

ADVICE NOTE: Health and Safety Advice

Getting hurt at work or becoming ill through work is not a pleasant subject. The reality is that, according to HSE statistics for 2010/2011, 175 people lost their lives at work in Britain. In addition, there were 200,000 reportable injuries, and 1.2 million people suffered from ill health caused or made worse by work.

Local Councils are, like all other employers, under a duty of care to ensure so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees. The obligation includes amongst others, the maintenance of a place of work and a working environment in a condition which is safe and without risks to health. There is also a duty on employees to behave at work so as not to put at risk other employees or members of the public.

Controlling dangers at work is no different from tackling any other task – recognising the problem, knowing enough about it, deciding what to do, putting the solution into practice. If you have five or more employees you **must** have a written health and safety policy statement (an example of a policy is annexed to this note). The policy should set out how your council manages health and safety in the organisation. As the Clerk, you are responsible for carrying out risk assessments – careful examinations of what could cause harm to you or other employees of the Council. Issues you should consider includes slip, trips and falls, asbestos, hazardous substances, display screen equipment, noise, electricity, maintenance and building work, fire and stress. Further advice on risk assessments can be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive. In particular they produce a useful leaflet which can be down loaded from their web site (www.hse.gov.uk) called *Five Steps to Risk Assessment*.

You should also carry out 'one-off' risk assessments for special events such as firework displays, community days, fetes or fairs. The principle is the same: identify the risks and take all possible steps to minimise them.

Does Health and Safety concern me?

- All Councils with five or more employees should have a written health and safety policy
- All Councils have to assess the risks from their work activities
- All Councils with five or more employees have to record the significant findings of their risk assessment
- All Councils have to consult their employees or their employees' safety representatives on health and safety matters
- All Councils have to provide health and safety training for employees

The Law

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (SI 1999/3242) (risk assessment)

Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (SI 1996/1513)

Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (SI 1977/500)

What to do if there's an accident at work

If someone has been hurt or fallen ill at work it's important to take care of them straight away, and make any dangerous conditions safe. First-aid means treating minor injuries at work and giving immediate attention to more serious casualties until medical help is available. Through this initial management of injury or illness suffered at work, lives can be saved and minor injuries prevented from becoming major ones. Reporting accidents and ill health at work is a legal requirement. The enforcing authorities use the information to see the big picture of where injuries, ill health and accidental losses are occurring, and to advise on preventive action.

As an employer your Council must provide first aid equipment and facilities appropriate for the circumstances in your workplace. The minimum would be a suitably stocked first-aid box and a person appointed to take charge of first-aid arrangements. You should consider whether your Council might need to provide more than the minimum. You should record all accidents, however minor in an accident book. More serious accidents should be reported to the relevant enforcing authority (normally your district or unitary authority).

The Law

Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 (SI 1981/917)

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (SI 1005/3163) (RIDDOR)

Contractors

It's easy to overlook contractors especially if your council only uses them occasionally. As Clerk you are responsible for any contractors who do work for your Council. You need to ensure that you have taken reasonable measures to ensure their safety. The issues you should consider include: Does anyone ever have to work on the roof, at a height or on fragile materials? Does anyone have to fault find and repair machinery or equipment when it breaks down? Is there a tank, pit, grave, silo or similar confined space into which someone might go – and would you know if they did? Have you found out whether there is any asbestos in your buildings or plant which could be disturbed during maintenance or alterations? Does the contractor have the right equipment and clothing for the task and have they undergone the necessary training?

The Law

Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007/320)

Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (SI 1998/2307)

Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (SI 1998/2306)

Confined Spaces Regulations 1997 (SI 1997/1713)

Volunteers

Volunteers are in the same position as contractors, except that they will probably have less experience of using the equipment and are less likely to have protective clothing or to have undertaken training. As Clerk, you are responsible for ensuring their health and safety.

How and where you can get more help

The Health and Safety Executive (www.hse.gov.uk) provides lots of advice much of which is free of charge. Some of the most helpful documents are listed below:

'Consulting employees on health and safety: A guide to the law' INDG232 (download for free)

'Consulting workers on health and safety' (2012) L146 (2nd edition) (download for free or £13.95 to buy)

'Health and safety training: What you need to know' INDG345 (download for free or available in packs of 15 for £3.50)

'Essentials of health and safety at work' (download for free or £10.95 to buy)

'Health and safety law poster' (£7.66 or £12.26 to buy)

'Basic advice on first aid at work' (poster, £12.50 to buy)

'First aid at work – The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 approved code of practice and guidance' (download for free or £8.75 to buy)

'Health and safety in construction' (download for free or £10.95 to buy)

Upwood & the Raveleys Parish Council: Health and Safety Policy

Adopted 07 September 2015

1. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- 1.1 Our policy is to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all our employees, and to provide such information, instruction, training and supervision as they need for this purpose.
- 1.2 The allocation of duties for safety matters and the particular arrangements which we will make to implement the policy are set out below.
- 1.3 The policy will be kept up to date, particularly as the council's activities change in nature and size. To ensure this, the policy and the way in which it has operated will be reviewed every year by the council. Although risk assessment is a continuing process, it shall form part of the annual review.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Overall and final responsibility for health and safety in the council and for compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act and Regulations made under the Act and the Occupiers Liability Act is that of the Parish Council of Upwood and the Raveleys.

