Version	3
Last Revision Date	August 2016

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HS 21

Work Equipment Policy

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DOCUMENT CONTROL	
POLICY NAME	**Work Equipment Policy**
Department	Human Resources
Telephone Number	01443 425536
Initial Policy Launch Date	
Reviewing Officer	Mike Murphy
Review Date	August 2018
Date of Equality Impact Assessment	2008
REVISION HISTORY	
Date	Revised By
March 2010	Mike Murphy
August 2016	Mike Murphy
DOCUMENT APPROVAL	
This document has received approval from:	Date of Approval
HR Senior Management Team	
Corporate Management Team	
Cabinet	

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This policy statement has been produced in response to the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER).

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 The Council is committed to the selection, installation and use of work equipment so that the health and safety of users and maintenance staff is protected.

2.2 Risk assessments will be used to ensure that the likely hazards associated with work equipment are identified and that any risks found are suitably controlled, for example, by eliminating the risk or implementing safe systems of work.

2.3 All employees will be required to abide by any rules concerning authorisation for the use or maintenance of equipment, and to report as soon as possible any faults which they identify with any item of equipment. If that fault is likely to cause injury, the employee is required to cease its use, take the equipment out of service and report to the appropriate manager.

2.4 The Council will ensure that all employees who use work equipment, and those who supervise or manage the use of work equipment, receive adequate training and are informed of any matters which such use may entail, including the precautions to be taken. Adequate training in this sense will be determined by the nature of the job requirements and the work equipment itself.

2.5 The Council will ensure that all employees who use work equipment, including those who supervise or manage the use of work equipment, have available adequate health and safety information and, where applicable, written instructions. This includes information and instructions on the conditions in which and the methods by which work equipment may be used, any foreseeable abnormal situations likely to occur and the action to be taken if such a situation were to occur, and any conclusion to be drawn from experience in using the work equipment.

2.6 All items of work equipment will be suitably designed, installed and maintained for safety.

2.7 Attached to this policy is guidance for managers, which will be of assistance in complying with the policy.

Attached at Appendix A is a list of typical risks associated with different items of equipment and the arrangements appropriate for the safety of employees using and maintaining them. This list is not exhaustive and is to be used as guidance only.

Attached at Appendix B is a checklist for purchasing/hiring equipment.

2.8 The responsibility for implementing the requirements of this policy and the preparation of an implementation strategy rests with each Director or Head of Service.

POLICY GUIDANCE

3. WHAT IS WORK EQUIPMENT?

3.1 The scope of work equipment is extremely wide. It covers almost any equipment used at work, including:

- 'tool box tools' such as hammers, knives, handsaws, meat cleavers etc.;
- single machines such as drilling machines, circular saws, photocopiers, dumper trucks, mowing machines etc.;
- apparatus such as laboratory apparatus (Bunsen burners, etc);
- lifting equipment such as hoists, lift trucks, elevating work platforms, lifting slings, etc.;
- other equipment such as ladders, pressure water cleaners, etc.;

4. WHAT IS NOT CLASSIFIED AS WORK EQUIPMENT?

4.1 The following are not classified as work equipment:

- livestock;
- substances (for example, acids, alkalines, slurry, cement, water);
- structural items (for example, walls, stairs, roof, fences);
- private cars.

5. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

5.1 Managers should:

- look at all the work equipment in use, decide what can cause harm, and how;
- look at what can be done to prevent harm, and see whether this is being done;
- decide whether more needs to be done;
- then do it!

6. WHAT RISKS ARISE FROM THE USE OF WORK EQUIPMENT?

6.1 Many things can increase the risk of harm, for example:

- using the wrong equipment for the job, e.g. ladders instead of access towers for work at high level;
- lack of guards or poor guards on machines, leading to accidents caused by entanglement, shearing, crushing, trapping, cutting, etc.;
- having inadequate controls or the wrong type of controls so that equipment cannot be turned off quickly and safely, or it starts accidentally;
- failure to keep guards, safety devices, controls, etc., properly maintained so that machines or equipment become unsafe;
- failure to provide the right information, instruction and training for those using the equipment.

6.2 When identifying the risks think about:

- all the work which has to be done with the machine and other equipment during normal use, and also during setting-up, maintenance, repair, breakdowns and removal of blockages;
- who will use the equipment, including experienced and well-trained workers, and also new starters, people who have changed jobs within the Council or those who may have particular difficulties, e.g. impaired mobility;
- workers who may act foolishly or carelessly or make mistakes;
- whether guards or safety devices are poorly designed and inconvenient to use or are easily defeated (this could encourage workers to risk injury);
- the type of power supply, e.g. electrical, hydraulic or pneumatic - each has different risks.

