

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Supporting charities, volunteers and communities

6. Employing and managing people

6.12 Health and safety policy



Your health and safety policy statement is the starting point to managing health and safety in the workplace and sets out how you manage health and safety in your organisation. It is a unique document that shows **who** does what; and **when** and **how** they do it.

If you have five or more employees you will need to have a written health and safety policy statement. This should set out how you manage health and safety in your organisation.

A written statement of the policy and the organisation and arrangements for implementing and monitoring it shows your staff, and anyone else, that hazards have been identified and risks assessed, eliminated or controlled.

When you draw up or review your policy, you should discuss it with your employees.

Example policy

General statement of intent

<Name of organisation> attaches the greatest importance to health and safety matters and undertakes to provide a safe and healthy working environment, in compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and all other relevant regulations. To meet its responsibilities, attention will be paid to the provision and maintenance of:

- Safe premises and systems of work and a healthy working environment.
- Information, instruction and training in safety matters.
- Safe access to and egress from a place of work and procedures to follow in an emergency.

This policy will be kept up to date as legislation changes and as the organisation grows, and will be reviewed annually by the <Management committee>.

Organisation – duties and responsibilities

1. Responsibility for the health and safety policy and practice

There is a shared responsibility between the staff and the <Management committee>.

<Name of organisation>'s Management committee will have the delegated responsibility to ensure that the health and safety policy and practices are implemented.

The day to day responsibility will be with the <Responsible person>, who will report to the <Management committee> at its <quarterly> meetings on any changes to health and safety legislation and guidelines, affecting the policy and practices.

2. Duties of the Management committee

This committee will meet <quarterly>, and review any changes to the health and safety policy and practices.

It will also be the responsibility of the committee to oversee the work of the health & safety staff who will provide a report to the committee meetings.

3. Duty of employees

The *Health and Safety at Work Act* lays down certain duties for all employees.

In particular, staff have a duty to:

- work safely, efficiently and without endangering the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues or anybody else working at or visiting the organisation's premises;
- adhere to all safety procedures laid down by the organisation;
- report all accidents, 'near-miss occurrences' and any other hazardous situations to the <Responsible person>.
- where necessary, wear safety and protective clothing or use protective equipment and safety devices as provided;
- meet any other statutory safety obligations including that laid down in Section 8 of the Act, which states that '*no person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare*';
- ensure they pay regard to the provisions within the Health & Safety policy on a regular visit.

4. Duties of the responsible person

The duties of the <Responsible person> are:

- To report to the <Management committee> on all health & safety issues.
- To liaise with staff on relevant health and safety issues.
- To implement the health and safety policy and practices and review these at least once a year.
- To ensure any assessments are carried out as required.
- To inspect the workplace at least once a year.
- To investigate any potential hazards and dangerous occurrences.
- To make sure that any hazards are repaired or equipment replaced where necessary.
- To investigate any complaints made by employees, committee members, and any person visiting <Name of organisation>'s premises and to forward report to the <Management committee>.
- To advise employees on job safety and accident prevention.
- To carry out fire drills at least once every six months.
- In conjunction with above, to advise employees on job safety and accident prevention.
- To inspect the first aid box at least twice a year and replace missing items.
- To give an induction to all new staff members on fire / emergency procedures.
- To carry out fire risk assessments on an annual basis at all <Name of organisation> properties.

- To organise any Health and safety training requirements for staff.
- To keep any necessary information on health and safety and make it available to any member of staff or committee member who wishes to see it.
- To advise **all** <Name of organisation> staff in all office accommodation on Health and safety issues on an annual basis.

5. Duties of first aiders

- To provide first aid as and when required.
- To provide advice on first aid matters as and when appropriate.

6. Duties of fire wardens

- To assist in the safe evacuation of the buildings.
- To liaise with the facilities advisor on fire evacuation procedures.
- To provide advise of fire evacuation procedures as and when required.

Arrangements

The following are general arrangements for implementation, which are set out alphabetically for ease of reference.

Accidents

Accident reporting - All accidents, no matter how small, must be properly reported. This should be done even if it appears that no injury has been received. Additionally, staff must report 'near misses' or potential hazards to the facilities advisor to ensure situations are investigated and preventative action taken where required. An appropriate Accident Book (BI510) is kept in each <Name of organisation> office and

details should be completed by a suitably trained member of staff.

Under the *Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985* (RIDDOR) the following must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive immediately by the <Responsible person> who will inform <Name of organisation>'s management committee.

- If somebody dies or is seriously injured in an accident.
- If there is a 'dangerous occurrence'.
- If anyone is off work for more than three days as a result of an accident.

