

Health and Safety Policy and Handbook

For use by	All employees, trustees and volunteers of Age UK Norfolk
Purpose	To provide employees trustees and volunteers with advice and guidance on Health and Safety
Key related Documents	Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Lone Working Policy Disciplinary Policy Volunteer Policy Homeworking Policy
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INTRODUCTION

This policy and handbook contains the health and safety information you require to comply with our Health and Safety requirements. After reading it you will be required to sign to confirm that it has been brought to your attention. If you have any queries regarding the contents please do not hesitate to ask your line manager or another manager at Age UK Norfolk

Age UK Norfolk takes its responsibility for health and safety very seriously and is committed to a programme of progressive improvement that requires input from all its employees and volunteers. If you see anything during your work that gives rise to a concern you are obliged by this Policy to report it to your supervisor or manager.

Safety is everyone's responsibility and that includes you.

Definitions: references to '**the organisation**' means Age UK Norfolk

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

The management team of Age UK Norfolk recognise that it has a legal duty of care, protecting the health and safety of its employees, volunteers and others who may be affected by the organisation's activities, and that managing health and safety is a business critical function.

In order to discharge its responsibilities, the management team will:

- bring this Policy to the attention of all employees and volunteers
- carry out and regularly review risk assessments to identify proportionate and pragmatic solutions to reducing risk
- communicate and consult with our employees and volunteers on matters affecting their health and safety
- comply fully with all relevant legal requirements, codes of practice and regulations
- eliminate risks to health and safety, where possible, through selection and design of materials, buildings, facilities, equipment and processes
- encourage employees and volunteers to identify and report hazards so that we can all contribute towards improving safety
- ensure that emergency procedures are in place at all locations
- maintain our premises and provide and maintain safe plant and equipment
- only engage contractors who are able to demonstrate due regard to health & safety matters
- provide adequate resources to control the health and safety risks arising from our work activities
- provide adequate training and ensure that all employees and volunteers are competent in the discharge of their duties.
- provide an organisational structure that defines the responsibilities for health and safety
- provide adequate information, instruction and supervision for employees and volunteers
- regularly monitor performance and revise policies and procedures to pursue a programme of continuous improvement
- where risks cannot be eliminated, they will be minimised by substitution, the use of physical controls or, use of personal protective equipment or, as a last resort, through safe systems of work

This Health and Safety Policy will be reviewed at least annually and revised as necessary to reflect changes to the business activities and any changes to legislation. Any changes to the Policy will be brought to the attention of all employees and volunteers.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY STATEMENT

The management team of Age UK Norfolk recognises that the day-to-day operations can impact both directly and indirectly on the environment. We aim to protect and improve the environment through good management and by adopting best practice wherever possible. We will work to integrate environmental considerations into our business decisions and adopt greener alternatives wherever possible, throughout our operations.

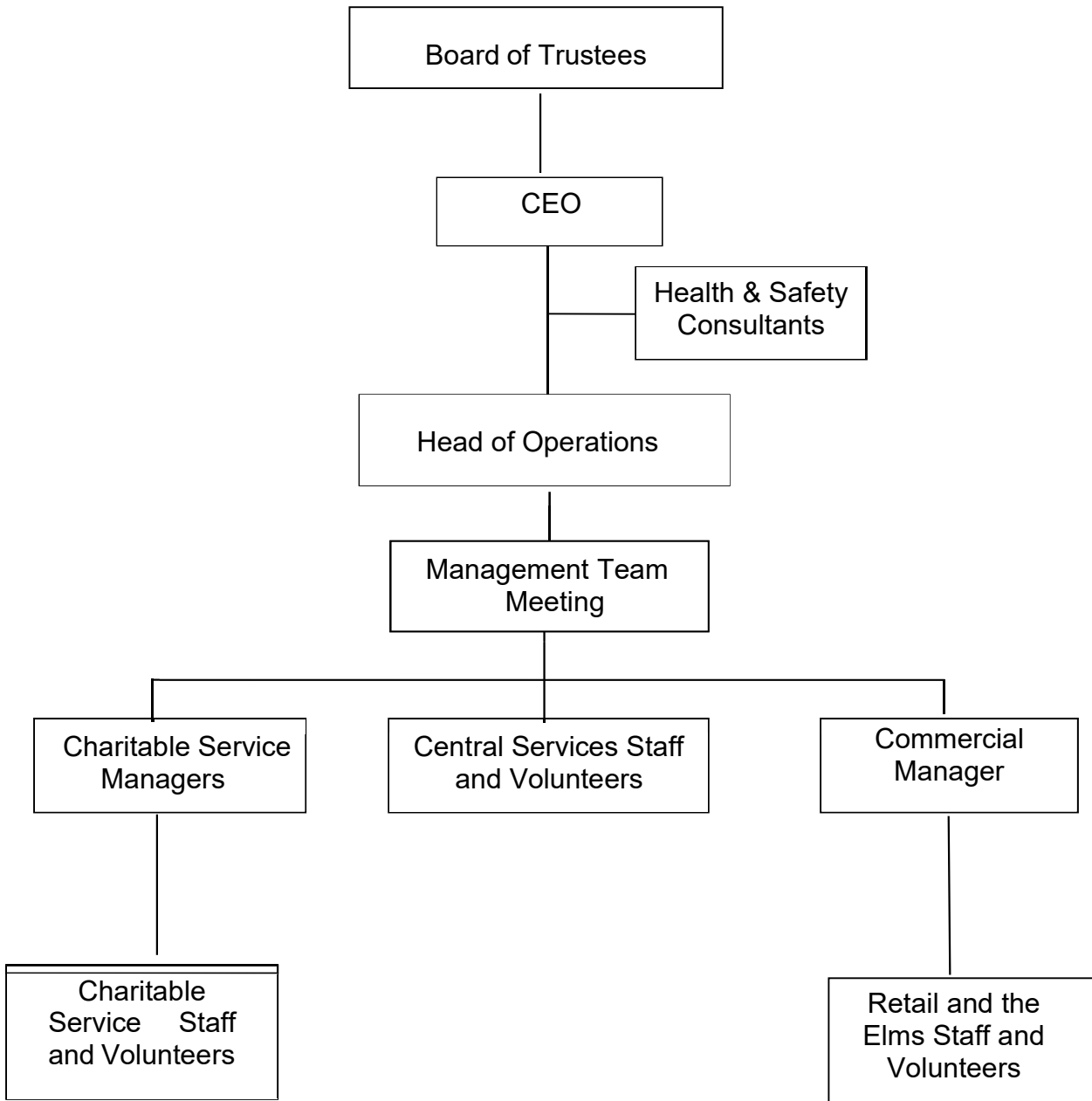
In order to discharge its responsibilities, the management team will:

- bring this Environmental Policy Statement to the attention of all stakeholders
- comply fully with all relevant legal requirements, codes of practice and regulations at International, National and Local levels
- eliminate risks to the environment, where possible, through selection and design of materials, buildings, facilities, equipment and processes
- ensure that emergency procedures are in place at all locations for dealing with environmental issues
- identify and manage environmental risks and hazards
- improve the environmental efficiency of our transport and travel
- involve customers, partners, clients, suppliers and subcontractors in the implementation of our objectives
- minimise waste and increase recycling
- only engage contractors who are able to demonstrate due regard to environmental matters
- prevent pollution to land, air and water
- promote environmentally responsible purchasing
- provide adequate resources to control environmental risks arising from our work activities
- provide suitable training to enable employees and volunteers to deal with their specific areas of environmental control
- reduce the use of water, energy and any other natural resources
- source materials from sustainable supply, when practicable
- where environmental impact cannot be eliminated it will be minimised by substitution, use of physical controls or, as a last resort, through systems of work

This Environmental Policy Statement will be reviewed at least annually and revised as necessary to reflect changes to the business activities and any changes to legislation. Any changes to the Policy will be brought to the attention of all stakeholders.

Age UK Norfolk

Organisational Structure Responsibility for Health and Safety



RESPONSIBILITIES AND RULES

Employee and Volunteers Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all employees and volunteers to co-operate in the implementation of this Health and Safety Policy within their areas of influence. All employees and volunteers have a legal duty to ensure their own safety and the safety of others (for example, colleagues, visitors, contractors) under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Employees and volunteers must therefore:

- take reasonable care of their own safety
- take reasonable care of the safety of others affected by their actions
- observe the safety rules
- comply with the Health and Safety Policy
- conform to all written or verbal instructions given to them to ensure their personal safety and the safety of others
- dress sensibly and safely for their particular working environment or occupation
- conduct themselves in an orderly manner in the workplace and refrain from any antics or pranks
- use all safety equipment and/or protective clothing as directed
- avoid any improvisations of any form which could create an unnecessary risk to their personal safety and the safety of others
- maintain all equipment in good condition and report defects to their supervisor
- report any safety hazard or malfunction of any item of plant or equipment to their supervisor
- report all accidents and near misses to their supervisor whether an injury is sustained or not and complete an accident report form. Form can be obtained from the General Drive. Completed form must be submitted to a member of the management team.
- attend any health and safety training course as requested
- observe all procedures for processes, materials and substances used
- be aware of the fire evacuation procedure and the position of all fire equipment and fire exit routes

Health and Safety Rules

General

- It is the duty of all employees and volunteers to co-operate with management in fulfilling our legal obligations in relation to health and safety.
- Employees and volunteers must not intentionally or recklessly interfere with anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare.
- Employees and volunteers are required to notify to management of any unsafe activity, item or situation.

