



# Alfreton Town Council

## Health and Safety Rules

## **1. Introduction**

The success of our health and safety policy depends on the active contribution of all of our employees, elected members (councillors), tenants and contractors: please therefore ensure that not only do you understand and follow all of our safety rules and regulations but that you contribute your own suggestions towards the progressive improvement in health and safety within our premises.

We do not consider that there are any specific hazards particular to our working environment: however, please do not be complacent about safety because you either work in an office or on other council owned properties or grounds. Accidents can happen anywhere but most can be avoided by using a little common sense and taking care.

A summary of our basic safety rules are reproduced below. These rules are intended to act as a continuing reminder to everyone of the essential elements of safe working practice and must be obeyed at all times. If necessary, training in the safe use of equipment will be provided.

## **2. General rules**

Always use tidy and systematic working methods which will ensure jobs are done safely and efficiently. Please dispose of waste materials by placing waste in the appropriate bins and ensuring that these are emptied regularly. All confidential papers must be shredded before discarding; any food waste, such as from lunches, is to be disposed of in a bin which has a plastic liner.

Do not leave both personal or Town Council belongings lying on the floor or standing in or protruding into gangways. Corridors and stairs must be kept clear from obstructions at all times. Safe access to, and exit from, all offices and other areas must be maintained at all times. None of these areas should be used for casual storage purposes.

Take extra care if carrying hot drinks. Use the trays provided and avoid carrying up or down stairs. If something is spilt on the floor, clean it up immediately.

Make sure that trailing telephone cables, electrical cables and flex from items of office equipment do not present a hazard. If they do, the office layout should be rearranged. Tape any trailing wires to the underside of your desk to prevent falling/tripping over them.

Do not leave drawers of cabinets or desks open to be fallen over. Only open one drawer of a filing cabinet at a time. Ensure filing cabinets are loaded evenly to avoid becoming unbalanced, fill the bottom drawer first to prevent the cabinet from tipping and do not overload top drawers.

Never put sharp objects in wastepaper bins; wrap them up, label them clearly and set them aside for special collection. Do not leave drawing pins on the floor. Use separate containers for storing drawing pins and paper clips.

Be careful when using pins and staplers.

Safety notices must clearly indicate the hazard to which they refer and must be kept in good order. Never remove a safety notice, cover it over with other announcements or obstruct it from clear view.

Routinely inspect your work equipment for any faults (eg loose or frayed flexes on electrical equipment, loose screws, broken springs or defective welds on chairs etc) and report any faults in equipment immediately to the Lead Officer. Do not attempt to repair any equipment unless you are qualified, trained and authorised to do so.

Never reach over or climb over equipment. Do not climb on boxes, filing cabinets, chairs etc to reach things -use the proper equipment.

Report any poor floor surfaces and any required repairs to flooring materials to the Lead Officer.

### **3. Electrical equipment**

Do not use equipment on which date on the Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) label has expired. Testing must be carried out by a competent person, must be current and in accordance with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998.

Do not make any adjustments to electrical connections unless specifically authorised to do so. Keep an eye on plugs and leads at your workstation and get them repaired as necessary. Look out for physical damage to the cable, failure of the cord grip at the plug and signs of overheating, or loose connections. Do not ignore obvious tell-tale signs such as faulty switching or intermittent stopping. Report any signs of electrical faults to the Lead Officer.

Do not overload circuits, for example by plugging into adapters unless these are designed with a safety mechanism. Do not use taped joints to connect cables - if cables have to be joined, proper connectors must be used.

Please ensure that you turn off any electrical equipment at your workstation at the socket before unplugging and before cleaning, Do not pull out plugs by pulling on the cable.

Report any requirements for replacement bulbs or other faulty lighting immediately to the Lead Officer.

### **4. Fire prevention**

Fire exits must be kept clear at all times and fire extinguishers must always be easily accessible.

Fire equipment must be kept clear from obstruction and under no circumstances should fire or smoke doors be wedged open.

Please ensure you keep your work area free from risk of fire by removing unwanted waste paper from work areas, by never using highly flammable liquids or solvents carelessly and by avoiding a build up of paper and other flammable materials, especially around any heat source. Paper and other materials should not be placed against radiators or near to/on top of any heaters.

Never obstruct corridors, gangways or stairs.

You should not attempt to use a fire extinguisher unless you have been instructed in its use

and it is possible to do so without any personal risk, otherwise leave the premises and raise the alarm by raising the alarm and ringing 999.

Fire drills will be held at least every six months. The person responsible for organising and monitoring these is the General Maintenance Officer.

Please treat fire drills as though they are the real thing. They are not a funny joke, but are designed to help ensure your safety in an emergency.