Action to be taken in the event of an accident - In the event of a minor accident, assistance should be sought from a first aider/appointed person and details entered in the accident book.

If the accident is such that the resultant injury cannot be dealt with by a first aider, the casualty should immediately attend the Accident and Emergency department of the nearest hospital. If the injury is such that assistance and/or constant attention is required, the first aider / appointed person will send for an ambulance.

If the person is seriously injured and/or unconscious, the ambulance service must be called.

Accident prevention - The prevention of accidents is essential to the efficient operation of the organisation. Safety audits, improved procedures, additional training and anticipation by both managers and employees will all be utilised to contribute to the prevention of accidents.

Accident investigation - All accidents at work should be preventable. The *<Responsible person>* will investigate the circumstances of any accident, or near miss, whereupon a full report will be given. Where possible, steps will be taken to reduce the possibility of a similar accident/incident occurring.

Approved Contractors

Successful contractors will be asked to forward copies of their health and safety policy and where necessary their method statements. Contractors will also be asked to sign *<Name of organisation>*'s 'rules for contractors' and complete a contractors check list.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

<Name of organisation> will eliminate, where possible, the use of hazardous materials on its premises by replacing them with less hazardous materials.

Where this is not possible, *<Name of organisation>* will control the use of these substances by limiting employees' exposure to them or providing protective equipment for employees.

There will be an annual assessment of these substances.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Regulations 1992

Under the above regulation *<Name of organisation>* will recognise its obligations and will ensure that staff will be given advice and training on the use of DSE to minimise any possible ill effects. Any difficulties experienced by a member of staff connected with the use of DSE should be brought to the attention of their line manager and the

<Responsible person>. A risk assessment programme will be undertaken whereupon the Facilities Advisor will carry out an annual assessment for every DSE user.

<Name of organisation> will pay for annual eyesight tests for any DSE user who requests this. A 'user' is defined as someone who habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal work

The *<Responsible person>* should ascertain from the risk assessment which staff members require eyesight tests. If a member of staff is experiencing any problems with their eyesight then they should also bring this to the attention of the *<Responsible person>* who will provide the necessary form for the member of staff to take to their opticians. Where tests identify that an employee requires glasses **solely** as a result of DSE work, *<Name of organisation>* will contribute £50 towards the cost of such special corrective eyewear. Written confirmation of test results will be required from the prescribing optician/optometrist.

Electricity at Work Regulations 1991

<Name of organisation> will ensure that a qualified electrician checks all electrical appliances / hard wiring in compliance with the above regulation, and where a defect is found, they will ensure that it is repaired or removed from use immediately.

Electrical equipment

The *<Responsible person>* will regularly visually inspect all portable equipment, including leads and plugs. At appropriate regular intervals an

approved electrician will test all portable appliances. All staff should report any defects to the *<Responsible person>* with immediate effect. The installation or tampering of any electrical equipment by staff is not permitted. The use of toasters by staff is not permitted within any of *<Name of organisation>*'s properties.

NB. Electrical circuits must never be overloaded. Electric or telephone leads must never be laid across walkways without appropriate safety cable covers.

Emergency evacuation procedures

In the event of an emergency situation, any person at the scene should dial 999 and request the appropriate emergency service(s). The *<Responsible person>* should be informed as soon as possible, so that an early investigation may be undertaken. Where an accident has occurred and is reportable under RIDDOR, no alteration to the site of the accident/emergency other than in the interests of safety should be made until advised to do so by the *<Responsible person>* as an Health and Safety Executive may need to be involved.

Fire Safety and Procedures

A detailed Fire Risk Assessment of each premises will be undertaken by a competent person.

Fire alarm system -The *<Responsible person>* will arrange for the weekly testing of the fire alarm sounders. The fire extinguishers will be tested annually by an approved company, in accordance with agreed procedures and a record of such tests will be kept in the Fire Safety log. The *<Responsible person>* will arrange for monthly visual inspection of all equipment.

Fire prevention - One of the main objectives is effective fire prevention. As part of this, staff must ensure that fire exits are kept clear and free of obstructions at all times. Notices concerning fire exits must not be covered or removed. Staff must make themselves familiar with the nearest fire exit to their office and with the location of fire fighting equipment.

Instruction in the use of fire extinguishers will be provided for staff and fire wardens. Fire procedures to be located adjacent to each piece of fire fighting equipment.

A list of all fire wardens should be posted on relevant notice boards and all staff / tenants should be informed as to who they are. These lists will be periodically updated.

