees to carry this out on their behalf.

Ensure that managers fully and effectively discharge their responsibilities as detailed in these procedures and that their performance is reflected in individual objectives and business plans.

Ensure the allocation of appropriate and sufficient resources and training to comply with and improve Health and Safety standards.

Chief Officers

Chief Officers carry primary responsibility for health and safety performance within their departments on behalf of the Council Manager/Chief Executive.

Chief Officer's duties include....

- Promotion of health and safety as an integral part of normal management practices.
- Ensuring that adequate resources are made available to meet health and safety requirements.
- Establishment of an adequate structure to facilitate effective health and safety management.
- Ensuring that effective communication systems exist for dissemination of health and safety information
- Ensuring effective implementation of Council health and safety related policies.
- Setting of performance standards based on corporate guidelines and ensuring that systems are in place for measurement of those standards
- Ensuring that provision is made for adequate supervision, instruction and training to ensure that health and safety standards are met
- Ensure that departmental procedures and safe systems of work are developed and implemented where necessary.

Managers and Supervisors

Managers and Supervisors have operational responsibility for ensuring that employees are able to carry out their work in a safe way and without risk to health, so far as is reasonably practicable, and that City Council Policy is implemented within their area of responsibility.

Managers and supervisors duties include:-

- development and implementation of procedures and safe systems of work to improve safety performance within their area of responsibility.
- ensuring that employees, contractors and visitors are aware of those procedures
- ensuring that equipment, plant and substances used are suitable for the task and are kept in good working condition; including regular maintenance, servicing, inspection and storage.
- provision of adequate training, instruction and information supervision to ensure that work is carried out without risks to health and safety, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- ensuring that adequate risk assessments are carried out, records are kept and that employees are made aware of the results of such assessments

Managers may be advised of specific health and safety duties relating to their area of responsibility and these may be included in job descriptions.

Contract Supervisors/Client Officers

Contract supervisors/client officers and others who engage or employ contractors or service providers, for any type of work, are responsible for ensuring that Council policies, and in particular those relating to the control of contractors are implemented at all times throughout the duration of the contract. Officers responsible must communicate with and monitor contractors throughout, to ensure that required conditions are maintained. Where risks have been identified, the client officers must ensure that the appropriate steps are taken by the contractor to eliminate these or reduce them so far as is reasonably practicable.

Contract supervisors/client officers duties include:-

- ensuring that contractors are aware of any relevant safety procedures and policies adopted by the City Council
- ensuring that contractors adopt City Council procedures and policies as minimum standards
- ensuring that contractors are competent in the management of health and safety issues
- ensuring that approved contractors are used and that the management of health and safety has been taken into account in the approval process.
- provide adequate information relating to the contract to ensure that any additional risks to existing operations are minimized

Contract supervisors/client officers with particular areas of responsibility may be advised of specific health and safety duties, for instance control of asbestos.

Health and Safety Advisers

Health and Safety Advisers are responsible for providing a progressive, effective, professional health and safety service to ensure conformity with legislative and corporate health and safety requirements throughout the organization.

Health and Safety Officers Duties include:-

- provision of information and advice to management and employees on the measures required to ensure that a healthy and safe working environment is maintained.
- advising management in the preparation and implementation of safe working practices and procedures to comply with current Corporate and legislative requirements.
- liaison with management to identify health and safety training needs and to assist in the provision of appropriate training to staff.
- Undertaking periodic health and safety monitoring inspections and audits to ensure that required standards are being met
- investigation of serious accidents and incidents and provision of reports and recommendations to management, including notification to statutory bodies where appropriate.
- preparation of information and statistics relating to health, safety and welfare for departmental and corporate use.
- liaison with Trades Union Representatives and outside bodies such as the HSE on health and safety issues.

Employee Responsibility

Employees have a duty while at work to take care of the health and safety of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions

All employees must:-

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- consider the health and safety of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions
- work in accordance with instruction, information and training
- refrain from intentionally misusing or recklessly interfering with anything that has been provided for health and safety purposes
- report any hazardous defects in plant and equipment or short coming in the existing safety arrangements to a responsible person without delay
- not undertake any task for which they have not been given authorisation and/or training
- co-operate with and assist management in complying with current health and safety legislation and City Council policy.

Health and Safety Policy Arrangements

Introduction

This document details the arrangements for the Health, Safety and Welfare of employees, visitors, service users and others affected by the activities of the City Council. These arrangements form part of the City Council's Health and Safety Policy and apply to all Directorates and Departments. These arrangements outline the basic minimum standards and should be adhered to or improved on. They will be supplemented and expanded from time to time by specific policies, guidance and procedures.

