

Health and Safety policy

Introduction

Management of health and safety issues is an integral part of our business and is given the highest priority. Compliance with Health and Safety legislation is regarded as the minimum standard to be adhered to: our aim is to minimise the number of accidents and work-related illness to the lowest level practicable.

We accept our responsibility for providing a clean and safe environment in which all our people can work. It is our duty to take whatever reasonable measures are necessary for accident and fire prevention and to protect the health, safety and welfare of our employees, customers, contractors and visitors to our premises.

We can only make our safety policy work with the full co-operation and understanding of all our employees and workers. We all need to ensure we carry out our work in a safe manner. All employees and workers have responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act and should report any potential risk (such as faulty equipment or process) to the appropriate manager, and follow all Health and Safety instructions that may affect them, their colleagues, or the public. Any neglect of health and safety requirements will be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter. Where an action or neglect is so dangerous as to constitute gross misconduct, the employee concerned will be liable to summary dismissal - and even prosecution.

We will endeavour to ensure that all equipment is safe, and will provide Personal Protective Equipment if necessary. So far as is reasonably practicable we will also ensure that our people are given whatever training is necessary to understand the equipment they work with and to be aware of any potential risks to them. Information will be provided to employees about particular hazards or dangerous substances related to their jobs. Safety notices throughout the workplace will be clear and prominent.

This policy is non-contractual. The guidelines required to meet our objectives and for the implementation of this policy are detailed within our Health and Safety Manual which will be kept in the Library. Detailed policies on specific aspects of health and safety referred to in this policy can be found in the Library.

All matters affecting health, safety and welfare are kept under constant review. This policy will be reviewed at least annually, and also when necessary in the light of experience, changes in legislation, or as our business grows or changes.

Organisation and responsibilities

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is ultimately responsible for ensuring:

- the effectiveness of our overall accident prevention and safety training programme
- that the proper operating practices and procedures to prevent injury are adhered to and encouraged
- that all the Directors are aware of their roles and responsibilities in all health and safety matters
- that adequate resources are allocated to meet the requirements of this policy as regards instruction, information, supervision and/or training

Directors

The Directors are responsible for:

- providing leadership and promoting a responsible attitude towards Health and Safety amongst those they manage or supervise

Office Manger

The Office Manger is responsible for:

- monitoring and auditing our health and safety procedures and working practices to ensure they are upheld and that we continually strive to make progressive improvements in health and safety
- promoting awareness of health and safety issues throughout the business and ensuring that all workers are aware of our policy and rules and regular consultation is undertaken with workers about issues of health and safety within our workplace
- the maintenance of safety records, investigation of accidents, provision of accident statistics, and keeping a watching brief on safety legislation. Full investigation of accidents will be carried out by this person with a view to the prevention of future occurrences. This person is also the person responsible for ensuring that notifiable occurrences and accidents are reported under RIDDOR
- conducting, maintaining and updating our risk assessments, reviewing our working practices and assessing any risks to the health and safety of our employees (or of visitors to our premises) arising out of the performance of their duties; ensuring that the introduction of any new equipment, substance or working practice into the workplace is properly considered by testing, examination and consultation with staff and establishing sufficient preventative measures to address any identified risks. Risk assessments are carried out regularly or whenever there is a significant change to working practices.
- ensuring our obligations in respect of our COSHH assessment, control and monitoring of hazardous substances are met.
- ensuring that our Fire Risk Assessment is complete and up to date, that fire fighting equipment is inspected and serviced at least annually and records are kept and employees trained to use these properly, that fire drills and inspections take place on a regular basis, that any remedial action istaken to ensure quick and safe evacuation, and that the appropriate number of fire wardens are "in post" and fully trained.
- ensuring that separate risk assessments are done for pregnant workers and any young people who work for us
- ensuring that our obligations in respect of assessment, control and monitoring of the workplace, work equipment, manual handling operations, personal protective equipment and display screen

equipment are met

- ensuring we have an appropriate number of fully trained First Aid personnel and that the First Aid box(es) are checked on a regular basis and restocked where necessary
- ensuring that prompt action is taken regarding any reported damaged or defective equipment
- prompting the regular review and monitoring of this policy

Managers

All Managers will:

- ensure that each new employee is given induction training which includes the precautions and procedures appropriate to his/her specific job and that all new employees are given a copy of our health and safety policy and any safety rules applicable to their jobs; told of the procedures for reporting accidents, made familiar with the routine in case of fire or other emergency that might require evacuation of the premises; shown the location of first aid boxes, fire exits and fire fighting equipment; and are introduced to the first aid personnel, fire wardens and the Office Manger
- ensure that staff reporting to them are only allocated tasks which they are able to carry out in a safe manner, and for which they have been given the appropriate information, instruction, and/or training
- ensure that staff reporting to them follow our safety rules and procedures and that a good level of housekeeping is maintained
- ensure that staff reporting to them are provided with the necessary protective clothing and that this is worn as instructed
- take appropriate action with regard to all reported defects and complaints relating to health and safety
- review the Health and Safety policy periodically and ensure that safety checks have been carried out in his/her area of operation
- ensure all accidents that occur in the workplace are recorded, using the appropriate form and that copies are completed immediately and returned to Office Manger
- ensure that the proper operating practices and procedures to prevent injury are adhered to and encouraged, and also that they themselves set a good example in safe behaviour
- ensure any remote workers have a health and safety checklist and that their equipment and location receive an annual inspection organised by Office Manger
- keep up to date with Health and Safety matters applicable to our operation