Fire drills will be carried out at six monthly intervals to ensure all staff / tenants are familiar with the procedures and a record kept of such drills in the Fire Safety log.

Action to be taken on discovery of a fire - Immediately sound the fire alarm at the nearest break glass alarm point and ensure the fire services is called.

All staff must immediately respond to the fire alarm. Never assume that it is merely a drill.

Leave the building by the nearest external fire exit.

Assemble at the designated area. Do not leave this area until given permission to do so.

Persons away from their normal workplace and visitors should follow the evacuation procedure as above.

Visitors are the responsibility of the staff member they have come to see.

A 'visual sweep' of the building will be carried out by fire wardens. In the event of fire wardens being absent then a roll call should be carried out by senior management or a nominated person within our other office locations. Only when the 'all clear' has been given should anyone return to the building.

Investigation of fire - The circumstances of any outbreak of fire will be investigated by the <Responsible person>/fire officer of the local fire service and, where possible, steps will be taken to reduce the possibility of a similar outbreak recurring.

First aid

First aid boxes - First aid boxes will be provided and maintained at all locations by a nominated First aider / appointed person. It will be the responsibility of the First aider / appointed person who uses the box to ensure that it is re-stocked. The <Responsible person> will check the contents of the boxes twice a year.

First Aid training - A nucleus of staff at all locations will be trained in first aid. It is essential for anyone providing first aid to observe hygiene guidelines gloves are provided in all first aid boxes and these must be worn at all times when dealing with accidents involving contact with body fluids.

Refresher training will be provided within the time scales specified. Names and locations of first aiders will be clearly displayed on relevant notice boards.

Hazard reporting

All staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report any hazards to the facilities advisor/line manager. Where possible steps will be taken to eliminate the hazard, where this is not possible it should be reduced to the lowest level.

Home working

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places duties on employers to protect the health and safety and welfare of their employees including anybody that works from home the same as they would in an office environment. A formal risk assessment needs to be carried out and the findings recorded. Where possible the hazard needs to be removed altogether however, if this is not possible then steps need to be taken to lower the risk to an acceptable level. Particularly attention needs to be made to the more common hazards, which may be present whilst someone is working from home.

Where staff work regularly at home for all / part of their working week it is <Name of organisation>'s policy to safeguard the individual's health, safety and welfare as far as is reasonably practicable .To help achieve this <Name of organisation> will issue specific homeworking questionnaires which will assist the <Responsible person> to assess any risks to the individual .

Induction

All new members of staff (including temporary staff) will be given a full health and safety / environmental induction on their first day of work. This induction will be carried out where possible by the <Responsible person> or by a delegated person who has

received full instruction on the induction process.

Lone working

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places duties on employers to ensure that their employees are working safely. The Management Of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require risk assessments to be carried out to ensure that significant risks are addressed. It is within these assessments that any specific risk faced by lone workers should be addressed the findings of which should be made known to the relevant line manager by the *<Responsible person>*.

Manual handling

<Name of organisation> will meet its obligations under the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

If it is established through the risk assessment process that manual handling will be an issue for any staff member then the *<Responsible person>* should give basic awareness training in relation to manual handling. Manual handling courses will be offered on a regular basis.

Personal safety

<Name of organisation> has a legal duty to minimise employees' exposure to harm while in work. Personal safety includes more than just the risk of physical violence. Employees may face verbal and/or mental abuse, discrimination, threatening behaviour, bullying even ostracism. Anyone who has concerns regarding their personal safety should discuss this with their line manager/*<Responsible person>* immediately.

Personal panic alarms will be offered to existing staff members periodically and to new staff members at the time of induction.

Pregnant workers

Under the Management of Health and Safety Regulations Regulation 16 *<Name of organisation>* is required to carry out the following:

- A specific risk assessment of the work of new and expectant mothers and the taking of appropriate measures as a result , including variation of working hours or conditions where reasonable to do so and effective against the risks, up to suspension from work where necessary.
- Regulation 17 requires the employer to suspend new and expectant mothers from work 'for as long as necessary' for their health and safety when a medical certificate indicates this should be done. In this instance the employee's rights to alternative work and remuneration are protected by the Employment Rights Act 1996.

There is a duty on the new or expectant mother to notify *<Name of organisation>* in writing of her condition or if she is breastfeeding. If she fails to notify *<Name of organisation>* or if *<Name of organisation>* cannot establish what her condition is then the provisions of regulation 16 and 17 would not apply.

Records

Information relating to accidents must be recorded in the accident books in the various office locations.

Information relating to fire safety must be kept in the fire safety log books in the various office locations.

