

## Health and Safety Arrangements

These health and safety arrangements detail what the Council will do in practice to achieve the aims set out in the health and safety policy and how we will eliminate or reduce the risks of hazards.

This document will assist managers fulfil their responsibilities set out in the health and safety policy by identifying key elements and providing guidance for practical management of health and safety.

Statutory requirements, Council requirements and industry best practice are identified within the arrangements; however these may not be exhaustive and only provide a generic guide to health and safety. Every service, location and activity is different so must be adapted to the relevant circumstances and additional risks and controls must be considered.

Further information on most health and safety topics can be found on the Council intranet:  
[Staff Handbook – Health and Safety Overview \(Policy, Arrangements and Management System\)](#)  
[Staff Toolkit – Health and Safety \(Information, Guidance, Forms, etc.\)](#)

Carl Free, the Corporate Health and Safety Officer can be contacted for further health and safety advice on: 01206 506579 or [carl.free@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:carl.free@colchester.gov.uk)

## Table of Contents

1 Audit & Review.....	3
3 Employee Consultation .....	4
4 Employee Welfare.....	5
5 Risk Control .....	9
6 Induction and Training .....	11
7 Accident and Incident Reporting and Investigation.....	12
8 Emergency Arrangements.....	13
9 Workplace Safety .....	14
10 Company Vehicles.....	17
11 Hazardous Substances .....	18

# **1 Audit & Review**

## **1.1 Audit**

An audit is a structured and objective process of collecting information in order to assess whether the system for safety management is working effectively.

Audits of services or arrangements are completed quarterly where possible by the Corporate Health and Safety Officer. In addition, quarterly inspections of all council corporate workplaces are completed by Designated Officers or responsible persons. An action plan is then produced and handed to the relevant managers. Reports on audits and inspections are presented at the health and safety committee and within the annual and half yearly health and safety report presented at SMT.

## **1.2 Review**

Reviews are necessary to ensure that policies and procedures are kept up to date. We review these whenever any of the following circumstances occur:

- Changes in legislation
- Changes to work processes
- On the introduction of new equipment
- Where there are changes to personnel
- After an incident

If none of the above occur, then all policies and procedures are reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

### **3 Employee Consultation**

Colchester Borough Council recognises its duties under The Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 and the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977.

It is the policy of Colchester Borough Council to consult with all employees over health and safety matters. We will provide all new employees with a copy of this Health and Safety Policy during their induction and publish it on the staff intranet known as 'COLIN'.

There is a health and safety committee within the Council which sits on a quarterly basis and is attended by staff and union representatives. Information is then disseminated to staff through the Designated Officers for Health and Safety. In addition, committee minutes are published online.

If we intend to make any changes to processes, procedures or equipment that may affect the health and safety of employees and contractors, we will consult with them before doing so.

We operate an open door policy with regards to reporting any concerns or suggestions for improvement and actively encourage this within the Council. Where an employee has made a comment regarding the health and safety of the company, the Health and Safety Officer will investigate and action accordingly.

## **4 Employee Welfare**

### **4.1 Facilities**

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 require that suitable welfare facilities are in place for employees. We provide and maintain the following for our staff:

- Toilets with hand washing facilities that have running hot/warm water
- Canteen areas with rest facilities and a means of preparing food
- Storage facilities for belongings where practicable.
- A supply of wholesome drinking water

Local arrangements are detailed during initial inductions to the Council.

### **4.2 Drug and Alcohol Policy**

We are committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for our staff and others. If staff are prescribed medication that may affect their ability to work safely, they should report this to their Manager. The Council's Drug and Alcohol Policy is under review. Additional information is provided in the Disciplinary Rules and Procedures.

### **4.3 Smoking**

We prohibit smoking in all workplaces including company vehicles. More information is contained in the Smoking Policy. Local arrangements are explained by managers as part of the corporate health and safety induction.

### **4.4 Occupational Stress**

We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stress. We will monitor the workload and working hours of employees to ensure that they do not become overloaded.

We encourage all employees to discuss any issues that are concerning them. The Council has a Stress Policy and all employees are encouraged to report any concerns of stress.

There is information for Managers on COLIN which can help them to identify signs of occupational stress so that they can act accordingly.

The Council runs an Employee Assistance Programme through Workplace Options who offer personal support and advice on wellbeing, family matters, relationships, debt management, workplace issues, consumer rights etc. All employees are encouraged to use this service which is free of charge.

#### **4.5 Violence, Discrimination and Harassment**

Workplace violence is defined as verbal and physical abuse, including threatening behaviour and assault. This can occur amongst staff or between staff and customers. The Council has a Bullying and Harassment Policy.