## **5. Lifting and handling**

Wherever possible, design your workload to minimise any lifting, for example, by keeping heavy files and breakable items on the middle and lower shelves, keeping your most used files and books closest to your workstation, splitting loads before lifting them, and making use of any trolleys which are available for conveying goods.

Always take care when lifting heavy loads and obtain help if necessary, especially with computers/heavy stationery. When carrying files or boxes, make sure that you can see where you are going, particularly if moving up or down stairs. Always ask a colleague for assistance before attempting to lift heavy objects. Do not over-reach or climb onto chairs or other furniture to reach items stored at height -use properly fixed ladders or steps where necessary.

Always follow these guidelines when:

### **Lifting:**

1. Before lifting the object, check there are no sharp or rough parts sticking out.
2. Place your feet slightly apart to give a comfortable stance.
3. Keeping your feet flat on the floor, squat down, keeping your back straight.
4. Take a firm grip of the object and keeping it as near as possible to the body, stand up using your legs to do the work.
5. If the object feels too heavy, or is awkward to manage on your own, do not attempt to lift it, get assistance.

### **Pulling/pushing:**

Pushing is much easier than pulling.

1. Always remain upright.
2. Keep your spine straight.
3. Put your hands straight out in front of you and grasp the object firmly.
4. Depending on the direction, lean backwards and or forwards, transferring the weight to the most backward or forward foot.
5. Remain upright at all times, keeping your spine straight.

## **6. VDU users**

Special regulations apply to those who habitually use VDUs for a significant part of their normal work. A risk assessment is made of each workstation - ensure that you are aware of this, and that you know how to adjust your screen to minimise glare and flicker.

Ensure that you take regular breaks from looking at your screen by alternating duties such as filing, telephone calls etc with screen work.

If you feel that you are suffering from eye strain at any time, speak to the Lead Officer

We provide free eyesight examinations for workers who use VDUs regularly: full details are available from the Lead Officer.

## **7. Hazardous substances**

A copy of our COSHH assessment is kept By the Lead Officer.

Always read all hazard warning signs and the instruction labels on containers. They should tell you if, for example, a substance is poisonous, easily set on fire, or can cause burns. Before you use a substance, find out what to do if it spills onto your skin or clothes. Wear rubber gloves provided in the kitchen if handling bleach.

Never transfer small quantities of any liquids or substances into unlabelled or wrongly labelled containers. This can be very dangerous for everyone you work with.

## **8. Smoking**

Always observe our "no smoking" policy throughout our premises and in company vehicles. See our Health and Safety policy on smoking for further details.

## **9. Security**

Our main entrance will be locked between the hours of 4.00pm to 8.00am.

Please ensure that all equipment is turned off, safety mechanisms are in place, and that any confidential documents or valuables are locked away before you leave the premises.

## **10. Your health**

No employee will be allowed to work on the premises under the influence of alcohol and/or unprescribed drugs. If you are taking any prescribed medication which is likely to make you feel drowsy or have any other side-effects which may be a risk to your safety, please mention this to the Lead Officer.

Under no circumstances are employees permitted to bring alcoholic drinks or illegal drugs onto our premises. Unless as stated in the Health & Safety Policy.

Should you come to work and be taken ill, please report to the Lead Officer before leaving the premises and he/she will ensure you are able to get home safely.

## **11. Reporting of accidents or hazards**

You should promptly report anything you think is liable to cause an accident, whether in your department or not, to the Lead Officer.

Any accident, no matter how trivial, should be reported to the Lead Officer using an Accident Report form available from the nominated first aider as soon as possible after the event to ensure it is recorded and any necessary remedial action taken.

Any damaged or defective equipment should be reported to the Lead Officer immediately.

All accidents will be notified to the Council at least annually.

## 12. Other Matters

Finally, if you are in doubt about any instructions given to you in the use of equipment, materials, methods etc PLEASE ASK before proceeding. Ensure that you read and understand the above rules, and that you comply with them. Health and safety is too important a subject to be taken lightly - mischievous behaviour or horseplay which endangers others, and failure to follow our rules could endanger lives

Any Employee found to have deliberately and wilfully breached these regulations in a manner which could reasonably be expected to cause damage or unacceptable risk to the staff, elected members, tenants and contractors could be accused of Gross Misconduct.

Elected Members (Councillors) are expected to follow the instructions within this policy and not to entice staff to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within this policy would bring the office of Councillor into disrepute.

Received Copy of Alfreton Town Council Health & Safety Rules

Signature.....

Date.....

Capacity in which received:

- Employee
- Elected Member (councillor)
- Tenant

For office use only

Date and place in either staff file or Member and Tenant file.....