Working Practices

- Employees and volunteers must not operate any item of plant or equipment unless they have been trained and authorised.
- Employees and volunteers must make full and proper use of all equipment guarding.
- Employees and volunteers must not clean any moving item of plant or equipment.
- Employees and volunteers under the age of 18 years must not operate any item of plant or equipment unless they have received sufficient training or are under adequate supervision.
- Employees and volunteers must not make any repairs or carry out maintenance work of any description unless authorised to do so.
- Employees and volunteers must use all substances, chemicals, liquids etc, in accordance with all written instructions.
- Employees and volunteers must not smoke except in designated areas.

Hazard / Warning Signs and Notices

- Employees and volunteers must comply with all hazard/warning signs and notices displayed on the premises.

Working Conditions / Environment

- Employees and volunteers must make proper use of all equipment and facilities provided to control working conditions/ environment.
- Employees and volunteers must keep stairways, passageways and work areas clear and in a clean and tidy condition.
- Employees and volunteers must dispose of all rubbish, scrap and waste materials within the working area, using the facilities provided.
- Employees and volunteers must clear up any spillage or liquids within the work area in the prescribed manner.

- Employees and volunteers must deposit all waste materials and substances at the correct disposal points and in the prescribed manner.

Protective Clothing and Equipment

- Employees and volunteers must use all items of protective clothing/equipment provided as instructed.
- Employees and volunteers must store and maintain protective clothing/equipment in the approved manner.
- Employees and volunteers must report any damage, loss, fault or unsuitability of protective clothing/equipment to their supervisor.

Fire Precautions

- Employees and volunteers must comply with all laid down emergency procedures.
- Employees and volunteers must not obstruct any fire escape route, fire equipment or fire doors.
- Employees and volunteers must not misuse any firefighting equipment provided.
- Employees and volunteers must report any use of firefighting equipment to their supervisor.

Accidents

- Employees and volunteers must seek immediate medical treatment for work related injuries they sustain by contacting a designated first aider. Upon returning from treatment, they must report the incident to their supervisor.
- Employees and volunteers must ensure that any accident or injury treatment is properly recorded on an Accident Form.
- Employees and volunteers must notify management of any incident which causes damage to property.

Health

- Employees and volunteers must report to management any medical condition or medication which could affect the safety of themselves or others.
- Employees and volunteers must co-operate with management to ensure the implementation of medical and occupational health provisions.

Rules Covering Gross Misconduct

An employee will be liable to summary dismissal if they are found to have acted in any of the following ways:

- a serious or wilful breach

- unauthorised removal or interference with any guard or protective device
- unauthorised operation of any item of plant or equipment
- unauthorised removal of any item of first aid equipment
- wilful damage to, misuse of or interference with any item provided in the interests of Health and Safety or welfare at work
- unauthorised removal or defacing of any label, sign or warning device
- horseplay or practical jokes which could cause an accident or near miss
- making false statements or in any way deliberately interfering with evidence following an accident or dangerous occurrence
- misuse of any item of equipment, utensil, fitting/ fixture, vehicle or electrical equipment
- deliberately disobeying an authorised instruction

Recording, Reporting and Communication

Accident, Incident and Ill-Health Recording, Reporting and Investigation

An **accident** is an unplanned event that causes injury to persons, damage to property or a combination of both.

A **near miss** is an unplanned event that does not cause injury or damage but could do so should it be allowed to reoccur.

A **work-related illness** is a prescribed illness that is obtained by an employee through the course of work or from a non-employee as a result of activities carried out by the organisation.

Reporting

All accidents and near misses must be recorded on the organisation's Accident Form. Accident Forms can be obtained from the organisations General Drive or from your supervisor. Employees and volunteers must ensure that they are aware of the location of the accident form.

Incidents and work-related ill-health need to be reported directly to your Manager or Supervisor.

Communication and Consultation

Our organisation has established effective lines of communication so as to involve and consult our employees and volunteers.

These may include:

- individual conversations
- notice boards
- internal publications
- staff meetings
- Health and Safety meetings



In addition, the organisation will display the 'Health and Safety Law – What You Should Know' poster in a prominent position.

Training for Health and Safety

Training in health and safety is a legal requirement and ensures competent employees and volunteers at all levels within the organisation

All employees and volunteers will receive Health and Safety information during induction

This will cover:

fire procedures, warning systems, actions to be taken on receiving warning, locations of exits/escape routes, evacuation and assembly procedures, first aid/injury reporting procedures, names of first aiders/appointed persons, instruction on any prohibition areas (i.e., no smoking), issue of protective clothing/equipment and its use, instruction under COSHH, mandatory protection areas and thorough instruction applicable to their particular duties at work.

Training needs will be reviewed as a result of job changes, promotion, new activities or new technology, following an accident/incident and performance appraisal. Records of training will be kept for all employees and volunteers.

Employees and volunteers must:

- participate in the induction
- work according to the contents of any information they receive
- ask for clarification of any points they do not fully understand
- not operate hazardous plant or equipment, use hazardous chemicals or carry out any hazardous activity unless they have been appropriately trained and instructed
- Request specific training should they identify a need

Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment involves identifying the hazards present in the workplace or arising out of any work activity, and evaluating the extent of the risks involved to employees, volunteers and others, taking into account existing precautions and their effectiveness. The organisation will arrange for competent people to carry out risk assessments of all activities, substances, equipment, plant or working conditions likely to give rise to a significant risk of injury or ill health.

Employees and volunteers will be advised as to the results of the risk assessment process and the additional control measures to be implemented to reduce risk to an acceptable level.

Work Equipment

The organisation will provide a safe working environment in relation to work equipment safety and ensure all employees and volunteers receive appropriate safety information and training in their work equipment.

Employees and volunteers must

- only use work equipment for which they have received information and training for
- not undertake any maintenance work unless competent and authorised to do so
- not interfere with or remove anything which has been provided for safety reasons
- report defects immediately to their manager/supervisor
- use any personal protective equipment as required

Common Areas of Concern for Health and Safety

Display Screen Equipment

All reasonable steps will be taken by the organisation to secure the health and safety of employees and volunteers who work with display screen equipment.

To achieve this objective the organisation will carry out an assessment of each user's workstation and implement necessary measures to remedy any risks found as a result of the assessment.

Eye Tests and Corrective Appliances

Reimbursement of an eye test and corrective appliances (glasses or contact lenses) where these are required specifically for working with display screen equipment should be claimed via Healthshield.

Health

Employees and volunteers should inform their departmental supervisor/line manager of any disability or health condition which may affect their ability to work using display screen equipment or be affected by working with DSE. In addition, they should also report to their departmental supervisor/line manager any discomfort or health concern believed to be associated with the use of DSE. All health information will be treated confidentially.

Drugs and Alcohol

Alcohol

Employees and volunteers must not drink alcohol on the organisation's premises or the premises of its customers or clients without express permission from a manager.

Any employee or volunteer who is found consuming alcohol on the organisation's premises or the premises of its customers and clients without permission or is found to be intoxicated at work will be referred to HR under the Disciplinary Policy.

Drugs and medication

The possession, use or distribution of drugs for non-medical purposes on the organisation's premises is strictly forbidden.

If you are prescribed drugs by your doctor which may affect your ability to perform your work, you should discuss the issue with your manager or supervisor.

If the organisation suspects there has been a breach of this policy or your work performance or conduct has been impaired through substance abuse, the organisation will refer the matter to HR and this will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy.

Medical Examination

Existing and prospective employees and volunteers may be asked to undergo a medical examination, which will seek to determine whether he/she has taken a controlled drug or has an alcohol abuse problem.

A refusal to give consent to such an examination or a refusal to undergo the screening will result in the immediate withdrawal of any offer made to prospective employees and volunteers. For current Staff the organisation will refer the matter to HR and this will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy.

If a medical examination confirms that you have been positively tested for a controlled drug, or you admit there is a problem, the organisation reserves the right to suspend you from your employment (with pay) to allow the organisation to decide whether to deal with the matter under the terms of the organisation's disciplinary procedure and/or to require you to undergo treatment and rehabilitation.

Right to Search Property

The organisation reserves the right to search you or any of your property held on organisation premises at any time if there are reasonable grounds to believe that this policy is being or has been infringed or for any other reason. If you refuse to comply with these search procedures, your refusal will normally be treated as gross misconduct.

The organisation reserves the right to inform the police of any suspicions it may have with regard to the use of controlled drugs by its employees and volunteers on the organisation's premises.

Electricity

All reasonable steps will be taken to secure the health and safety of employees and volunteers who use, operate or maintain electrical equipment.