7. WHAT CAN MANAGERS DO TO REDUCE THE RISKS?

7.1 Managers should ensure that the right equipment for carrying out the work is available and used.

Many accidents happen because of a failure to select the right equipment for the work to be done. Controlling the risk often means planning ahead and ensuring that suitable equipment or machinery is available.

7.2 Managers should ensure that equipment is safe to use.

There are many machines, parts of machines or parts of work equipment that can cause injury to anyone using them. Always try to make sure that these are safe by eliminating the source of harm altogether. However, this is rarely possible and so, instead, risks have to be controlled.

Controlling the risk often means guarding the parts of machines and equipment that could cause injury. Points to remember are:

- fixed guards should be used wherever possible, and should be properly fastened in place with screws or nuts and bolts which need tools to remove them;
- if employees need regular access to parts of the machine and a fixed guard is not possible, use an interlocked guard for those parts. This will ensure that the machine cannot start before the guard is closed and that it will stop if this guard is opened while the machine is moving;
- in some cases, e.g. on guillotines, devices such as photoelectric systems or automatic guards may be used instead of fixed or interlocked guards;
- check that guards are convenient to use and not easy to defeat, otherwise they may need modifying;
- think about the best materials for guards - plastic may be easy to see through, but can be easily scratched or damaged. If wire mesh or similar materials are used, make sure the holes are not large enough to allow access to the danger area. As well as preventing such access, a guard may also be used to prevent harmful fluids, dust, etc, from coming out;
- make sure the guards allow the machine to be cleaned safely;
- where guards cannot give full protection, use jigs, holders, push sticks, etc., to move the workpiece.

7.3 Some risks can be reduced by careful selection and siting of the controls for machinery and equipment, for example:

- position ‘hold to run’ and/or two hand controls at a safe distance from the danger area;
- ensure control switches are clearly marked to show what they do;
- make sure operating controls are designed and placed to avoid accidental operation, e.g. by shrouding start buttons and pedals;
- interlocked or trapped key systems for guards may be necessary to prevent operators and maintenance workers from entering the danger areas before the machine has stopped;
- where appropriate, have emergency stop controls within easy reach, particularly on larger machines so they can be operated quickly in an emergency.

Note: Before fitting emergency stop controls to machines that have **not** previously had them fitted, it is essential to check that they themselves will not result in risks. For example, some machines need the power supply to be on to operate the brakes. This power could be lost if the machine is stopped using the emergency stop control.

7.4 Make sure that hand tools are safe.

Many risks can be controlled by ensuring that hand tools are properly used and maintained, for example:

- **hammers** - avoid split, broken or loose shafts and worn or chipped heads. Heads should be properly secured to the shafts;
- **files** - these should have a proper handle. Never use them as levers;
- **chisels** - the cutting edge should be sharpened to the correct angle. Do not allow the head of cold chisels to spread to a mushroom shape - grind off the sides regularly;
- **screwdrivers** - never use them as chisels, and never use hammers on them. Split handles are dangerous;
- **spanners** - avoid splayed jaws. Scrap any which show signs of slipping. Have enough spanners of the right size. Do not improvise by using pipes, etc, as extension handles.

7.5 Make sure that machinery and equipment is maintained in a safe condition.

Controlling the risk often means carrying out preventative checks and maintenance, for example:

- check what the manufacturer's instructions say about maintenance and ensure that this is carried out where necessary;
- routine daily and weekly checks may be necessary, e.g., fluid levels, pressures, brake function. When you enter into a contract to hire equipment, particularly a long-term one, you need to establish what routine maintenance is needed and who will do this;
- some equipment, e.g., a crane, needs preventative maintenance, i.e. servicing, so that it does not break down;
- equipment such as lifts, cranes, pressure systems and power presses should have a thorough examination by a competent person at intervals specified in law;
- make sure the guards and other safety devices (e.g., photoelectric systems) are routinely checked and kept in working order. They should also be checked after any repairs or modifications.

7.6 Carry out maintenance work safely.

Many accidents occur during maintenance work. Controlling the risk means following safe working practices, for example:

- maintenance should be carried out where possible with the power to the equipment off, and ideally disconnected or with fuses or keys removed, particularly where access to dangerous parts will be needed;
- isolate equipment and pipelines containing pressurised fluid, gas, steam or hazardous material. Isolating valves should be locked off and the system depressurised where possible, particularly where access to dangerous parts will be needed;
- support parts of equipment which could fall;
- allow moving equipment to stop;
- allow components which operate at high temperatures time to cool;
- switch off the engine of mobile equipment, put the gearbox in neutral, apply the brake and, where necessary, chock the wheels;

- to prevent fire or explosions, thoroughly clean vessels that have contained flammable solids, liquids, gases or dusts and check them before hot work is carried out. Even small amounts of flammable material can give off enough vapour to create an explosive air mixture, which could be ignited by a hand lamp or cutting/welding torch.