Accident Reporting and Investigation

All Directorates and Departments will have adequate arrangements in place for the reporting of accidents or major incidents that occur to employees whilst at work. These arrangements will include the reporting of accidents to non-employees and all major losses. All First Aid and medical treatments provided on site must also be recorded. All incidents must be recorded in the accident book and on the Corporate Incident Form and a copy submitted to the appropriate Health and Safety Adviser.

All incidents should be investigated by the line manager with the object of determining direct and indirect causes and implementing, where necessary, suitable measures for the prevention of further, similar, incidents.

The Health and Safety Advisers will be responsible for reporting lost time (over 3 days) accidents, incidents and Dangerous Occurrences to the Health and Safety Executive where required under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR).

The Health and Safety Advisers will produce accident and incident statistics at suitable intervals. The information contained in these reports will assist managers in identification of accident and incident frequency, trends and any changes that are required to ensure the reduction of risks.

Consultation with Employees

Appropriate forums for joint management/employee discussions on health and safety topics shall be established and maintained.

Consultation will take place on anything which may affect the health and safety of employees including changes to work practices, services or organisation before the changes are introduced.

Contractors

The City Council has a duty by law, to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, that any work carried out on its behalf by contractors or their sub-contractors meets adequate standards of safety and is without risks to health. All Contractors will be evaluated to ensure that their health and safety management procedures meet suitable standards and monitored on a regular basis to ensure that those standards are being maintained. This applies to all contractors whether providing goods, direct services or indirect services to the public.

Discipline

It is the City Council's policy that compliance by all employees with specific safety procedures forms part of their conditions of employment. Where there is clear evidence of persistent and/or serious breach of these procedures, individuals will be subject to normal disciplinary procedures. Breaches of procedures which are likely to jeopardise or adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of other employees or the public will be regarded as serious misconduct which could lead to dismissal in accordance with normal procedures.

Display Screen Equipment

All users of display screen equipment should undergo an assessment of their workstation as soon as possible after starting work on display screen equipment. Managers should ensure that any risks highlighted by the assessment are controlled as far as is reasonably practicable. Display screen equipment users are entitled, by the Regulations, to a free eyesight test, and where necessary corrective spectacles for use while using display screen equipment.

Driving

All employees who drive as part of their normal duties will be required to operate their vehicles in accordance with the specific procedures and guidance contained in the drivers' handbook and the driving policy. All incidents which occur in working time or which involve a vehicle owned by the City Council must be reported immediately or as soon as possible using the Corporate Incident Report Form.

First Aid

All sites and services will have adequate first aid provision which will include as a basic minimum a first aid box with minimum contents as specified under the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 and its associated Code of Practice. Line Managers will ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out and an appropriate number of qualified emergency aid trained or, if necessary, first aid at work trained employees are available and that adequate recording systems are in place for any treatments carried out either to employees or to members of the public.

Fire

The City Council recognises the importance of fire prevention and the need to operate a clear fire policy to assure the safety and welfare of staff, service users and visitors to its properties. Detailed fire prevention arrangements will be available for all premises based on fire risk assessments. These will also contain details of early detection systems and response plans in the event of a fire.

Hazard Identification and elimination

It is the responsibility of all employees to report to line managers, any hazard, unsafe equipment or unsafe place of work as soon as they become aware of it. It is also their responsibility to report any incident, injury, damage or near miss.

It is the responsibility of line managers and supervisors to check for hazards in the workplace or work activity and take appropriate remedial action wherever possible. If they cannot immediately resolve the problem, they will ensure that effective steps have been taken to isolate the danger, give adequate warning and report the matter to their managers for further action.

Infection Control

Where employee's work involves close contact with the public or work with a possible infection risk, it is the duty of managers and employees to ensure that working practices follow safe systems. Where available, suitable vaccination will be provided for specific risks as identified by risk assessments.

Manual Handling

The City Council recognises that the primary objective in the reduction and minimisation of the risk of injury should always be to optimise the design of manual handling operations as appropriate. Where possible the need for manual handling will be eliminated, where this is not possible, the manual handling operation will be designed to suit the individuals carrying it out. Adequate and suitable training will be given as a complement to safe systems of work not as a substitute.

Monitoring and review of policy and procedures

The aim of the City Council's Policy is to improve standards of health and safety at work. Its implementation and the extent to which objectives are being met will be carefully monitored by managers as detailed in the associated procedures. Regular reports will be submitted to Departmental and Corporate Management Teams on the operation of the policy and its effectiveness.