Employees and volunteers must:

- visually check electrical equipment for damage before use
- report any defects found to their line manager/supervisor
- not use defective electrical equipment
- not carry out any repair to any electrical item unless qualified to do so



- not bring any electrical item onto the organisation's premises until it has been tested and a record of such a test has been included in the appropriate record
- not leave electric cables in such a position that they will cause a tripping hazard or be subject to mechanical damage
- not carry out any live working unless authorised to do so under a permit-to-work

Environment

All reasonable steps will be taken to protect the environment and all employees and volunteers are expected to cooperate with the organisation in ensuring that:

- any pollution to land, air or water is avoided
- water and energy usage is kept to a minimum
- surplus materials and waste are recycled using the facilities provided
- any incidents of pollution or wastage are reported

Environmental complaints will be treated the same as any other complaint under the Complaints Policy and should be forwarded to complaints@ageuknorfolk.org.uk

Fire

All reasonable steps will be taken to prevent a fire occurring. In the event of fire, the safety of life will override all other considerations, such as saving property and extinguishing the fire.

The organisation does not require persons to attempt to extinguish a fire, but extinguishing action may be taken if it is safe to do so. Immediate evacuation of the building must take place as soon as the evacuate signal is given. All occupants, on evacuation, should report to the pre-determined assembly points.

Re-entry of the building is strictly prohibited until a fire officer or a fire warden declares it is safe to do so.

Employees and volunteers are encouraged to report any concerns regarding fire procedures so the organisation can investigate and take remedial action if necessary.

Infection Control

For some work activities, employees and volunteers may be at risk of infection or of spreading infection. The organisation aims to prevent the spread of infection through work-based activities by adopting suitable control measures.

Employees and volunteers must:

- follow any procedures set out and good hygiene practices
- wear personal protective equipment (PPE) as directed
- follow the most up-to-date risk assessment

Vaccination

Employees and volunteers at risk of infection will where possible be offered vaccinations without charge. Please contact your manager/supervisor to make arrangements.

Staff Illness and Reporting

It is important to remember that infection can also be passed onto people from employees and volunteers. Employees and volunteers should notify their manager if they develop any infectious disease that may affect work or people around them, for example:

- skin infections or exposed areas of infestation
- severe respiratory infection (e.g. pneumonia, TB)
- severe diarrhoea/vomiting
- jaundice
- hepatitis
- chicken pox, measles, mumps, rubella
- HIV
- COVID-19 related symptoms

Managers will need to discuss with the individual suitable controls. In some cases, employees and volunteers may need to be referred to an Occupational Doctor or their GP for advice.

Employees and volunteers should also report any illness or disease which has been contracted through work. In some circumstances if an employee or volunteer member contracts a disease whilst at work, this is reportable under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations). Certain diseases including Leptospirosis, Hepatitis, TB, and Tetanus are specifically required to be reported.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be maintained at all times in relation to an employee or volunteer who is known to have any infectious disease.

No health information will be disclosed without the written consent of the employee and volunteer concerned and any breach of such confidentiality, either inside or outside the organisation, will be regarded as a disciplinary offence and may result in disciplinary action.

Lifting Operations and Equipment

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure lifting operations and equipment are suitably managed with regards to health and safety.

Lifting equipment includes any equipment used at work for lifting or lowering loads, including attachments used for anchoring, fixing or supporting it.

Lifting equipment must only be used if:

- there is a safe working load displayed and the load is within the limit
- it has been examined and tested prior to use and within examination scheme
- there are no obvious signs of defects or damage
- you have received information, instruction and training to do so

Any damage to lifting equipment or accessories should be reported immediately to your manager/ supervisor and equipment taken out of use or signed appropriately.

Manual Handling

To prevent injuries and long-term ill-health from manual handling the organisation will ensure that operations which involve manual handling are eliminated, so far as is reasonably practicable. Where it is not practical the organisation will carry out an assessment to determine what control measures are required to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. In considering the most appropriate controls, an ergonomic approach to designing the manual handling operation will optimise the health, safety and productivity associated with the task.

Information and Training

Adequate information and training will be provided to persons carrying out manual handling activities including details of the approximate weights of loads to be handled and objects with an uneven weight distribution

No employee or volunteer will be required to lift any item that they do not feel confident of doing without risking personal injury.

Employees and volunteers who have a medical condition that may prevent them undertaking a task should notify their Manager/Supervisor beforehand. Should you become injured whilst handling anything then this must be reported to your Manager/Supervisor so it can be suitably investigated.

Lone Working

All employees and volunteers must read and be conversant with the Lone Working Policy and Procedures

Smoking

It is the policy of the organisation that all of its workplaces are smoke-free and that all employees and volunteers have a right to work in a smoke-free environment.

Smoking is prohibited throughout the entire workplace and this includes the use of all artificial smoking aids and private vehicles where a commitment to transport staff, volunteers or clients has been made and expenses will be claimed.



The organisation will ensure that all employees, volunteers and contractors are aware of the no smoking policy.

Appropriate 'no smoking' signs will be clearly displayed at or near the entrances to the premises. Signs will also be displayed in company vehicles that are covered by the law.

Visitors

In the interest of safety and security, the organisation will take the necessary measures to protect employees, volunteers and visitors from any accidents or incidents that may occur during visiting.

Employees and volunteers must ensure their visitors:

- are authorised to enter the premises or are accompanied
- adhere to applicable health and safety instructions and rules during their visit
- provide adequate information to ensure their safety including emergency information
- provide protective clothing and ensure it is worn
- report any accidents / incidents and near misses involving visitors through the accident reporting arrangements

Employees and volunteers aware of people on the premises who may be unauthorised should report these to their manager for action.

Emergency Action

In the event of the fire alarm sounding, all visitors should be escorted to the assembly point by their host. Visitors should not leave the area before notifying the senior person present.

Young Workers

Whilst precautions taken to protect the health and safety of the workforce as a whole will, in many cases, also protect young persons, there are occasions when different and/or additional measures will be necessary due to their lack of experience, knowledge or absence of awareness of potential risks.

A 'young person' is defined as one who is below the age of 18 years.

To ensure the safety of young persons the organisation will:

- carry out and implement young person specific risk assessments
- inform the young persons of any risks associated with their work and the control measures taken to protect them
- provide a copy of the risk assessment to the parent/guardian of any young person below the school leaving age

DETAILED GUIDANCE

Asbestos

Asbestos fibres are present in the environment in Great Britain, so people are exposed to very low levels of fibres. However, a key factor in the risk of developing an asbestos-related disease is the total number of fibres breathed in.

Working on or near damaged asbestos-containing materials or breathing in high levels of asbestos fibres, which may be many hundreds of times that of environmental levels could increase your chances of getting an asbestos-related disease.

When these fibres are inhaled, they can cause serious diseases which are responsible for around 4000 deaths a year. There are three main diseases caused by asbestos: mesothelioma (which is always fatal), lung cancer (almost always fatal) and asbestosis (not always fatal, but it can be very debilitating).

Remember, these diseases will not affect you immediately but later on in life, so there is a need for you to protect yourself now to prevent you contracting an asbestos-related disease in the future.

It is also important to remember that people who smoke and are also exposed to asbestos fibres are at a much greater risk of developing lung cancer.

You are mostly at risk when:

- you are working on an unfamiliar site
- the building you are working on was built before the year 2000
- asbestos-containing materials were not identified before the job was started
- asbestos-containing materials were identified but this information was not passed on by the people in charge to the people doing the work
- you don't know how to recognise and work safely with asbestos
- you know how to work safely with asbestos, but you choose to put yourself at risk by not following proper precautions, perhaps to save time or because no one else is following proper procedures

Remember, as long as the asbestos is not damaged or located somewhere where it can be easily damaged it won't be a risk to you.

- you can't see or smell asbestos fibres in the air
- the effects of asbestos take many years to show up - avoid breathing it in now
- smoking increases the risk many times
- asbestos is only a danger when fibres are made airborne

The organisation will protect employees, volunteers and other persons potentially exposed to asbestos as far as is reasonably practicable. Everyone who needs to know about the presence of asbestos will be alerted. No one will be allowed to start any work that could disturb asbestos unless the correct procedures are to be employed.



If you notice any material that causes you concern or you become aware of any damage to asbestos material, you must report it immediately

to your supervisor/manager. Please be aware of any asbestos materials which are labelled as shown.

What to do if you suspect Asbestos

- DO NOT disturb the material
- check the design specification (**details asbestos procedure**)
- notify the responsible person on the site
- ask to see the site asbestos log / survey report
- DO NOT carry out any drilling or removal of the suspect material until it has been declared safe by an approved specialist or the material has been safely removed by a licensed contractor

How do I identify Asbestos?

There is no clear way of identifying asbestos by just looking at it but the following images do clarify the main areas you are likely to find it and what it looks like.