The Council condemns all forms of discrimination and harassment and will not tolerate such acts. Disciplinary action will be taken should this occur within the workplace and all concerns should be reported immediately to Managers or Supervisors.

Due to the work carried out, we recognise that employees may at times encounter members of the public who act aggressively towards them. Whilst we take precautions and train our staff to diffuse these situations, unfortunately, they can occur. If a potentially violent incident occurs we ask employees to complete our electronic incident report form so that we can monitor and investigate such incidents accordingly. Once investigated, the manager will then ensure that a suitable resolution is implemented in order to support the member of staff concerned.

We also operate a Cautionary Contact Register (CCR) which contains the details of all members of the public who have behaved in a threatening manner towards Council employees. If employees encounter an individual who behaves in such a manner, they are advised to complete a Cautionary Contact Incident Report Form. This form is then reviewed by the CCR panel to decide whether details of the individual concerned should be entered onto the CCR following a process as described in the CCR Policy.

#### **4.6 Lone Working**

Lone working is discouraged wherever possible, but due to the services we carry out, we recognise that this is not always avoidable. As we have many employees who work alone, we operate a lone worker personal monitoring alarm system called 'Skyguard'.

Services with employees who lone work must complete a risk assessment to identify the hazards and risks to lone workers and remove or reduce the risks to a suitable level through appropriate control measures.

Employees are encouraged to be aware, trust their instincts, not ignore warnings, be alert, confident and keep fit, to aid self-protection.

Any physical assault or verbal abuse (above an individual's threshold) to employees must be reported using the online incident reporting form and an investigation carried out by the manager.

As part of the reporting process, the perpetrator can be nominated by the investigating manager for inclusion on the Cautionary Contact Register (CCR).

Further information and guidance is available on the Intranet.

#### **4.7 Personal Protective Equipment**

Where a risk assessment has identified that PPE is necessary as the last resort to further control an identified hazard, this will be provided free of charge to all employees.

PPE supplied must comply with the new PPE Regulation 2016/425, and it should have: the relevant EU Type Examination Certification, a Declaration of Conformity, the user instructions supplied in the correct language, CE marked, or a 'BSI Kitemark' which demonstrates that it was tested to and meets a 'published standard'.

Managers must ensure that suitable PPE is provided to all staff members who require it, and that the person knows how to use and store this correctly as well as the procedure for reporting defects.

Once defects are reported, the Manager must ensure that PPE is repaired or replaced before the employee requires it again.

Employees are reminded to use all PPE as instructed and not to interfere with any provisions that have been made with respect to health and safety.

#### **4.8 Workplace Temperature and Extreme Weather**

During working hours, the temperature in all workplaces inside buildings shall be reasonable, which depends on work activity and the environmental conditions, however should be at least 16°C, or 13°C if much of the work involves rigorous physical effort.

There is no maximum temperature in the workplace, however the thermal environment should satisfy the majority of people in the workplace and provide thermal comfort (generally between 13°C and 30°C with acceptable temperatures for more strenuous work activities concentrated towards the bottom end of the range, and more sedentary activities towards the higher end).

If thermal discomfort is a risk, and employees are complaining and/or reporting illnesses that may be caused by the thermal environment, managers will review and implement appropriate controls to manage the risks.

Upon heatwave alert from Public Health England (temperatures of 30°C during the day and 15°C at night) additional controls must be considered by managers;

- Reschedule work so staff can stay out of the sun 11am to 3pm (ensuring an 11 hour break between working days)
- Provide more frequent rest breaks and introduce shading to rest and working areas or cooler facilities inside
- Provide specialised personal protective equipment designed for use in heat and/or encourage the removal of personal protective equipment when safe to do so or resting to help encourage heat loss
- Remind staff about recognising the early symptoms of heat stress and how to reduce the risk
- Identify staff who are more susceptible to heat stress (due to an illness, condition, pregnancy, or medication)
- Monitor the health of staff at risk and measure heat stress

Outdoor workers could be at risk of too much sunlight which is harmful to skin, it can cause skin damage including sunburn, blistering and skin ageing and in the long term can lead to an increased risk of skin cancer. Sunscreen and guidance will be provided to staff at risk.

Risk Assessments will include controls for the risk and effects of extreme weather to outdoor workers. The Corporate Health and Safety Officer (in liaison with the Resilience Officer and First Call Officer) will further advise managers in situations of widespread or long term extreme weather.



## 5 Risk Control

### 5.1 Risk Assessment

Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires that employers carry out an assessment of reasonably foreseeable risks that may be faced by employees and anyone else affected by their activities.