The policy will be reviewed in the light of operational expertise or where the need is indicated by the issue of further guidance from national agencies or internal sources.

Occupational Health Risks

Potential health risks will be identified through the risk assessment process and where necessary, monitoring will be carried out by referral to the Occupational Health Department. Should specific risks be identified for which there is a recognised immunisation method, managers will refer the employees concerned to the Occupational Health Service for vaccination.

Other Standards and policies

Operational, technical and professional standards in specialist areas form an integral part of this policy. Managers and Supervisors must ensure that all employees are familiar with and have access to the relevant policies, standards or safe systems of work relating to their tasks and that they follow them.

Permit to Work Systems

In some types of work where there is a high risk of injury a 'permit to work' system may be needed. These will follow best practice on issuing, monitoring and signing off by designated persons. Where there are permit to work systems in place Managers and Supervisors will ensure that employees are familiar with them and that they are being strictly adhered to.

Personal Protective Equipment and Clothing

Where protective clothing or other equipment is identified as necessary through the risk assessment process, this will be provided by the City Council. Managers will ensure that any equipment or clothing provided is suitable for the circumstances and hazards involved, that employees use it, know how to fit it properly and maintain it.

It is the responsibility of the employee to take good care of such equipment or clothing and report any defects or wear to their Manager or Supervisor.

Safe Systems of Work

Where necessary suitable and sufficient safe systems of work will be introduced and followed. These are formal, written procedures, which result from systematic examination of a task in order to identify all the hazards and where possible, design them out. Where risks cannot be eliminated safe methods of carrying out the tasks will be defined. These principles will be applied to routine work as well as more specific or specialised areas such as:

- Cleaning and maintenance operations
- Making changes to work layout, materials used or work methods
- Employees working away from base or working alone
- Breakdowns or emergencies
- Controlling activities of contractors on City Council premises or carrying out work on behalf of the City Council
- Loading, unloading and movement of vehicles

Safety Representatives

The City Council recognises the value of the contribution made by Safety Representatives in formulating policy and encouraging awareness of health and safety in the workplace. Safety Representatives appointed by recognised trade unions will be granted all facilities set out in the relevant legislation and codes of practice in order to carry out their functions.

Substances Hazardous to Health

Wherever possible the use of substances which are potentially hazardous to health will be eliminated. Where this is not possible a safer substitute will be sought. If this is not possible a thorough written risk assessment (COSHH assessment) will be carried out and adequate control measures, including a safe system of work will be introduced to minimise the risks as far as possible. Processes to control risks from hazardous substances will be adequately monitored to ensure that they are effective.

Training

It is the responsibility of all managers to ensure that their staff receive adequate information, instruction and training to perform the duties required of their post safely and without risk to health.

Specialist trainers, tutors and instructors within the City Council have a responsibility to ensure that health and safety aspects are highlighted, and thoroughly understood, as appropriate in all training or instruction that they carry out.

The Health and Safety Team is responsible for supporting managers in identifying training needs to ensure that all employees are able to fulfil their role in line with the appropriate policies and also for advising on suitable training methods.

Every employee has a duty to co-operate with management by attending health and safety related training as required and to actively participate in such training.

Work Equipment

All portable electrical equipment operating at voltages greater than 25V will be inspected by a competent person at frequencies not exceeding twelve months and will be marked with the date of the next due inspection. It is the responsibility of the person using the equipment to ensure that it is inspected and is not used after the indicated due date.

New machinery, plant and equipment must comply with UK Legislation, EU Standards (CE Mark) and where appropriate those British Standards adopted as approved standards under EU Law. It is the responsibility of persons involved in purchasing such equipment to ensure that it complies with the policy before purchase. It is the responsibility of the person in charge of any such equipment to identify the training requirements of employees required to operate it to arrange a suitable programme of training before they are allowed to use it.

Inspection and examination of plant and equipment shall be carried out where there is a statutory duty. It is the responsibility of the person in charge of such equipment to ensure that these inspections are undertaken and that it is fit for purpose and is maintained in a proper state. All inspections reports must be kept in an accessible place and be available for examination when required. Where required, daily or weekly checks and inspections must be carried out by the operator and records completed. It remains the responsibility of the person in charge of the equipment to ensure that these inspections are made.

Other Related Policies

This policy contains an outline of the arrangements for health and safety within the City Council. From time to time, other, more specific policies will be issued. It is the responsibility of managers to ensure that they are familiar with such policies and associated procedures as they relate to their area of work and that their staff are familiar with, understand and are following those policies and procedures.