This list is not exhaustive and is a basic example of products which you may come into contact with.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

There are a range of Hazardous Substances to which the regulations apply. These include:

- those classified and shown with warning label
- substances with Occupational Exposure Limits








- biological agents e.g., Legionella bacteria
- any kind of dust
- substances generated by work processes e.g., various bacteria/viruses from bodily fluids' premises with covered or underground parking that may expose people to vehicle exhaust fumes and some manufacturing and cleaning processes that may give off dusts, vapours or fumes

Chemical Hazard Labelling

Hazardous substances may be defined as being very toxic, toxic, corrosive, harmful, sensitising, irritant, carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic for reproduction.

Classification of hazardous substances is done under Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply) Regulations known as CHIP.

These can be readily identified by their label:

	Harmful / Irritant		Corrosive		Toxic		Flammable
	Oxidising		Explosive		Dangerous to the Environment		

Hazardous substances that are generated by work processes are not as easily identifiable as they do not come conveniently labelled.

Exposure Routes

Exposure to hazardous substances may be via:

- inhalation e.g., dust/ particulate or vapours/ fumes
- contact with eyes or cuts
- absorption through the skin
- ingestion
- injection

Hazard Effects

Effects on health may be short-term or long-term and will generally vary according to levels and duration of exposure. Effects of substances also vary with some having an accumulative effect and some that will have only temporary health effects.

Control Principles

The principles applied to substances to control exposure are:

1. elimination - don't use the substance
2. substitution - a less hazardous substances

3. engineering controls e.g., Local Exhaust Ventilation
4. information, instruction, supervision and training
5. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - . gloves, glasses, overalls

Working with Hazardous Substances

Prior to working:

- ensure you understand the risks of working with any hazardous substances and the controls in place
- ensure you know the location of the material safety data sheets and risk assessments
- ensure the controls specified in the risk assessment, including any items for emergencies are:
 - in place
 - fully operational
 - available
- ensure you understand how to operate or use any control measures safely and have received training prior to starting work

Whilst working

- ensure regular check controls are effective
- clean up any spillages etc
- report any problems or defects immediately to your manager
- report any ill-health or accidents to your manager

Display Screen Equipment (DSE)/Visual Display Unit (VDU)

Some practical tips:

Getting Comfortable

- Adjust your chair and VDU to find the most comfortable position for your work. As a broad guide, your lumbar should be supported by the seat cushion, forearms should be approximately horizontal and your eyes the same height as the top of the VDU.
- Make sure you have enough workspace to take whatever documents or other equipment you need.
- Try different arrangements of keyboard, screen, mouse and documents to find the best arrangement for you. A document holder may help you avoid awkward neck and eye movements
- Arrange your desk and VDU to avoid glare, or bright reflections on the screen. This will be easiest if neither you nor the screen is directly facing windows or bright lights. Adjust curtains or blinds to prevent unwanted light
- Make sure there is space under your desk to move your legs freely. Move any obstacles such as boxes or equipment
- Avoid excess pressure from the edge of your seat on the backs of your legs and knees. A footrest may be helpful, particularly for smaller users



Keying in

- Adjust your keyboard to get a good keying position. A space in front of the keyboard is sometimes helpful for resting the hands and wrists when not keying.
- Try to keep your wrists straight when keying. Keep a soft touch on the keys and don't overstretch your fingers. Good keyboard technique is important.

Using a mouse

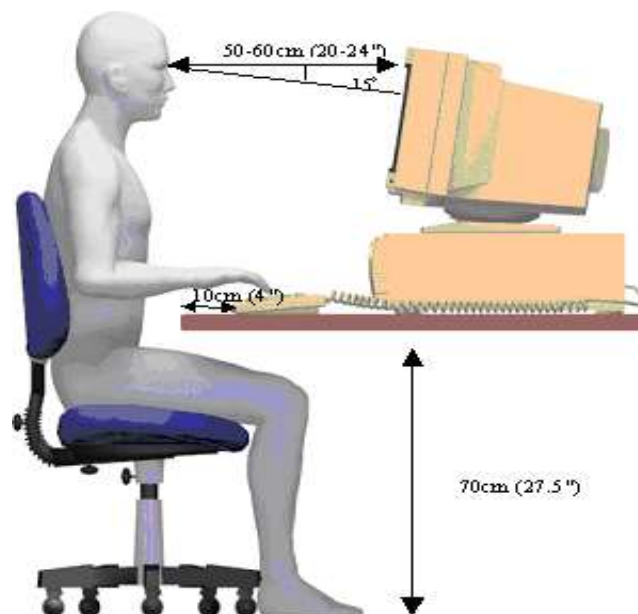
- Position the mouse within easy reach, so it can be used with the wrist straight. Sit upright and close to the desk, so you don't have to work with your mouse arm stretched. Move the keyboard out of the way if it is not being used.
- Support your forearm on the desk, and don't grip the mouse too tightly.
- Rest your fingers lightly on the buttons and do not press them hard.

Reading the screen

- Adjust the brightness and contrast controls on the screen to suit lighting conditions in the room.
- Make sure the screen surface is clean.
- In setting up software, choose options giving text that is large enough to read easily on your screen, when you are sitting in a normal, comfortable working position. Select colours that are easy on the eye (avoid red text on a blue background, or vice-versa).
- Individual characters on the screen should be sharply focused and should not flicker or move. If they do, the VDU may need servicing or adjustment.

Posture and Breaks

- Don't sit in the same position for long periods. Make sure you change your posture as often as practicable. Some movement is desirable but avoid repeated stretching to reach things you need (if this happens a lot, rearrange your workstation).
- Most jobs provide opportunities to take a break from the screen, e.g., to do filing or photocopying. Make use of them. If there are no such natural breaks in your job, your employer should plan for you to have rest breaks. Frequent short breaks are better than fewer long ones.



Driving

Driving is the most dangerous work activity that most people do. Research indicates that around 20 people are killed and 250 seriously injured every week in crashes involving someone who was driving for work purposes. The organisation encourages employees and volunteers to follow the guidance given in order to minimise risk to themselves and other road users.

Vehicle Maintenance and Checks

Company vehicles will be maintained by approved companies and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and schedules.

Employees and volunteers are required to ensure that their vehicles are maintained in accordance with manufacturers recommended service intervals and are in a safe roadworthy and legal condition at all times.

If your vehicle is over 3 years old, it requires an annual MOT test.

Regular checks should be carried out on vehicles by drivers, especially prior to undertaking a long journey.

These should include:

- oil, coolant and brake fluid levels
- power steering fluid level
- screen washer fluid level
- wiper condition and operation
- windscreen condition and cleanliness
- tyre pressure, tread depth and general condition
- all lights are working
- seatbelts
- bodywork

If any faults are found that may affect vehicle safety, the vehicle **MUST NOT** be used until they are remedied.

Vehicle Breakdown

Breaking down can be a stressful and worrying experience, particularly if you are alone or in an unfamiliar place. It can also be hazardous. Following the basic safety guidelines below can help to reduce risk.

On motorway

If at all possible, leave the motorway at next exit or pull into a service station.

If this is not possible then the hard shoulder should be used accordingly:

- use the hard shoulder lane to decelerate before stopping as far to the left as possible, preferably near an emergency telephone

- turn on hazard warning lights along with sidelights if dark or visibility is poor. DO NOT display a red triangle or other warning device
- get out of the car by doors on the verge side. Ensure passengers also vacate the vehicle the same way
- take note of marker posts and contact the emergency services, where possible, using an emergency phone instead of a mobile phone
- if walking along the hard shoulder to a telephone, keep as far away from the traffic as possible
- if you feel at risk from another person, return to your vehicle by the passenger door and lock all doors. Leave the vehicle again as soon as you feel danger has passed
- DO NOT attempt even minor repairs
- once the vehicle is repaired, return to the motorway using the hard shoulder to accelerate to merge fully with traffic in the first lane

If you cannot get your vehicle onto the hard shoulder, switch on the hazard warning lights and only leave your vehicle when you can get safely clear of the carriageway.

You must NEVER use the motorway hard shoulder to:

- stop for a break, to eat or drink or to go to the toilet – use the service stations
- use a mobile telephone
- check a route or map

Off the motorway

If your vehicle breaks down on an ordinary road or carriageway, you should:

- leave your car in as safe place as possible, ideally away from traffic
- switch off the engine
- switch on hazard warning lights along with sidelights if dark or visibility is poor
- display a red triangle, if you have one, on same side of road at least 45 meters (147ft) behind
- find the nearest telephone or use a mobile phone to phone for assistance
- wait for assistance in a safe place, away from your vehicle, keeping clear of the road and traffic
- do not stand between your vehicle and oncoming traffic as you may obscure lights

Tyre Safety

You need good tyres to drive safely as they affect the steering, braking and acceleration of your vehicle. Faulty tyres work less efficiently and don't last as long; they could also mean a heavy fine and penalty points on your licence. It is against the law to have:

- car tyres with tread worn below 1.6mm
- a mix of radial and cross ply tyres
- over or under inflated tyres

tyres with cuts, lump, bulges or tears the wrong sort of tyre fitted

Refer to the manufacturer's handbook for guidance on recommended pressures for your vehicle. Care must be taken when inflating a tyre. Only fill the tyre to the manufacturer's recommended pressure for the type of driving to be undertaken. Do not use tyre inflation devices near to cuts / open wounds etc. Tyre pressures should be checked every 2 weeks and when the tyres are cold (pressures are raised when warm).