7.7 Instruct and train employees.

Make sure that employees have the knowledge they need to use and maintain equipment safely, for example:

- give them the information they need, e.g., manufacturers' instructions, operating manuals;
- instruct them on how to avoid risks, e.g., check that the drive is not engaged before starting the engine/machine and do not use on sloping ground;
- an inexperienced employee may need some instruction on how to use hand tools safely;
- as well as instruction, appropriate training will often be necessary, particularly if control of the risk depends on how an employee uses the work equipment.

Training may be needed for existing employees as well as inexperienced employees or new starters (do not forget temporary employees), particularly if they have to use powered machinery. The greater the danger, the more comprehensive the training needs to be. For some high risk work such as driving fork lift trucks, using a chainsaw and operating a crane, training is usually carried out by specialist instructors. Remember, younger people can be quite skilful when moving and handling powered equipment, but they may lack experience and judgement and may require supervision to begin with.

People who carry out servicing and repairs should have enough knowledge and training to enable them to follow safe working practices.

8. WHAT SHOULD EMPLOYEES DO TO REDUCE THE RISKS?

8.1 Employees should check that:

- they know how to use the equipment;
- they know how to stop the equipment before they start it;
- all guards are in position and all protective devices are working;

- the area around the equipment is clean, tidy and free from obstruction;
- they are wearing appropriate protective clothing and equipment, such as safety goggles or shoes, where necessary.

8.2 Employees should:

- tell the supervisor at once if they think a machine is dangerous because it is not working properly or any guards or protective devices are faulty;
- stop using the machine until the matter has been checked.

8.3 Employees should never:

- use a machine unless they are trained and competent to do so;
- try to clean a moving machine if this could be dangerous - they should switch it off and unplug it or lock it off;
- use a machine or appliance which has a danger sign or tag attached to it. Danger signs should be removed only by an authorised person who is satisfied that the machine or process is safe;
- wear dangling chains, loose clothing, gloves, rings or have long hair which could get caught up in moving parts;
- distract other people who are using machines, fool around or deliberately misuse the equipment;
- allow passengers to be carried on vehicles such as dumper trucks or forklift trucks unless the vehicle is designed for such use.

9. WHAT DO THE PRECAUTIONS MEAN IN PRACTICE?

9.1 The following are examples of accidents which involve equipment that is widely used. They show what can be done to reduce the risks.

Ladders

Accidents can happen from:

- ladders not being securely placed and fixed;
- climbing with loads;
- overreaching or overbalancing;

- ladders being used when other equipment would be safer;
- the use of poorly maintained and/or faulty ladders.

Many accidents involving ladders happen during work lasting 30 minutes or less. Ladders are often used for short jobs when it would be safer to use other equipment, e.g., mobile tower scaffolds. Using the correct type of well maintained equipment can significantly reduce the risk of accidents.

Drilling Machines

Accidents can happen from:

- hair being caught in rotating spindles, chucks or tools;
- entanglement of gloves, rings, clothing, etc.;
- impact from violent spinning of a workpiece due to inadequate clamping;
- swarf thrown into unprotected eyes.

Fit an adjustable guard around the chuck and spindle and keep it adjusted to give maximum protection. Provide adequate clamps or a suitable vice for the workpiece. Operators should be trained to check guards and report faults promptly. Radial arm drilling machines can inflict very serious injuries, so guards or trip devices must be provided for the chuck and spindle.

Food processing machinery

Accidents can happen from:

- fingers coming into contact with rotating blades/cutters/knives;
- contact with rollers;
- contact with feed mechanisms.

Many injuries are caused when well-intentioned operators or service workers remove guards and try to clear blockages with the power switched on. They should switch the power off first. Employees should be trained to follow laid-down procedures and safe systems of work developed for operators and maintenance workers.

Pressure water cleaners

Accidents can happen from:

- electric shock (often fatal);
- fluid being injected through the skin.

The weakest parts of these cleaners are their cables, so wherever possible cleaners should be fixed in place and permanently connected to the electrical system. Electrical faults to the plug, cable or equipment may make the metal lance at the end of the flexible hose, or the machine's casing, live. Contact will result in an electric shock.