The Health and Safety Officer has produced a bank of generic risk assessments which Managers and Health and Safety Designated Officers can then use to make specific for particular tasks. These are published on COLIN along with a blank template which can be downloaded and completed as appropriate.

Following this process, appropriate control measures are then put in place to reduce risks as far as reasonably practicable. We apply control measures in line with the generally accepted hierarchy of control:

Eliminate → Reduce → Isolate → Control → PPE → Discipline

COSHH assessments are carried out for all hazardous substances used in the workplace. Assessments of typical hazardous substances are published on COLIN for Managers to use and amend for their needs.

Fire Risk Assessments are carried out for each Council corporate workplace. A copy of each is held centrally and also at the site concerned.

It is our policy to communicate relevant risk assessments to all employees during their initial induction and at regular intervals. We also communicate any changes that have been made following a review.

Unless any changes occur to the processes, machinery used, people carrying out the work, or following an incident, we review our risk assessments on an annual basis to ensure that they remain relevant.

### 5.2 Hot Work Permits

Where work is carried out that creates a source of ignition, a hot work permit is required. This is to give the worker permission to carry out the work providing necessary precautions are taken.

Fire watches are required in line with the permit. Permits should only be cancelled by an authorised person after they are satisfied that all the conditions are met.

The necessary precautions are described on our standard permit which is available on COLIN.

### **5.3 Method Statements**

Where a risk assessment shows that risks can be reduced further if a set way of working is in place, a method statement will be written by the relevant Manager or Health and Safety Designated Officer.

This document sets out a step by step approach to the task and must be followed in order to ensure that a task is carried out in a safe manner.

Examples method statements are available on COLIN as a guide for Managers needing to complete these for the tasks that workers carry out.

## **6 Induction and Training**

### **6.1 Inductions**

All new employees are given a company induction which includes the following:

- Health and safety information;
- Emergencies and fire arrangements;
- Welfare facilities and first aid;
- Accidents and hazard reporting;
- Risk assessments and training;
- Work prohibitions; and
- Personal protective equipment.

### **6.2 Training**

A training matrix is in place which details mandatory health and safety training for all employees and recommended training for specific services/employees.

Mandatory training for is provided by the Health and Safety Officer and recommended training will be provided as decided by the Corporate Health and Safety Officer. Managers are responsible for providing recommended training within their services.

The e-learning portal also provides additional training that employees are encouraged to complete.

### **6.3 Supervision**

All new employees are supervised when they first join the Council. Ongoing supervision is then carried out by Managers and Supervisors as appropriate.

## **7 Accident / Incident Reporting and Investigation**

Once an accident / incident has been reported we will:

- Take prompt emergency action (contact emergency services, first aid, etc.)
- Make the area safe (in some cases this may need to be done first)
- Preserve the scene for investigation

An online Incident Report Form (IRF) will be completed for every accident/incident, near miss, verbal abuse (including threats), physical assault or dangerous occurrence that occurs. This applies to incidents involving employees, volunteers, work experience etc. carrying out Council work and members of the public, contractors, etc. on Council property or land.

We actively encourage all staff to report near misses in the workplace using the IRF or 'near miss report card', so we can investigate and identify potential failings or improvements helping prevent future incidents and injuries.

Incidents will be submitted on the IRF as soon as possible and no more than five days after the incident. If the injury is specified (serious / major) or fatal, then the Corporate Health and Safety Officer will be informed without delay.

Managers will complete a health and safety investigation as soon as possible for all incidents. The investigation effort (time and cost) should be relative to the incident severity. Investigation findings and an action plan where necessary to help prevent reoccurrence will be recorded on the IRF.

The Corporate Health and Safety Officer will notify the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) of reportable incidents under Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). The HSE will be notified without delay and within 10 days of the incident, or within 15 days for an incident resulting in over 7 day incapacitation. Incidents resulting in 3 to 7 incapacitation are recorded for information only.

The appropriate Manager/s, Group Manager and Senior Management Team (SMT) will receive a summary of the incident, investigation findings and actions, and copy of the completed IRF and F2508.

The Corporate Health and Safety Officer will monitor reported incidents to identify trends and concerns, and report to SMT on a regular basis.

## **8 Emergency Arrangements**

### **8.1 Fire Procedures**

The Chief Executive recognises his duties as overall Responsible Person for Colchester Borough Council under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

A fire risk assessment has been carried out for all Council 'Corporate' premises. These are held at each site within the Fire Log Book. We carry out a review of these whenever any significant changes are made to building layouts or processes carried out in them.