Accidents

Any accidents involving physical injury to an employee or volunteer driving on company business (excluding commuting to and from work), or involving a member of the public must be reported through the organisation's accident reporting procedures.

Mobile Phones

Research has shown that the potential for being involved in an accident whilst using a mobile phone can be significantly increased due to the individual concentrating more on the phone conversation than on their immediate surroundings.

The law has now made it illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone when driving, even when you are stopped at traffic lights or in a queue of traffic. This includes making or receiving calls, pictures, text messaging or accessing the internet.

You can also be prosecuted for using a hands-free mobile phone if you fail to have proper control of the vehicle. If you drive carelessly or dangerously when using any phone, the penalties can include disqualification, a large fine and up to two years imprisonment.

Mobile phones should be used in accordance to the organisation's agreed policy when driving on company business.

Driver Fatigue

Research shows that physical fatigue and tiredness in drivers is a significant cause of accidents, particularly on motorways.

Drivers should recognise the signs of fatigue, which are:

- increased yawning
- not remembering the last few minutes



- jerking your head or body from the brink of falling asleep
- losing concentration
- car veering off the road

If drivers feel sleepy they should get off the road into a safe parking area to take a break. In order to keep awake until reaching a suitable parking place, drivers should turn on the radio, open the window or increase the cold air ventilation.

To avoid fatigue, try the following tips:

- plan your journey to include a 15 minute break every 2 hours
- drink coffee or high caffeine drink
- don't start a long trip if already tired
- ensure you have had sufficient sleep if starting early
- avoid driving between midnight and 6am when you are likely to feel sleepy

Driver Eyesight

Drivers should be able to read a number plate at the legal distance of around 20 meters (65 feet), using any corrective appliances such as glasses or contact lenses. The general recommendation is to have eyesight tested every two years. Having an eyesight test will usually identify the majority of common eyesight conditions and also give clues about other less common diseases.

If there is any problem with the employee's or volunteers vision, because of either injury or disease or following an eyesight test, the employee or volunteer must notify their linemanager immediately.

Adverse Weather

The British weather is unpredictable and adverse weather can occur suddenly. If you drive regularly for work you should ensure that you are prepared for the weather conditions. When adverse weather has been forecast, relevant details should be obtained to decide whether it is appropriate to travel.

Alternative methods of travel may be more suitable depending on the weather conditions. Driving in adverse weather should take account of visibility, ability to stop when roads are wet or icy and load etc being carried.

Poor Visibility

When visibility is seriously reduced you should drive at a safe distance with dipped headlights on. You may also use front and rear fog lights (in addition to the headlights) but you must switch them off when visibility improves.

Wet Weather

In wet weather, stopping distances will be at least double those required for stopping on dry roads. This is because your tyres have less grip on the road. In wet weather:

- you should keep well back from the vehicle in front. This will increase your ability to see and plan ahead
- if the steering becomes unresponsive, it probably means that water is preventing the tyres from gripping the road. Ease off the accelerator and slow down gradually
- the rain and spray from vehicles may make it difficult to see and be seen. Use dipped headlights

Flooded roads

Occasionally roads become flooded when there is a high rainfall over a short period of time.

- don't attempt to cross if water seems too deep
- drive slowly in first gear but keep the engine speed high by slipping the clutch to avoid stalling
- avoid the deepest water
- test brakes after driving through floods

Icy and Snowy Weather

Great care should be taken when driving in icy or snowy weather. Vehicle drivers are advised to carry a spade, warm clothing, a warm drink and emergency food in case your vehicle breaks down.

When driving:

- keep well back from the vehicle in front as stopping distances can be ten times greater than on dry roads
- take care when overtaking gritting vehicles
- watch out for snowploughs, which may throw out snow on either side. Do not overtake them unless the lane you intend to use has been cleared
- drive extremely carefully when the roads are icy. Avoid sudden actions as these could cause a skid

Windy Weather

High side vehicles are most affected by windy weather, but a strong gust can also blow a car off course. This can happen on stretches of road exposed to strong cross winds, or when passing bridges or gaps in hedges. In strong winds your vehicle may be affected by turbulence created by large vehicles. Motorcyclists are particularly affected, so keep well back from them when they are overtaking high sided vehicles.

Personal Security

Lone driving forms part of the organisation's policy regarding driving, whether the driver is female or male. Below is a checklist for personal security when driving:

- keep the doors of the vehicle locked, especially when in towns to avoid 'car-jacking'
- keep 'valuables' including briefcases etc. out of sight when driving and on parking, lock whatever is to be left behind in the boot
- when parking, if possible, drivers should use a manned car park and park near the exit. Reversing into parking spaces is also advised to allow drivers to drive off immediately
- keep the vehicle well maintained and with a surplus of fuel for the planned journey or to the next planned rest break or refuelling point
- keep a mobile phone with you to summon help or keep in contact with your manager / office
- avoid eye contact with other drivers and do not get into personal confrontation
- if you believe you are being followed, drive to a police station, if possible, or a crowded place
- always approach the vehicle with the key alarm/sender in hand, and be aware of people around you
- carry a torch (integral with the key if possible) to make locating the lock at night easier
- look in the back seat before entering and lock the car once seated

Alcohol and Drugs

Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (whether prescribed or illegal substances) is against the law. Drugs and alcohol can both seriously impair your ability to drive and the effects may last for a number of hours (or days). There is no safe limit of alcohol and drugs as their affect can be dependent on a number of factors:

- weight
- sex
- age
- metabolism
- amount of food consumed
- amount and type of alcohol consumed

Before driving, employees and volunteers must ensure they are fit to drive and have a level of alcohol below the maximum limit allowed, ideally zero and not under the influence of any drugs that may affect ability to drive (check with your pharmacist / GP for the effects of any prescribed or over the counter drugs).

If driving on company business this should be in accordance with the organisation's policy. Consumption of alcohol whilst driving is prohibited both during company time or whilst driving a company vehicle. The possession, use or distribution of drugs / substances for non-medical purposes is strictly forbidden.

Refuelling of Vehicles

Due to the risks of fire and explosion, when refuelling any vehicle, the following should be adhered to:

- do not use any naked flames whilst on the filling station forecourt
- do not use mobile phones
- do not smoke

Care should also be taken when walking on the forecourt due to the possibility of spilt diesel and petrol being present.

For those using an unfamiliar vehicle check fuel type prior to dispensing. If using diesel, then gloves should be worn when refuelling.

Safe Speed

One of the most significant risks for drivers and road users is inappropriate speed. This includes both exceeding the speed limits and driving within the limits but in unsuitable conditions.

When driving you should observe the following guidance:



- ensure you know the national speed limits for the roads and vehicle you are driving
- plan journeys allowing for poor weather, traffic delays etc
- obey posted speed limit signs at all times (even if late at night / early morning)
- reduce speeds for poor weather, busy roads, unfamiliar roads, high pedestrian activity etc

Further Advice and Information

www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk

Electrical Safety

What are the hazards?

The main hazards are:

- contact with live parts causing shock / burns (normal mains voltage, 230 volts AC, can kill)
- faults which could cause fires
- fire or explosion where electricity could be the source of ignition in a potentially flammable or explosive atmosphere, e.g. in a spray paint booth

Ensure that:

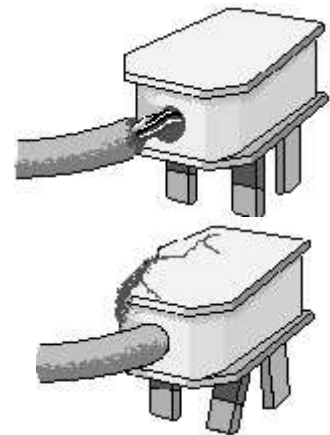
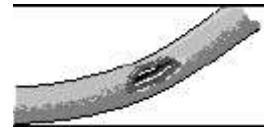
- suspect or faulty equipment is taken out of use, labelled 'DO NOT USE' and kept secure until examined by a competent person
- where possible, equipment, tools and power socket-outlets are switched off before plugging in or unplugging
- equipment is switched off and/or unplugged before cleaning or making adjustments

Visual checks on electrical equipment

1. Inspections and testing of all portable electrical equipment and the fixed electrical installations is the responsibility of the organisation, though the responsibility for undertaking visual checks falls to all employees and volunteers.