Information relating to training and occupational health issues will be kept on individual personal files.

Personal files will be kept confidential at all times and in a locked filing cabinet.

Risk Management

The following guidelines have been provided for information and advice only.

Principles - The purpose of a risk assessment is to identify the measures needed to protect employees, trustees, visitors and others who may be affected by the risk.

All staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report any hazards to the facilities advisor. Staff are encouraged to adopt the following protective and preventative measures:

- Where possible, avoid risk altogether.
- Reduce unavoidable risk to a minimum.
- Adapt work practices to minimise adverse effects on health and safety.
- Give priority to measures which protect the whole workplace.

Encourage and promote an active health and safety culture within <Name of organisation>.

Scope - In addition to the formal risk assessments at <Name of organisation> premises which are carried out on an annual basis, all events organised by

<Name of organisation> require a risk assessment as does any <Name of organisation> physical contribution to an event organised by a third party. All risk assessments are to be sent to the <Responsible person> who will maintain a register.

Training

The <Responsible person> will arrange for staff to undertake any health and safety training which may be specific to an individual's work activity. Manual Handling, first aid, fire safety and personal safety awareness training will be offered on a regular basis. The responsibility for implementing this programme will be the <Responsible person>.

Safety of premises

It is <Name of organisation>'s intention to ensure all premises under its control are maintained, so far as is reasonably practical, to be safe and without risk to health and safety and to have adequate access. Regular risk assessments will be taken and recorded. Premises will display legally required notices and certificates.

Security

The importance of building security cannot be overstated.

Staff are to take care of personal belongings, particularly handbags, wallets and purses. <Name of organisation> cannot accept responsibility for these items.

All visitors must report to reception, sign in and be given an identity badge (where applicable). On leaving, all visitors must check out and hand in badge. Where necessary, visitors must stay at reception until greeted by member of staff.

Visitors who are seen not to be wearing badges may be offered assistance by staff, asked to identify themselves and their reason for visiting.

Where the <Responsible person> deems a situation to be a risk to staff and visitors, appropriate action may be taken.

The person(s) who has invited the visitor(s) to attend <Name of organisation> property is/are deemed responsible for the visitor's safety at all times during their visit.

Smoking

In Wales under the *Smoke free premises legislation 2007* smoking is not permitted on <Name of organisation> premises or property, including car parks, yards and the like.

Welfare

Adequate toilet and washing facilities are available and these will be kept to a minimum required standard at all times. The office accommodation areas will be regularly cleaned and kept in good repair and decorative order.

Young Persons

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (reg.19), <Name of organisation> is required to carry out a specific risk

assessment for any young person on site (a young person is defined as someone who is between compulsory school age (16 years) and 18 years old.) <Name of organisation> should ensure that any young person employed or on work experience are protected from any risks to their health and safety, which may result from their lack of experience and awareness of risks or their immaturity. In particular young persons cannot be employed to do work beyond their physical or psychological capacity or which involves:

- harmful exposure to toxic, carcinogenic or other chronic agents of harm to human health
- harmful exposure to radiation
- risks of accidents which, it can be reasonably assumed, cannot be recognised or avoided by young persons because of the lack of experience or training, or because of their insufficient attention to safety
- a risk to health from extreme heat and cold, noise or vibration

Where a young person of school age is to be employed / work experience, <Name of organisation> must first provide the parents or guardians / school of that child with 'comprehensive and relevant information' of the findings of the risk assessment and the preventative/protective measures taken.

Summary

It is <Name of organisation>'s policy to consult employees on health and safety matters.

Any member of staff disregarding the health and safety policy, procedures or requirements, or found to be encouraging others to do so, will be dealt with under the <Name of organisation> disciplinary procedures.

Further information

Environmental Health Offices

Can be contacted for advice if they are your enforcing body. Their telephone number is in your telephone directory under the Local Authority section.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Tel: 08701 545500

www.hse.gov.uk – this site gives you an overview about the HSE, its activities and the information it can provide to you.

www.hsedirect.com – this site has been described as the authoritative source on health and safety legislation and guidance.

www.hsebooks.co.uk – this site gives you access to and facilities to order HSE produced free and priced publications as well as videos. Some of this literature is also available in Welsh.

HSE in conjunction with the Charities Safety Group has produced a document specifically aimed at the voluntary sector. It is entitled *Charity and voluntary workers: a guide to health and safety at work*, ISBN 0 7176 2424 2.

You can obtain copies from HSE Books (Tel: 01787 881165

www.hsebooks.co.uk)

Disclaimer

The information provided in this sheet is intended for guidance only. It is not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon it.

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