

Employees' guide to

# General Health and Safety

Issue 1

November 2016



## Introduction

This guide has been produced to provide employees with general information on their duties under health and safety law and on some of the significant workplace health and safety issues they should be aware of.

The guide is only intended as an overview and, where appropriate, employees will need additional, more detailed information and, sometimes, instruction and training to enable them to carry out their duties safely. The guide should help identify where this is the case.

Managers are to bring the guide to the attention of all employees who, in turn, are required to read it and to request any information, instruction or training they feel they need and which they have not already been provided with.

The Council has a number of health and safety policies, together with specific guidance documents, giving more detailed information on various topics. These are accessible on the RCT Source.

The first point of contact for employees for further advice and information on health and safety should always be their line manager.

However, in addition, advice and information is also available from the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Team, its Occupational Health and Wellbeing Unit and the Health and Safety Executive, contact details for which are at the end of this document.

# All Employees

## Whilst at work, all employees have a duty to:

- Cooperate with their employer (the Council) in all matters relating to health and safety;
- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their work activities;
- Behave in a safe and responsible manner;
- Report to their manager/supervisor any issue they become aware of that could impact on health and safety;



- Take reasonable care of work vehicles/machinery/equipment;
- Wear/use any PPE determined as necessary;
- Report to their manager/supervisor any work related incident/accident they are involved in;
- Cooperate with any investigation into any incident/accident;
- Comply with the requirements of health and safety law, and with any other appropriate law (for example, the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971);
- Comply with Council Health and Safety Policies, and with any other appropriate Council Policy (for example, the Driving at Work Policy);
- Comply with any safe method of work and/or risk control measures;
- Attend any appointment made for them by their manager at the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Unit.

# Line/Operation Managers

## Risk Assessment



Risk assessments must be undertaken for all hazardous activities and any control measures identified as necessary implemented. Further information is available in the Council guide 'Risk Assessment - A Guide For Managers' and on the HSE website, which includes example assessments.

## Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)



Any hazardous substances used at work must be identified, COSHH risk assessments undertaken in respect of them and identified control measures implemented. Further information is available on the HSE website, including the COSHH e-tool, which can be used to complete assessments.

## Work Equipment



Work equipment must be inspected, serviced and maintained in accordance with legal requirements, manufacturers' recommendations and industry best practice. Employees must be provided with appropriate information, instruction and training in its safe use. Advice can be obtained from the Health and Safety Team.

## Work at Height



Where possible, work at height must be avoided and, where it can't, work activities involving work at height must be risk assessed and identified control measures implemented. The correct equipment suitable for the particular job must be used and employees must be provided with appropriate information, instruction and training.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



Risk assessments could identify that work activities require workers to be provided with PPE. Where this is the case, the PPE must be provided free of charge and must be worn/used by the workers.

## Line/Operation Managers (continued)

### Noise and Vibration



Exposure to noise and vibration must be eliminated wherever possible and, where not, reduced so far as is reasonably practicable. Where noise and vibration levels are likely to be hazardous (above action levels), the risks must be assessed and any control measures identified as necessary implemented. In certain instances, workers must be referred to the Council's Occupational Health and Wellbeing Unit for health surveillance. Advice can be obtained from the Health and Safety Team.

### Moving and Handling



Hazardous moving and handling operations must be avoided where reasonably practicable. Where this is not possible, the operations must be risk assessed, control measures implemented and employees provided with suitable training. Further information is available on the HSE website, including risk assessment tools.

### Lone Working



People who work alone should not be put at more risk than any other employees. Risk assessments should be undertaken to determine the right level of control measures necessary. There are some activities where lone working is not permitted, for example working in a high-risk confined space.

### Display Screen Equipment (DSE)



Workers who regularly use DSE (e.g. computers) as a significant part of their normal work are classified as 'users'. DSE users must have their workstations assessed and any necessary control measures implemented. Users must be provided with information, instruction and training on the safe use of DSE and how to adjust equipment, identify risks and report problems. Users are entitled to financial assistance with the cost of eye tests and may also be entitled to assistance with the cost of spectacles. Further information is available in Council Policy HS11 - Display Screen Equipment and the guide 'Display Screen Equipment - Setting Up Your Workstation'.

# Line/Operation Managers (continued)

## Alcohol and Substance Misuse



People must comply with the law e.g. The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, and with Council Policy HS17 - Alcohol and Substance Misuse, whilst at work or whilst on Council premises or in Council owned or controlled vehicles. For example, staff must not drink alcohol, take illegal drugs or be under their influence whilst at work.

## Pregnant Women at Work



Risk assessments must be undertaken for new and expectant mothers to ensure their health and safety, and that of their child, is not put at risk. A pregnant woman risk assessment form and example is available on the RCT Source.

## Incidents/Accidents



Incidents/accidents involving employees at work, including acts of violence, or incidents/accidents to non-employees whilst on Council premises or involving Council work activities/equipment/vehicles, etc., must be investigated, recorded on the appropriate form and reported to the Health and Safety Team in accordance with Council procedures. Incident/Accident Form HS5(A) and Violence at Work Form HS(V1) must be available for employees' use. Further information is available on the RCT Source.