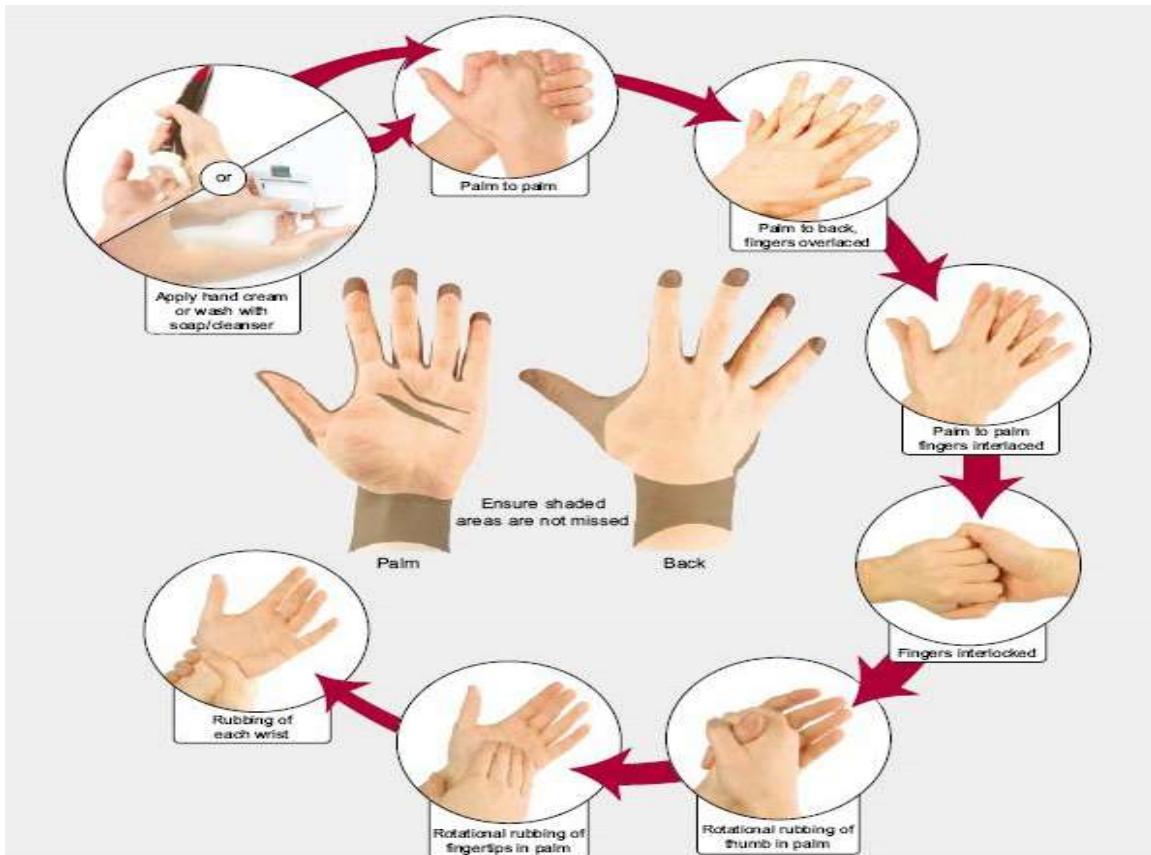
2. Around 95% of all faults or damage can be found by visual checks and this will involve checking:

- for damage to the cable covering, such as cuts and abrasions, apart from light scuffing, or non-standard repairs e.g cable wrapped with electrical tape
- where the cable enters the plug. Internal wires – those covered by the outer sheath may be exposed or the cable may be loose and move within the plug
- for damage to the plug such as cracked casing, bent pins, evidence of overheating i.e. burn marks or discoloration
- for damage to the sockets, switches, etc. e.g., cracked or broken casing
- that equipment has been used in conditions for which it is not suitable, e.g., a wet or dusty workplace or has damage to the outer cover of the equipment or has obvious loose parts or screws
- cables are routed safely, with the one extension lead used per socket. Where there is a risk of tripping over cables and they cannot be re-routed, cable strips must be fitted



Hand Washing

It is important to look after your skin. Wash hands using steps below to remove any contamination from your skin promptly, and remember to thoroughly dry your skin after washing. Using moisturising creams can also help to protect your skin.



Regularly check your skin for dermatitis. Look for signs of dryness, itching and redness. If you think you may have dermatitis, report it to your supervisor.

Lone Working

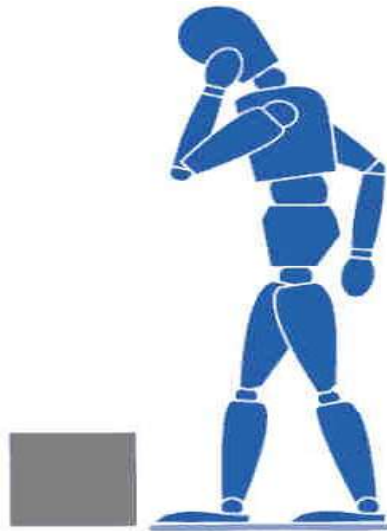
All employees and volunteers are expected to have read, understood and remain up-to-date with Age UK Norfolk's Lone Working policy. If you have not read and understood this policy, then please refer to your supervisor/ manager immediately.

Manual Handling

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD HANDLING TECHNIQUE

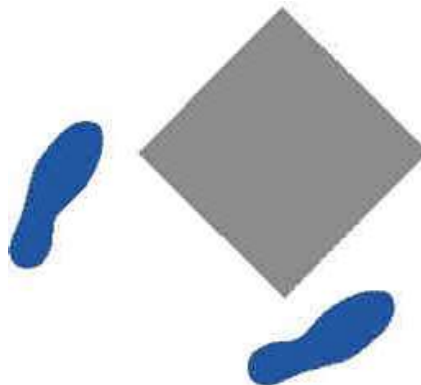
1 Planning

Plan the lift, consider where the load is to be placed, the distances involved, are there any obstructions such as closed doors, is assistance required, can handling aids or equipment be used?



2 Feet

The feet should be positioned a shoulder width apart, one foot ahead of the other in the direction of the intended movement.



3 Knees

Adopt a good posture for handling with the knees bent (not squat – don't kneel), in order to gain the most effective power from the thigh muscles.

4 Back

The back should be straight (not necessarily vertical, 15 - 20° from vertical is alright) keeping the natural curve of the spine. It may help to tuck in the chin. If necessary, lean

forward a little over the load to get a good grip and to keep the centre of gravity over the load.

5 Arms

The arms should be close to the body (nearer the centre of gravity) with the shoulders level and facing the same direction as the hips.



6 Hands

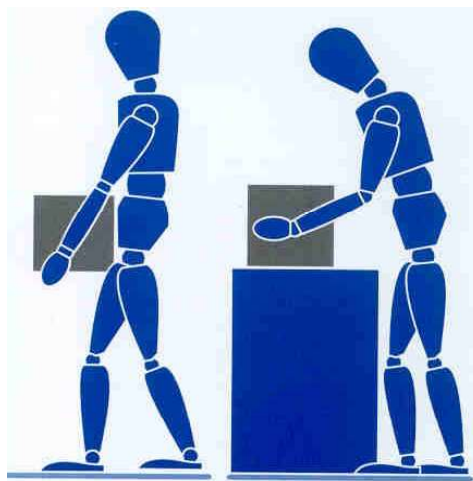
Ensure a firm grip on the load using the roots of the fingers and the palm of the hand. Holding the load this way is also less tiring than keeping the fingers straight.

7 Head

Raise the chin out and up as the lift begins, otherwise this results in round shoulders and a curved spine.

8 Moving the Load

Keep the load as close to the trunk for as long as possible, and where relevant, keep the heaviest side of the load close to the body. Slide the load towards you if required.



Lift smoothly

- Move the feet not the trunk when turning to the side i.e. don't twist.
- Put the load down and then slide the load into the required position if necessary.

9 Team handling

Handling by two or more people may make possible an operation that is beyond the capability of one person or reduce the risk of injury to a solo handler.



Additional difficulties may arise if team members impede each other's vision or movement, or if the load offers insufficient good handholds. This can occur particularly with compact loads which force the handlers to work close together or where the space available for movement is limited.

When lifting loads at or near floor level is unavoidable, it is preferable to use handling techniques which allow the use of relatively strong leg muscles rather than those of the back, provided the load is small enough to be held close to the trunk. In addition, if the task includes lifting to shoulder height, allow the handlers to change hand grip. Bear in mind however, that such techniques impose heavy forces on the knees and hip joints which must carry both the weight of the load and the weight of the rest of the body.

The closeness of the load to the body can also be influenced by foot placement. The elimination of obstacles which need to be reached over or into will permit the handler's feet to be placed beneath or adjacent to the load before beginning the manual handling operation.

Safe Use of Stepladders

This guidance is to help you:

- know when to use a stepladder
- decide how to go about selecting the right sort of stepladder for the particular job
- understand how to use it
- know how to look after it

- take sensible safety precautions

When is a stepladder the most suitable access equipment?

As a guide, **only** use a stepladder:

- in one position for a maximum of 30 minutes
- for 'light work' - they are not suitable for strenuous or heavy work. If a task involves you carrying more than 10 kg (a bucket of something) up the stepladder it will need to be justified by a detailed manual handling assessment
- where a handhold is available on the stepladder
- where you can maintain three points of contact (hands and feet) at the working position

On **stepladders** where a handhold is not practicable you will need to consider whether it is safe to work or not.

Is it a safe place to use a stepladder?