All employees and workers

All employees and workers have a responsibility to do everything they can to prevent injury to themselves, their fellow workers and others affected by their actions or omissions at work. They are required to:

- ensure they are aware of all their responsibilities regarding Health and Safety

- follow safe working practices and not remove or alter any safety devices on equipment
- ensure that they are fully trained in the use of all equipment that is relevant to their job
- record all accidents or injuries or "near misses" that occur in the workplace, using our Accident Report form, and seek first aid treatment where appropriate; also report any accidents or injuries to them which occur at customers' or suppliers' sites to the appropriate authority on those premises, as well as to our Office Manger
- inform their manager or Office Manger of any serious or imminent danger and report any shortcomings that they see in the safety arrangements
- seek guidance from their manager if they are in any doubt concerning any Health and Safety issue
- follow our general safety rules and maintain a good system of housekeeping, including keeping workspaces tidy
- inform any visitors with whom they are meeting of any health and safety risks and precautions they must take

Authority to stop work

All Directors have the authority to stop dangerous or illegal practices and if necessary, to require workers to stop work.

Consultation

Effective safety performance will only be achieved by enthusiasm and interest at all levels within the business. We will consult with staff on an individual basis by informing them of any changes to working practices, amendments to our safety procedures or changes in legislation. In addition, all workers are encouraged to raise any issues regarding health and safety with their manager or with the Office Manger.

Safety information

The Health and Safety at Work poster is displayed on the Notice Board.

All employees are provided with a copy of the Health and Safety Policy and rules on joining our business.

All accidents should be recorded in the Accident Book which is kept in the Library

Copies of our risk assessments and COSHH assessment are kept in the Library and will be supplied to staff as appropriate to their jobs.

The fire regulations and evacuation procedures are displayed on the notice Board. All workers are instructed to read these carefully, and to know what to do in the event of a fire.

The First Aid box is kept in the Call Centre Managers office. Workers are requested to inform the Office Manger if any replacement items are needed. The names of our First Aiders are listed _SPECIFY_ LOCATION. Our first aiders are fully trained and should be contacted in the event that an employee requires first aid treatment.

Hazard reporting

All workers must report any potential hazard or unsafe working practice to their manager or the Office Manger. If the hazard or unsafe working practice presents an immediate danger, it should be reported to the most senior person present at the time. This person has the authority to take immediate action to alleviate the danger, including the stopping of any work until further action is taken. Any damaged or defective equipment should be reported to the appropriate manager immediately.

Health and safety rules

A copy of our general health and safety rules is given to each new employee on joining us and is also displayed on the Notice Board. All workers should ensure that they are aware of these and follow them.

Smoking

All our premises are designated no-smoking areas and this must be observed at all times by both employees and visitors. Failure to comply with this request may lead to disciplinary action.

Alcohol and illegal drugs

Alcohol and illegal drugs are not allowed onto our premises. Any employee who is found with these substances or whose ability to work is impaired due to them may be suspended and subject to disciplinary action. We currently do not undertake any routine or random testing for drugs or alcohol.

Pregnant women and those of child bearing age

A separate risk assessment covering pregnant women and those of child bearing age is regularly reviewed by the Office Manger. Once we are informed that an employee is pregnant or is breast-feeding, a specific risk assessment will be undertaken for that individual. All necessary steps will be taken to reduce any risk to the employee or her child.

Manual handling

All reasonable effort is made to limit the need for manual handling within the business. However, where this is necessary, employees will be provided with the necessary information and training on safe handling.

VDU users

Regular risk assessments are carried out for those employees who use VDUs on a regular basis and reasonable measures taken to reduce the risk of repetitive strain injury. In addition, training will be provided on the safe use of the equipment, and an assessment of each workstation undertaken. Regular eyesight tests and the provision of spectacles for VDU use only will be paid for by the business where these are deemed necessary.

Security

All reasonable efforts are made to provide secure premises and to ensure that staff can enter and leave our premises safely. Access to any potentially hazardous areas is limited to authorized persons. When leaving work at the end of a shift, employees are responsible for locking away confidential documents or valuable items. Anyone working on site or alone on our premises should be made aware of our lone workers policy and ensure that they comply with the safety rules relating to them.

Medical checks and health surveillance

If any medical tests are necessary prior to an employee joining, this will be made clear on the offer letter and in the contract. It is a term in all of our employment contracts that employees should undergo a medical examination at any time should we have concerns about their health and feel this to be necessary.

Additional precautions

In addition to our general health and safety rules, separate rules apply to those who are involved in such activities as lifting/handling activities, VDU usage etc. A copy of these will be issued as appropriate and any necessary training provided.

Review of policy

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis (at least annually) and additionally whenever there are relevant changes in legislation or to our working practices.