All fire protection measures are inspected and serviced in line with regulatory requirements. This is managed at each premises by the Health and Safety Designated Officer or respective Manager for the site.

Our emergency arrangements are made known to our employees during induction and are displayed at conspicuous places throughout each place of work. This information is also communicated to all contractors and visitors to our buildings.

We have designated incident controllers and fire marshalls for each of our sites. These people are trained to carry out this role and we carry out fire drills on a regular basis to ensure that the arrangements remain effective.

### **8.2 First Aid**

Colchester Borough Council recognises its duties under the First Aid Regulations 1981 to supply adequate and appropriate first aid equipment, facilities and people to assist in an emergency. Each place of work has dedicated first aiders. Their details are included in the inductions carried out for all new starters. Should this person change, updated information will be communicated as appropriate.

The Health and Safety Designated Officers for each site are responsible for monitoring and re-stocking first aid supplies. Employees are encouraged to inform them if stocks need replenishing.

## 9 Workplace Safety

We will ensure that all our workplaces (corporate buildings) are safe for our staff and anyone else who may visit our premises or use our services, with safe means of access and egress, and ensure that adequate welfare facilities are provided for people at work.

Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) are responsible for the planned and responsive maintenance and asset management of 'Corporate' buildings, and will act as the 'responsible person' for Legionella and Asbestos management.

We will report matters to CBH management, concerning repairs to or structural defects of these workplaces which may impact health and safety.

Managers named as the 'responsible person' will monitor to ensure suitable health and safety management and statutory inspections are completed within their workplaces.

### 9.1 Electrical Equipment

The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 requires that all portable electrical equipment is checked at regular intervals. We encourage all staff to check electrical equipment before use and to take out of service and report any defective equipment.

We will ensure that all portable electrical equipment is maintained along the following guidelines, as suggested by the Health and Safety Executive:

Equipment	User Check	Formal Visual Inspection	Combined Inspection and Testing
Battery operated items less than 40 volts	No	No	No
Low voltage items such as telephone equipment	No	No	No
Display screens Desk top computers	No	Yes: 2 – 4 years	No if double insulated, otherwise up to 5 years
Photocopiers Fax machines (not hand held & rarely moved)	No	Yes: 2 – 4 years	No if double insulated, otherwise up to 5 years
Class II Double insulated equipment: Fans Table Lamps (not hand held & moved occasionally)	No	Yes: 2 – 4 years	No
Class II Double insulated equipment: Floor Cleaners Hand held & mobile	Yes	Yes: 6 months – 1 year	No
Class I earthed equipment: Kettles Kitchen equipment Irons	Yes	Yes: 6 months – 1 year	Yes, 1 – 2 years
Cables, leads & plugs connected to the above equipment Mains voltage extension leads	Yes	Yes: 6 months – 4 years dependant on the type of	Yes, 1 – 5 years depending on the type

Battery charging equipment		equipment it is connected to	of equipment it is connected to
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## 9.2 Workstations and Display Screen Equipment

All staff classed as DSE users (those who regularly use DSE as a significant part of their normal work - daily, for continuous periods of an hour or more) must complete the DSE Workstation Assessment Form during their induction, with the assistance of their manager to ensure that their desk / workstation is set up correctly. All DSE users should then adopt the same principles when hot desking, taking a few moments to ensure their workstation is correctly set up or adjusting as required.

DSE users are encouraged to take regular breaks from looking at their screen and/or sitting, such as 10 minutes every hour, or micro breaks more regularly.

DSE users who substantially change their workstation (or the way it is used), or suffer from pains or discomfort believed to be caused or made worse by working with display screen equipment, must inform their manager and complete a new DSE Workstation Assessment. This helps ensure their workstation is set up correctly and should highlight the areas of concern.

DSE users suffering from pains or discomfort with a correctly set-up workstation or those with pre-existing medical conditions that may be affected by DSE use, must inform their manager, who should seek assistance from the Corporate Health & Safety Officer and/or Occupational Health. The Corporate Health & Safety Officer may visit the user at their workstation to assess and suggest reasonable adjustments if necessary (such as a monitor stand, taking regular breaks or a specialist chair).

Copies of completed DSE assessments must be kept by the manager for three years for possible future reference.

DSE users are entitled, on request, to receive an eye and eyesight examination. Colchester Borough Council will contribute the full costs of the eye and eyesight examination and up to £45 towards glasses prescribed solely for DSE use.

Further information and guidance is available on the intranet.