Machines should be given a regular visual examination, looking for signs of faults or damage, and should be checked by the user before use. Faulty or damaged machines must be repaired before use. A residual current device (circuit breaker) should be used in the electricity supply to any cleaner that is not fixed in place.

High-pressure jets can force fluid into the skin or eyes. This can be very dangerous, so suitable eye protection and special clothing may be required.

10. ADVICE

10.1 Advice on the implementation of this policy can be obtained from the Health and Safety Team, Human Resources, Ty Elai, Williamstown, CF40 1NY, telephone 01443 425531.

APPENDIX A

TYPICAL HAZARDS FROM WORK EQUIPMENT AND PRECAUTIONS TO BE TAKEN

Equipment	Hazards	Typical Precautions
Paper guillotine	Amputation (fingers)	Sited on firm table, well lit, and work area kept clean and tidy. Guard fitted. Employees instructed to leave in blade down position. Blade periodically sent to be sharpened.
Photocopier	Electrocution Light Ozone Toner dust	Employees not permitted to open up machine (maintenance task), and maintenance by external competent engineer. Employees advised to copy with lid down (notice to that effect by each machine). Copiers sited in well-ventilated areas. Sealed packs used, employees advised to wipe up (not brush/vacuum) spillages.
Plant room	Trapping, electrical etc.	Access restricted to authorised persons, subject to training for competence in building engineering. Each plant room inspected and checked for lighting (including emergency lighting), safe access, absence of tripping hazards, each item of equipment correctly labelled, etc., and all maintenance carried out in accordance with supplier's/installer's instructions.
Vacuum cleaner	Electrocution	Equipment inspected for potential damage each use by the cleaner (trained and instructed) and tested periodically by maintenance electricians.
Lift machinery	Trapping, electrocution	Lift motor room locked, access only to competent engineers who have advised that they have carried out a risk assessment of their work as their own 'competent persons'.
Heating boiler	Hot surfaces Explosion Emission of steam/hot water	Boiler subject to regular inspections and maintenance on contract by competent engineers, access to boiler room restricted to maintenance staff to check on gauges, no contact with equipment itself.
Maintenance workers' tool kits	Cuts, eye injuries, etc.	Skilled tradesmen, advised that they are responsible for checking their own tool kits every month and taking action to deal with worn screwdrivers, damaged chisels etc.

Equipment	Hazards	Typical Precautions
Ladders	Falls from height Electrocution	Each ladder tagged and subject to a recorded inspection every 6 months. Employees trained to inspect prior to each use. Maintenance staff advised that only wooden ladders to be used in electrical switchgear rooms, etc.
Small abrasive wheel in maintenance shop	Eye injury	Only authorised employees may use wheel, and only employees appointed in writing after training are permitted to mount a new wheel or dress the mounted wheel. Screens are mounted for eye protection but employees required to wear goggles as well.
Lawnmower	Electrocution Cut (on blade)	Mower only to be used in dry weather, earth leakage circuit breaker used. Employees to unplug before any maintenance, etc. Safety shoes to be worn, employees advised on sharpness of blade and its tendency to overrun when switched off.

APPENDIX B

CHECKLIST FOR PURCHASING/HIRING EQUIPMENT

Equipment evaluated as suitable for the purposes?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Appropriate location identified to site equipment (or store it, if mobile)?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Equipment supplied with handbook, etc., on use and maintenance?	Yes ☐ No ☐
Training required for users? If so, how provided? ……	Yes ☐ No ☐
Maintenance arrangements (contract or in-house)? Specify: ……..	Yes ☐ No ☐
Training required for maintenance staff? If so, how provided? ……..	Yes ☐ No ☐
Special risks associated with equipment? If so, specify: …….	Yes ☐ No ☐
Electrical safety special requirements? If so, specify: …….	Yes ☐ No ☐
Emergency procedures required? If so, specify: …….	Yes ☐ No ☐
Inspection and test procedures required? If so, specify by whom and how often: …….	Yes ☐ No ☐
Equipment records to be kept? If so, specify: ……	Yes ☐ No ☐
Name: …… **Date: ……**	

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MANAGERS CHECKLIST

	✓ As Appropriate		
	N/A	Yes	No
• Has an inventory of work equipment been carried out?			
• Have the hazards arising from work equipment been identified?			
• Are there control measures in place to reduce the risk?			
• Have employees been given sufficient information, instruction and training in the use of work equipment?			
• Are there site procedures in place when purchasing/hiring equipment?			
• Are there monitoring procedures in place to ensure the requirements of the policy are being met?			

Completed by: _____ Confirmed by: _____
(Signature) (Signature)

Name: _____ Name: _____
(Print) (Print)

Designation: _____ Designation: _____

Date: _____ Date: _____