

## 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.

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# **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.

All procedures are audited on an annual basis by the Health and Safety Officer. In addition, they also carry out a quarterly audit of all council premises. An action plan is then produced and handed to the Manager for that building/area. Reports on all audits are presented at the health and safety committee.

## **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 'The Hub'.

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 on The Hub.

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 available within the Human Resources section on The Hub. Additional information is provided in the Disciplinary Rules and Procedures.

### **4.3 Smoking**

The company prohibits smoking in all workplaces including company vehicles and client premises. More information for employees is contained within the Smoking Policy within the Human Resources section on The Hub. Local arrangements are explained during 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 which is published on The Hub and all employees are encouraged to report any concerns of stress.

There is information for Managers on The Hub 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 that is published on The Hub.

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 at management level with the Health and Safety Officer to decide whether details of the individual concerned should be entered onto the CCR following a process as described in the standard for the Cautionary Contact Register CCR.

#### **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 members of staff who work remotely or are mobile, we operate a worker protection scheme, CRISYS.

There is detailed information on how the CRISYS system works and employees are encouraged to use this when working alone. There is also guidance for Managers on how to ensure that staff within their area are safe.

In addition, the Council also has a standard which details the process for working safely when alone. A generic Lone Working risk assessment has also been carried out. This is available on The Hub for Managers to use and make specific for their team.

#### **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.

It is the Manager's responsibility to ensure that PPE is issued to all staff members who require it. They must also ensure that the person knows how to use and store this correctly as well as the procedure for reporting defects.

When defects are reported, the Manager needs to ensure that PPE is repaired or replaced before the employee needs 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.

## 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 Co-ordinators can then use to make specific for particular tasks. These are published on The Hub 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 The Hub for Managers to use and amend for their needs.

Fire Risk Assessments are carried out for each Council owned building. 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 The Hub.



### **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 Co-ordinator.

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 The Hub 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**

Training for Health and Safety Co-ordinators is provided by the Health and Safety Officer.

The e-learning portal on The Hub 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 and Incident Reporting and Investigation**

As required under the Reporting of Incidents and Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (as amended), once an accident has been reported we will:

- Provide first aid if qualified to do so
- Call the emergency services if required
- Ensure that the area is undisturbed to allow an investigation to be carried out

We operate an online reporting system which employees are encouraged to complete as soon as possible after the event and no more than 5 days after its occurrence.

If the injury is serious or fatal, then the HSE will be notified by telephone on: 0845 300 9923.

If the accident results in an over 7 day incapacitation (not including the day of the accident), the Health and Safety Officer will report this to the HSE using the correct form at [www.hse.gov.uk/riddor](http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor)

If the accident results in 3 days absent from work, we will keep a record of this, but are not obliged to report this to the HSE.

The Health and Safety Officer will monitor reported incidents to identify trends and report matters to SMT on a regular basis. Where relevant, we will implement an action plan to make necessary changes to prevent recurrence, review the risk assessments and control measures as appropriate.

We actively encourage all staff to report all near misses in the workplace as this will allow us to investigate and see where improvements can be made before future accidents occur.

## **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- owned 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. If neither occurs, they will be reviewed annually.

All fire protection measures are inspected and serviced in line with regulatory requirements. This is managed at each premises by the Health and Safety Co-ordinator 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 Co-ordinators 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

Colchester Borough Council recognises our duty to ensure that the workplace is safe for our employees and anyone else who may visit our premises or use our services. This includes the equipment that we supply to employees as well as the environment in which they work.

### 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 Battery charging equipment	Yes	Yes: 6 months – 4 years dependant on the type of equipment it is connected to	Yes, 1 – 5 years depending on the type of equipment it is connected to

## **9.2 Workstations and Display Screen Equipment**

As required under the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, we carry out a risk assessment for users of display screen equipment. A copy of this is published on The Hub along with a standard that explains the process.

When any new member of staff starts work at the Council, they are asked to carry out a DSE/Workstation assessment with their Supervisor/ Manager. If there are any further concerns, they are encouraged to discuss these with the Health and Safety Officer.

We encourage all users to take regular breaks, such as 5 minutes every 30 minutes or a 30 second micro break every 10 minutes.

As the Council operates mobile 'hot desk' working, all employees are encouraged to take a few minutes at the start of each day to ensure that they have set their workstation up correctly.

The ongoing management of DSE and workstations is the responsibility of the employee and their Manager. If necessary the matter will be referred to Occupational Health. In addition, where employees have consulted a medical professional who has confirmed that there is a need for a formal assessment and potentially specially made equipment, this matter will be referred to the Health and Safety Officer.

## **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.

Generic risk assessments have been carried out for equipment used in the workplace which are published on The Hub as a guide for Managers to make specific to individual needs.

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**

Employees are encouraged to avoid manual handling wherever possible by using lifting and carrying aids when moving goods. Where manual handling cannot be avoided employees should do this as a two person operation.

A generic manual handling risk assessment has been produced and is published on The Hub for use by Managers to update with the activities of their staff.

#### **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. Assessments of typical hazardous substances are published on The Hub 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.