## 9.3 Work Equipment

In line with the requirements of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998, all equipment used in the workplace will be selected for its suitability for the tasks required and will be used and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Risk Assessments are completed for equipment used in the workplace by managers.

Users are required to carry out a visual check before using any equipment. Where they have concerns over the safety of the equipment, they are to report this immediately to their Manager or Supervisor and take the equipment out of circulation until it has been assessed.

Where any work equipment is hired, we will ensure that this is accompanied by the relevant inspection records to show that it is safe to use.

#### **9.4 Noise and Vibration**

We recognise that some equipment used by employees creates noise and vibration which needs to be controlled. Employees are given instruction on the correct use of machinery to reduce noise emissions and are provided with the information gained from risk assessments.

Where the risk assessments identify that PPE is required to further reduce risk, we provide employees with the necessary items and will monitor the use. We encourage employees to raise any concerns they may have about using this type of equipment and will investigate this accordingly.

#### **9.5 Work at Height**

Council employees may have to work at height in their activities. They are required to work in accordance with our risk assessments and to use all access equipment in accordance with the training that they have been given.

All access equipment owned by the Council is inspected as required to ensure it is fit for purpose. Anyone using a ladder is required to visually check it for any damage before use. If damage is found they are to take this out of use, label it accordingly and report this to their Manager or Supervisor.

#### **9.6 Manual Handling**

Hazardous manual handling operations must be avoided so far as is reasonably practicable, by redesigning the task to avoid moving the load or by automating or mechanising the process.

If hazardous manual handling operations cannot be avoided, managers must complete a suitable and sufficient risk assessment of the risk of injury, ensuring the task, individual, load and working environment is considered.

The risk of injury must be reduced so far as is reasonably practicable. Where possible, manual handling aids / mechanical assistance must be provided, for example, a sack trolley or hoist. Where this is not reasonably practicable then changes to the task, the load and the working environment are explored.

Staff must: follow training and systems of work in place for their safety, use equipment provided for their safety properly, cooperate on health and safety matters, inform their manager if they identify hazardous handling activities, and take care to make sure their activities do not put others at risk.

Further information and guidance is available on the intranet.

#### **9.7 Housekeeping**

We encourage all employees to maintain a clean working area and to keep all walkways free from belongings and other items. Bins are provided for all rubbish and employees are encouraged to regularly clear their work areas.

We endeavour to keep all external routes clear and to dispose of rubbish in the appropriate manner.



## **10 Company Vehicles**

The Council publishes a Vehicle User's Handbook which incorporates the Driving for Work Policy. In addition, it provides guidance for those employees who operate a Council owned vehicle.

The Council has a Fleet Working Group which meets on a regular basis to discuss the way in which vehicles are operated throughout the Council.

We ensure that all our vehicles are insured, taxed and have a valid MOT where applicable.

It is standard policy for all drivers to have a break of 45 minutes when driving for any 4.5 hour period.

All new staff should provide their driving licence and the Council will ask to see this on an annual basis. Staff are required to present their driving licence should anything change within this interval. Any employees who drive company vehicles should report any situations which may have an effect on their ability to drive, such as the use of medication that causes drowsiness.

## **11 Hazardous Substances**

We recognise our duties under relevant legislation and have the following procedures in place to satisfy the requirements:

### **11.1 Asbestos**

The majority of asbestos within Council owned buildings was removed as part of an initiative in 2004.

Where this has been left in situ, it has undergone an asbestos management survey from which an asbestos register has been developed. A management survey assesses the condition of any remaining asbestos for normal occupation of the building. Any contractors who arrive to carry out work in our buildings are required to read the register which is held at reception for individual premises and sign to confirm that they understand where asbestos is located. Before any work is carried out that affects the fabric of a building, a refurbishment and demolition survey is carried out which identifies the exact location so that it can be dealt with appropriately.

### **11.2 Substances Hazardous to Health**

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health 2002 requires employers to make assessments of the risk to the health and safety of employees when using hazardous substances.

COSHH assessments are carried out for all hazardous substances used in the workplace. COSHH assessment templates are available on COLIN for Managers to use and amend to the specific requirements for their members of staff.

### **11.3 Biological Hazards**

Due to the work carried out by some of our employees, it is likely that at some point they may come into contact with biological hazards. The principal identified hazards being bird droppings, discarded needles, rats and animal faeces. These matters are taken into consideration when risk assessments are carried out by the relevant managers and appropriate personal protective equipment is issued where required.

### **11.4 Legionella**

Legionella is managed in all corporate buildings by Colchester Borough Homes. All buildings have been subject to a water hygiene risk assessment and have a scheme for control in place.