As a guide, **only** use a stepladder:

- on firm ground or spread the load (e.g. use a board)
- on level ground - for **stepladders** refer to the manufacturer's instructions
- on clean, solid surfaces (paving slabs, floors etc). These need to be clean (no oil, moss or leaf litter) and free of loose material (sand, packaging materials etc) so the feet can grip. Shiny floor surfaces can be slippery even without contamination

Never stand stepladders on moveable objects, such as pallets, bricks, stacks of paper or boxes etc. If the stepladder won't reach, you need to use a more suitable type of access equipment.

You should **only** use stepladders:

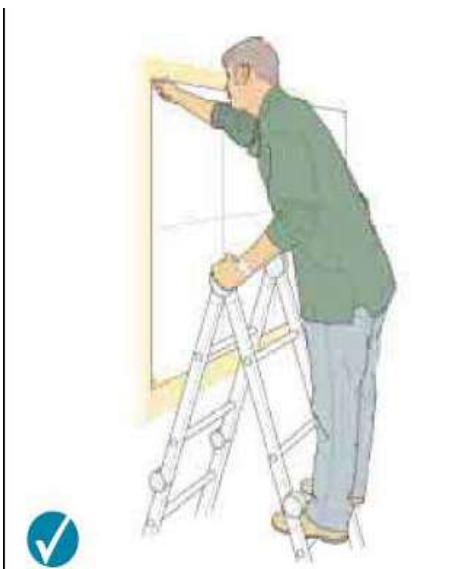
- where they will not be struck by vehicles, by protecting them with suitable barriers or cones
- where they will not be pushed over by other hazards such as doors or windows, by securing doors (not fire exits) and windows where possible. If this is impractical, have a person standing guard at a doorway, or inform building occupants not to open windows until they are told it is safe to do so
- where pedestrians are prevented from walking under them or near them, by using barriers, cones or, as a last resort, a person standing guard at the base

Safety in use – stepladders

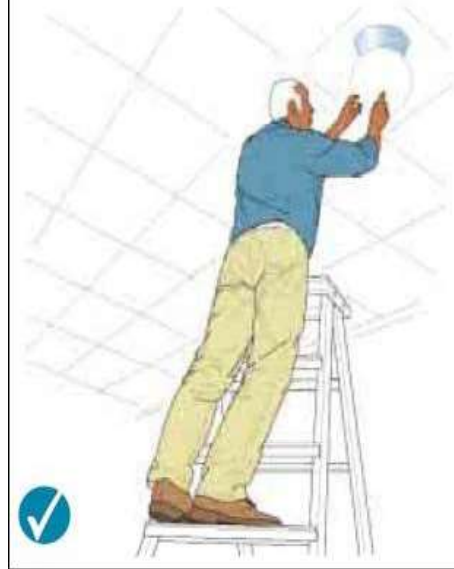
On a stepladder **do not**:

- overload it – you and anything you are carrying should not exceed the highest load stated on the stepladder
- use it in locations where the restraint devices cannot be fully opened. Any locking devices must also be engaged
- use the top two steps of a stepladder, unless a suitable handrail is available on the stepladder

- use the top three steps of swing-back or double-sided stepladders, where a step forms the very top of the stepladder



Correct – two clear rungs. Don't work any higher up this type of stepladder.



Correct – 3 clear rungs, do not work any higher on this type of stepladder

When using stepladders, avoid work that imposes a side loading, such as side-on drilling through solid materials (e.g. bricks or concrete), by having the steps facing the work activity. Where side-on loadings cannot be avoided you should prevent the steps from tipping over, for example by tying the steps to a suitable point, or you should use a more suitable type of access equipment.



Incorrect – steps side on to work activity



Correct – steps facing work activity

Where you cannot maintain a handhold (e.g. putting a box on a shelf), the use of a stepladder will have to be justified by taking into account:

- the height of the task
- a safe handhold still being available on the stepladder
- whether it is light work

- whether it avoids side loading
- whether it avoids overreaching
- whether your feet are fully supported
- whether you can tie the stepladder

Consider tying a **stepladder** where possible and helpful to the task (e.g. side-on working or where two free hands are needed). Stepladders should not be used for access to another level unless they have been designed for this.

Is the stepladder safe to be used?

You must check that the stepladder is in a safe condition before using it (a daily pre-use check). As a guide, **only** use stepladders that:

- have no visible defects
- are suitable for work use - use Class 1 or EN 131 stepladders at work because domestic (Class 3) ones are not normally suitable for use at work
- have been maintained and stored in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions

Also, you must always use a non-conductive stepladder for any necessary live electrical work.

Pre-use checks

Look for obvious visual defects before using a stepladder. Check that:

- all the feet are fitted
- the feet are in good repair (not loose, missing, splitting, excessively worn, secure etc)
- the feet are clean - the feet should be in contact with the ground
- all the screws, bolts and hinges are secure
- on a stepladder, that the "spreaders" on the ladder can be locked into place
- there are no other obvious signs of damage such as cracks

If you find a problem, **DO NOT USE** the stepladder. It should be repaired (if practicable) or destroyed.

Storage

Store step ladders in the closed, vertical position.

The information in this Guidance is based on the HSE leaflet 'Safe use of ladders and step ladders'

Work At Height

Work at Height means work in any place from which a person can fall and includes work at ground level where there is the potential to fall below ground level such as into excavations, manholes, pits etc.

Work at height usually involves the use of specialised work equipment such as:

- scaffolds including fixed and mobile systems
- mobile elevated working platforms
- edge protection and barriers around leading edges
- suspended equipment such as cradles and Boatswain's Chairs
- ladders, crawling ladders, stepladders and trestles

Permanent staircases, raised walkways and high level work areas are NOT deemed to be work at height if they have appropriate balustrades, guard-rails, parapet walls etc. to prevent falls unless work is being done which raises the person sufficiently for them to fall. The potential hazards relating to falls from a height are usually quite obvious and can be found in most work places.



There are many hazardous situations which could result in falls from a height such as:

- unprotected elevated workplaces such as flat roofs, gantries, walkways etc
- fragile surfaces such as pitched roofs, skylights on flat roofs etc
- unprotected openings such as manholes, excavations, shafts, pits etc
- use of unsuitable equipment such as chairs, tables, ladders etc
- use of unstable equipment such as ladders, stepladders, mobile tower etc
- failure to wear or use fall arrest equipment

TYPES OF PROTECTION

Permanent protection

This forms part of the permanent fall protection measures of the building or structure and should be designed to an appropriate standard; preventing personnel falling from a height. In some older buildings this protection maybe below the current standard or the original protection has been altered or destroyed over time making it unsuitable for its intended purpose. If you intend to use existing fall protection (e.g., edge protection around a flat roof) or permanent access arrangements you must:

- check existing arrangements meet relevant fall protection standards (e.g., 950mm high with suitable mid-rail and toe-boards to prevent people and objects falling)
- ensure suitable access exists such as suitable staircase, secure fixed ladder set at the correct angle with suitable handholds or vertical ladder with hoops etc

If the permanent protection is not adequate you will need to consider temporary protection.

Temporary protection

Examples of temporary protection include:

- proprietary edge protection installed around flat roofs and other elevated positions
- conventional scaffolding boarded out with suitable guard-rails and toe-boards
- tower scaffolding properly boarded out with suitable guardrails and toe-boards
- mobile elevated working platforms such as Cherry Pickers, Scissor Lifts etc
- purposely designed platforms properly attached to Forklift trucks
- suspended cradles with suitable guard-rails and toe-boards

Proprietary edge protection

Proprietary edge protection is also regarded as temporary edge protection and should be installed where the design of the roof does not provide suitable permanent edge protection.

The equipment must be properly installed to provide an effective barrier and the top of the guard rail or other similar means of protection must extend at least 950mm above the working surface and any opening or gap must not exceed 470mm. Toe-boards should also be fitted where necessary to prevent material falling off the edge.

Conventional scaffold

All types of conventional scaffolding must be erected or installed by competent and trained personnel. Alterations or modifications must not be made unless authorised by a competent person. All scaffolding must be erected on firm ground or from a suitable structure capable of supporting the total load and fitted with suitable guard rails (950mm high) with an intermediate rail 450mm high and toe-boards to prevent material falling off. Suitable access should also be provided to reach the working platform and those erecting or dismantling the scaffold should wear and use adequate fall arrest equipment.



Tower scaffolds (both static and mobile)

The erection or dismantling of tower scaffolding should only be carried out by trained personnel and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. This type of equipment will provide a safe place of work as long as the following rules are applied. All towers should be erected and used only on firm level surfaces and static towers should be fitted with metal base plates to prevent damage to the standing tubes. The stability of tower scaffolds depend largely on the height to smallest base ratio with the maximum ratios shown below depending on whether it is a static or mobile tower:

- Static tower used internally 4: 1
- Static tower used externally 3.5: 1

- Mobile tower used internally 3.5: 1
- Mobile tower used externally 3: 1

The maximum freestanding height for mobile and static towers is 9.6m and 2m respectively and must conform to the ratios mentioned above. If the scaffold goes over these heights it must be properly secured to a suitable adjacent structure. Any working platform must be fully boarded with adequate guardrails around the platform (top and mid-rail 950 mm and 450mm respectively) with suitable toe-boards.