2.2 The following supervisors are responsible for safety in particular areas:

Supervisor	Area	Any Special Responsibility
Parish Clerk	Office of the Parish Council	N/A
Parish Clerk & Cemetery Officer	Meadow Road Cemetery	N/A

2.3 All employees have the responsibility to co-operate with councillors to achieve a healthy and safe workplace and to take reasonable care of themselves and others.

2.4 Whenever an employee or councillor notices a health or safety problem which they are not able to put right, they must tell the appropriate person named above.

2.5 Consultation between the council and employees is provided by immediate day to day discussion with the parish clerk.

2.6 The Accident Record Book is kept in the parish clerk's office.

3. FIRST AID

3.1 First Aid boxes are located as follows:

Box 1: The office of the parish clerk.

3.2 Appointed persons responsible for boxes are:

Box 1: The parish clerk

4. FIRE SAFETY

The parish council does not have direct responsibility for fire safety. It will comply with the fire safety regulations provided to hirers of Upwood and the Raveleys Village Hall.

5. TRAINING

5.1 The Town Clerk has overall responsibility for training.

9. REPORTING AND RECORDING ACCIDENTS

9.1 Accidents shall be reported to the parish clerk who will record them in the Accidents Record Book.

10. SMOKING

10.1 Smoking is not allowed at any parish council function or activity.

OFFICES

1. HEATING, LIGHTING AND VENTILATION

- a) Temperature must reach a minimum of 60.8 degrees F after the first hour of working time and be maintained between 60.8 degrees F and 68 degrees F throughout the working day.
- b) Free standing heaters must not be used unless specifically authorised. When these are so authorised, they must comply fully with Fire Regulations and the area around them must be kept clear of any paper or other flammable materials, and be sited away from desks and chairs.
- c) Office lighting. Desks should be placed to gain the maximum amount of light. Free-standing desk lights should be avoided or placed so as to minimise the danger of trailing electrical leads.

2. ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

- a) All electrical equipment shall be inspected in accordance with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 (SI 1989/635).
- b) Mains must not be overloaded. It is important that the correct socket outlet and plug top face (where these are available) is used for each item of electrical equipment.
- c) 13 amp plugs can be used for appliances with a loading capacity maximum of 13 amps. Plus fuses must be fitted to suit current load of the equipment being used, e.g. desk lamp, calculator, typewriter: 3 amp fuse; 2-bar heater, kettle: 13 amp fuse. Fuses are available with ratings of 3, 5, 7, 10 and 13 amps. The current load is normally shown on the item of equipment. When in doubt, do not guess, seek qualified advice.
- d) Only electrical equipment provided by the Council should be used and electric points must not be overloaded by means of multi-adaptors. All mains should be switched

off when not in use, and plug tops removed from sockets overnight and at weekends.

- e) Leads from points for various desk uses should not present a hazard by trailing across areas of access. Extension leads are for temporary use only and should not exceed 10 feet in length.
- f) Defective equipment must never be used. Staff should not attempt to effect repairs to electrical equipment, unless competent to do so.

3. FURNITURE, FITTINGS AND EQUIPMENT

- a) Heavy equipment and furniture must not be moved by individuals.
- b) Office equipment whether manually or electrically operated, must not be used by unauthorised, untrained personnel.
- c) Filing cabinets should always have sufficient weight in the bottom drawer to prevent the cabinet from tipping when a full top drawer is opened. Filing cabinet and desk drawers must always be closed immediately after use. Drawer filing cabinets should be inspected at least every six months to ensure correct loading and smoothness of operation, with particular regard to the effectiveness of the drawer stops. Damaged or defective cabinets must not be used.
- d) High shelves should only be reached through the use of steps provided for that purpose. It is dangerous to stand on desks and chairs, particularly those fitted with castors and this should be avoided at all times.

4. FIRE PRECAUTIONS

- a) All staff must be fully conversant with the "Fire Alert" system displayed in the village hall.
- b) Exit corridors, landings and stair cases must be kept clear at all times.
- c) Flammable materials must not be stored, even for a temporary period, in the offices or corridors, unless the storage is in a fire resistant structure such as a metal cupboard or bin, clearly marked "Flammable Materials".

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

1. Only contractors or authorised members of staff, who have received training and instruction in the operation of machinery and equipment may do so.
2. All dangerous moving parts of machinery must be guarded. Guards must not be removed except for the purpose of repair and maintenance. All machinery must comply with statutory regulations for guarding and use.
3. The engines of any motorised equipment must be stopped before any inspection or adjustment is carried out. In the case of electrically operated machines the plug lead must be disconnected.

4. Children must not be allowed to play in an area where machinery is in use. Machinery must not be left unattended where children (or others) may interfere with them.
5. Stones and similar objects must be cleared from the path of equipment to prevent such objects being projected from machinery.
6. Fuel tanks must only be filled in the open, with the engine stopped. No risk of naked flames, or smoking is allowed in the vicinity of a fuel tank or storage can. Fuel may only be stored in a safety can of a type approved, and in a store designated by the Fire Officer.
7. The manufacturer's instructions regarding the safe use of chemicals must be adhered to.
8. Appropriate protective clothing such as gloves and overalls, face masks and boots must be used when operating with machinery and chemicals including herbicides and pesticides.
9. Ladders and stepladders must be in good condition and free from defects and securely positioned at all times when in use.
10. Pathways on Council owned premises shall be inspected annually (not applicable to Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council).