## Hazard Reporting Scheme and Employee Suggestion Scheme



Employees must be made aware of the existence of these schemes and the relevant forms HRS1 and ESS1 must be made available for their use. Completed forms must be acted upon in accordance with the provisions of the schemes. Forms are available on the RCT Source.

# Building/Site Managers

## Asbestos



All Council premises should have had an asbestos survey undertaken and, where asbestos has been identified as being present in a building, there should be an Asbestos Management Plan in place. Advice can be obtained from the Asbestos Team in Corporate Estates.

## Legionella



Legionella risk assessments should have been undertaken for all water systems under the control of the Council, and procedures should have been developed and implemented to manage the risk from Legionella. Advice can be obtained from the Legionella Team in Corporate Estates.

## Fire

All premises should have had a fire risk assessment undertaken by Council appointed external consultants, and any actions identified as necessary in the assessment must be addressed and the on-line system updated.



Fire safety equipment must be tested periodically by both external consultants – which is arranged by Corporate Estates – and in-house, with details entered in a fire log book. Procedures for the safe evacuation of people must be developed and implemented and all employees must receive fire safety training. Advice on fire risk assessments and external testing can be obtained from Corporate Estates. Advice on in-house testing, evacuation procedures and fire safety training can be obtained from the Health and Safety Team.

## Electricity and Gas



Fixed electrical installations, portable electrical equipment and gas appliances must be tested periodically by a competent person. Advice can be obtained from Corporate Estates.



## Building/Site Managers (continued)

### Passenger Lifts



Passenger lifts must be thoroughly examined by a competent person at least every six months, as well as being suitably serviced and maintained. Emergency procedures should be developed and implemented in the event of the lift breaking down and trapping someone inside it.

### Powered Gates/Barriers



Powered gates/barriers must be periodically inspected, serviced and maintained by a competent person to ensure that the risk of crushing and/or impact is properly managed. Advice can be obtained from Corporate Estates.

### Doors and Gates



Where young people use the premises, e.g. children's care homes, schools, leisure centres, parks, theatres, etc., the risk of them trapping their fingers in doors and gates must be assessed and managed. Further advice is available in the Council guide 'Managing the Risk from Finger Trapping in Doors and Gates'.

### Contractors



The control of contractors on site is important to ensure the safety of both Council employees and contractors' employees. Further information is available in Council Policy HS23 - Managing Contractors.

### First Aid



A first aid needs assessment should be undertaken for all sites to ensure there is adequate first aid provision available in the event that someone is injured or taken ill at work. Council Policy HS9 - First Aid at Work gives more information.

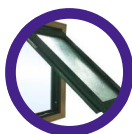
## Building/Site Managers (continued)

### Slips, Trips and Falls



Pedestrian routes, including external walkways and steps and internal corridors and staircases, etc., should be kept free of slip, trip and fall hazards. During winter months, procedures should be developed and implemented to manage the risks from snow and ice. Further information is available in the Council guide 'Slips and Trips - A Guide for Managers'.

### Projecting Windows



Where any part of a window projects into a space which is used by people moving in or about the building and is 2 metres or lower above the floor or ground level, it should be fitted with a restrictor to prevent it opening more than 100mm into the space so as to protect people from colliding with it.

### Welfare Facilities



Sites must have suitable provisions in place for the welfare of people e.g. toilets, washing facilities, kitchens etc. Advice can be obtained from the Health and Safety Team.

### Smoking



People must comply with the law and with Council Policy HS18 – Smoking in the Workplace with regards to both tobacco products and e-cigarettes whilst at work or whilst on Council premises or in Council owned or controlled vehicles.

### Visitors



The risks to visitors whilst they are on site must be properly managed. It is important that signing in and out procedures are developed and implemented and that visitors are appropriately supervised.

### Traffic Management



A traffic risk assessment should be undertaken for all relevant sites and control measures implemented to prevent accidents occurring. Further information is available in the Council guide 'Managing Traffic Safety Guidelines'.

## Further Information

**Information on some of the issues referred to above can be obtained from:**

*Corporate Estates*, Valleys Innovation Centre, Navigation Park, Abercynon, Mountain Ash, CF45 4SN

Telephone: 01443 744444

**Health and safety information can be obtained from:**



The *Health and Safety Team* at Tŷ Elai, Williamstown, CF40 1NY

Telephone: 01443 425531

[healthandsafetyteam@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafetyteam@rctcbc.gov.uk)



The web-based *RCT Source* (under *Health, Safety & Wellbeing/Safety*), accessible on the following link:

[rct.learningpool.com](http://rct.learningpool.com)

If you do not have access to the *RCT Source*, contact:

Email: [thesource@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:thesource@rctcbc.gov.uk) or Telephone: 01443 424064.



The *Health and Safety Executive*, accessible on the following link:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