Ideally access should be an integral staircase inside the tower itself. However if vertical ladders are used they should always be fixed on the narrowest side. Never lean ladders against the outside of a tower in case it topples.

Mobile towers

In addition to the precautions mentioned under tower scaffolds, mobile towers must never be moved with plant, equipment or people on it and should only be moved by pushing or pulling near the base. Wheels must always be locked and where appropriate outriggers fully extended before allowing personnel to use this equipment.



Mobile elevated working platforms (MEWPs)

MEWPs are the collective name for many types of powered working platforms such as Cherry Pickers, Flying Carpets, Scissor Lifts etc. This type of equipment must only be set up and used by properly trained and competent operators in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Outriggers must be fully extended and lowered onto a firm surface to effectively support the equipment, where appropriate, and the equipment visually checked each time before use.



Since the platform is designed to move under power, care must be taken when used next to overhead or adjacent structures to avoid trapping and where necessary fall arrest equipment should be worn and used if there is a risk of the operator falling from the platform.

Platforms on forklift trucks

Only platforms specifically designed for attachment to Forklift trucks must be used for this purpose and the method of securing the platform to the forks and the operation of the platform must always be in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Suspended cradles

Suspended access equipment includes items such as cradles, cages, suspended platforms etc. All such equipment must be specifically designed for its intended purpose and only trained and authorised personnel must use this type of equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Such equipment must be regularly inspected and tested where appropriate.

Temporary protection as part of safe systems of work

This type of solution is usually adopted when the temporary protection mentioned above is not practical. However the options shown below by itself do not provide a safe place of work and therefore additional precautions need to be considered in terms of establishing a safe system of work. This includes providing appropriate training, instruction and effective supervision to make sure the safe system is adhered to. The safe system may include the provision and use of fall arrest equipment to ensure that if the person undertaking the work does fall any possible injuries are minimized.

Temporary protection, which requires a detailed safe system of work, includes:

- leading edge protection
- roof ladders and crawling boards
- lightweight staging (Youngmans Boards)
- Boatswain's chairs
- abseiling equipment
- leading edge protection

These are movable platforms and barriers to protect personnel from falling when installing floors and roofs etc and are normally used with fall arrest equipment. It is extremely important to ensure there is a clearly defined safe system of work of how such equipment will be used in order to minimize the risk of falling and that the application of the system is closely supervised.

Roof ladders / crawling ladders

These are normally used on pitched roofs for limited short duration work such as fixing loose tiles, capping stones, checking hook bolts etc. More involved work on roofs will require scaffolding and suitable edge protection.

Lightweight staging

Such staging as the name suggests is designed for lightweight use and is commonly called Youngman staging or boards (proprietary name). This equipment is normally placed above and properly secured to suitable fixed supports to form a temporary working platform, which is then used for access or light, short duration work.

It is important to ensure when using this type of equipment that it is adequately supported to take the required load and properly secured to prevent accidental displacement. Guardrails and toe-boards should be securely fitted in order to prevent falls and proper thought and consideration given to erecting and dismantling the staging as part of the overall safe system of work.

Podium or platform steps

These types of steps are superior to step ladders since they provide an integral working platform as part of the steps with suitable guardrails or handholds. Some have the guardrail

around all four sides whereas others have the guardrail around three sides allowing the work involving two hands.

The more comprehensive the guardrail system or extensive the handhold the less chance there is falling off and this should be the important criteria when deciding what type of equipment to provide and use.

Nevertheless, it is still important to consider stability when using this type of equipment to prevent accidental toppling.

Boatswain's chair

This type of suspended access must only be used where the work is of short duration and other forms of platform are not reasonably practicable. They must only be used by competent persons as part of a detailed safe system of work and appropriate personal protective equipment must be used.



Abseiling equipment

This equipment is used for light work and inspection tasks where the provision of conventional means of access would be difficult or prohibited. It must only be used by competent persons as part of a detailed safe system of work and appropriate personal protective equipment must be used.

Stepladders

Many of the general rules for the safe use of ladders also apply to step ladders. Stepladders should only be used for low-level work.

Treads, hinges, bolts, screws and fixings must be sound and secure and the retaining cords must be of equal length and fully extended when in use. Stepladders must always be placed on a firm level surface with the ladder facing the work and the user should ensure the top of the ladder is not below waist height.

Trestles

All trestles require a firm, level base and must be fully extended before installing the platform. At least the top third of any folding trestle must be above the working platform and the maximum span should not exceed 3m. Guardrails and toe-boards must be erected around the platform to prevent people falling off.

Ladders

Many people fall from ladders while attempting to work as they are primarily designed to provide suitable access and egress. However, ladders are sometimes used as a working platform if the other options mentioned above are not reasonable practicable and the work is short duration (a maximum of 15 - 30 minutes work at a single position before it is moved).

At least one handhold must be available and used at all times; any work involving the use of both hands at the same time will require a different type of solution such as those mentioned above e.g. platform with guardrails etc.

Fall arrest equipment

This type of equipment is normally used in conjunction with the temporary protection mentioned above or where there is no other practical solution to prevent falls from a height. Such equipment does not prevent falls; instead, it limits the height of the fall provided the equipment is properly installed and used.

Fall arrest equipment comes in various forms such as:

- Full / Chest Harnesses with Lanyards
- Full / Chest Harnesses with Inertia Reels
- Safety Nets
- Full / Chest Harnesses with Lanyard or Inertia Reel

This equipment is only effective if suitable anchor points have been provided to connect the lanyard or Inertia Reel since without the opportunity to connect the equipment the user will simply fall while wearing the equipment. It is therefore essential when selecting this option to ensure that full and proper account is taken of how the equipment will be connected to the structure using anchor bolts, running lines, manlock devices etc.



It is also important to ensure that any anchor point is kept as high as possible and certainly above waist height to prevent the wearer falling any further than is necessary. Anyone expected to wear this equipment must be properly trained in its use and adequate provision made to check the equipment at regular intervals and to store it safely.

Fall restraint equipment must be provided and used when working on equipment that can move, such as window-cleaning cradles. It should, where practicable, be attached to an auxiliary safety rope rather than a main suspension rope or cradle since this will prevent falls in event of failure of the cradle. Fall restraint equipment must be thoroughly inspected both before and after each use particularly the condition of straps, webbing, stitching and ropes.

Safety nets

Nets do not prevent falls but will restrict the fall height minimizing injuries. Nets are normally used in semi-static situations where most of the work is concentrated in one area since the erection of the net itself produces its own risks.

It is also important to ensure the net is fixed in a position close to the work in order to minimize as far as possible the height of the fall and must be wide enough to catch anyone falling into it.

Inspection of protection

Inspection of the protective measures set up to ensure the safety of those affected during the working at height operation is an integral part of the effective management of the system.

Inspections should take place:

- before the equipment or system is used
- during the use of the equipment or system

- after extraordinary incidents, accidents or adverse conditions
- at intervals not exceeding 7 days in the case of scaffolds and other working platforms (including tower scaffolds and MEWPs) used for construction work and from which a person could fall more than 2 metres

Other aspects to consider when working at height are:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - where there are additional risks such as to the head, feet and hands suit PPE should be provided and worn e.g. safety helmet, foot wear, gloves etc
- falling objects - to prevent falling objects netting, barriers and toe-boards should be used as well as closing off areas below the work. All tools and loose material should be kept in suitable shoulder bags or containers
- fragile surfaces – if anyone does work on or near a fragile surface; suitable platforms, coverings, guard rails and the like are provided and used to minimise the risk
- waste removal - to avoid people or material falling consideration should be given to installing purposely designed waste chutes to make handling easier and safer
- emergencies – consider the method of egress in an emergency such as a fire or the need to rescue someone who is ill or falls while wearing a harness etc
- material handling - consider how to best to transport material at a height using suitable mechanical aids to reduce manual handling. It is also important to think about safe storage to prevent it accidentally falling particularly in windy conditions
- mechanical handling - hiring and siting of lifting equipment is extremely important such as cranes in order to avoid the equipment striking or knocking personnel off of working platforms and ladders
- transport - the movement of vehicles and other forms of transport can inadvertently strike working platforms such as ladders, towers etc. and therefore it is important to control any traffic in the area where work at height is being undertaken
- weather conditions - can have a significant effect on safe working at height and therefore steps must be taken to ensure the safe system of work takes fully and proper account of the effect this may have on those undertaking the work

Personal Protective Equipment

The organisation provides personal protective equipment (PPE) when the risk presented by a work activity cannot be eliminated or adequately controlled by other means. When it is provided, it is because health and safety hazards have been identified that require the use of PPE and it is therefore necessary to use it in order to reduce risks to a minimum.

Employees and volunteers provided with PPE must:

- wear the PPE as instructed or where indicated by signage



- maintain it in good condition
- report any defects to your supervisor/manager
- ensure the PPE fits correctly, is comfortable and fully adjusted