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# HEALTH & SAFETY HANDBOOK



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Position: Town Clerk

Signature: .....

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## Introduction

This handbook supplements our health & safety management system documentation. It outlines the responsibilities and arrangements for ensuring your health and safety at work. The aim is to help you work safely and avoid accidents by providing a framework within which a safe method of work can be established. It is therefore important that you read the advice given here before you start work with us.

Accident prevention is mainly common sense, tidiness and forethought, but safety within our organisation does require constant vigilance and care. Remember that a little planning and thought can save a great deal of trouble and regret. Always seek expert advice when in doubt.

You are required to sign and return the declaration issued with this handbook stating that you have read the handbook and are satisfied as to your and the organisation's responsibilities with respect to health and safety.

This handbook will be reviewed annually and supplementary information distributed to all employees. Suggestions for inclusion, corrections and revisions for future editions of this Handbook should be sent to your line manager.

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# **SECTION 1**

# **HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY**



## Tewkesbury Town Council Health and Safety Policy Statement 2022

Tewkesbury Town Council regards the promotion of occupational health, safety and environmental awareness as a key responsibility for all council members and employees. Tewkesbury Town Council recognises and accepts its statutory responsibilities as an employer and will strive to secure the health, safety and welfare of its employees and stakeholders affected by its activities (for example, members of the public, service users, visitors, contractors, etc.).

It is the Tewkesbury Town Council's policy to take all reasonably practicable measures to prevent personal injury, occupational disease and damage to property.

Tewkesbury Town Council will do this by assessing the possible risks and establishing suitable and adequate risk control measures with the assistance of DWSafetyUK. (Health and safety consultants)

Tewkesbury Town Council is committed to complying with all relevant health and safety legislation. Tewkesbury Town Council does however, recognise that compliance with legislation is only a minimum requirement, and will therefore strive to improve and achieve higher standards.

The management of health and safety is regarded as an integral part of Tewkesbury Town Council's business activities with health and safety objectives regarded as being of equal importance to other corporate objectives.

Tewkesbury Town Council will monitor health and safety performance to verify that the Council's Health and Safety Policy is being implemented and health and safety standards are being maintained and progressively improved.

The Town Council is committed to the development of a climate in which a positive health safety and wellbeing culture is developed and maintained. The Town Council will achieve this by:

- Maintaining effective systems of communication on health, safety and wellbeing matters;
- Ensuring that there is sufficient competency within the organisation in terms of health and safety support and advice and ensuring that all employees and elected members are provided with sufficient information, instruction and training to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities as defined by this policy and supporting documents;
- Establishing and maintaining control by setting clear health, safety and welfare objectives and providing strong leadership;
- Securing co-operation between stakeholders, individuals, trade unions, employee safety representatives and working groups.

Tewkesbury Town Council accepts the following responsibilities:

- To provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions taking into account statutory requirements.
- To provide and monitor training which enables employees to perform their work safely and efficiently.
- To provide and maintain all necessary safety devices and protective equipment.
- To provide instruction as to when and how to use safety devices and protective equipment and to monitor ongoing appropriate use.
- To meet the obligations of health and safety in the workplace through consultation with external health and safety regulatory bodies and with employees.

Tewkesbury Town Council's employees have the following responsibilities:

- To work safely and efficiently.
- To meet statutory obligations relating to health and safety in the workplace.
- To report promptly all accidents and incidents including those where no injury to people has occurred.
- To follow the Tewkesbury Town Council's working procedures.
- To assist in the investigation of accidents so that measures may be taken to prevent a recurrence.
- In the absence of the Clerk or when necessary responsibility will be delegated to another member of staff.

The Clerk to the Council is responsible for reporting notifiable accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the enforcing authority, as required by the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)

At each of Tewkesbury Town Council location, the most senior person is fully responsible for maintaining safe and healthy working conditions. In particular, he or she will establish the systematic management of safety and health and any specific arrangements applicable at that location for the implementation of this policy statement.

Name: Debbie Hill

Signature: D. M. Hill

Date: 16/02/2022

Review date: February 2025

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# **SECTION 2**

# **HEALTH & SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES**

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## Responsibility and Accountability

All employees, at all levels and functions, are responsible for understanding and carrying out the responsibilities and duties outlined in this procedure.

To enable the allocation of overall responsibility, accountability and authority for the development, implementation and performance of our health and safety management system and the achievement of the relevant health and safety objectives a structure will be established to;

- ensure that health and safety is a line management responsibility which is known and accepted at all levels;
- define and communicate to the employees the responsibility, accountability and authority of persons who identify, evaluate or control health and safety hazards and risks and promote health;
- provide effective supervision, as necessary, to ensure the protection of employee's health and safety;
- promote co-operation and communication among employees, to achieve compliance with the health and safety requirements of national laws and regulations;
- fulfil the principles of health and safety management systems contained in relevant national guidelines, tailored guidelines or voluntary programmes, as appropriate;
- establish and implement a clear health and safety policy and measurable objectives;
- establish effective arrangements to identify and eliminate or control work-related hazards and risks, and promote health at work;
- ensure the participation of employees in the implementation of the health and safety policy.

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## Management Responsibilities

The ultimate responsibility for health and safety rests with the highest level of management, the Councillors. However, responsibilities will be delegated to all levels, identifying those individuals with particular safety responsibilities for their areas of control.

These functions will also include ensuring that:

- A representative is appointed to ensure that the health and safety management system is established, implemented and maintained in accordance with relevant health and safety standards;
- An organisation chart is prepared identifying the management structure;
- Policies are developed and communicated throughout the organisation;
- An understanding and awareness of the system is promoted throughout the organisation;
- Performance of the management system and any need for improvement is communicated to management;
- Sufficient resources exist to manage the daily operation within the organisation;
- Job descriptions are prepared clearly outlining the key tasks to be managed by the individual;
- All employees are made aware of their responsibilities and these can only be delegated to those with suitable training and competence;

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## **Employee Responsibilities**

All our employees, regardless of position or occupation, have general duties under Sections 7 and 8 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act and other relevant legislation.

Employee duties will be clearly identified, and will be specific in their nature and clearly understood by individuals.

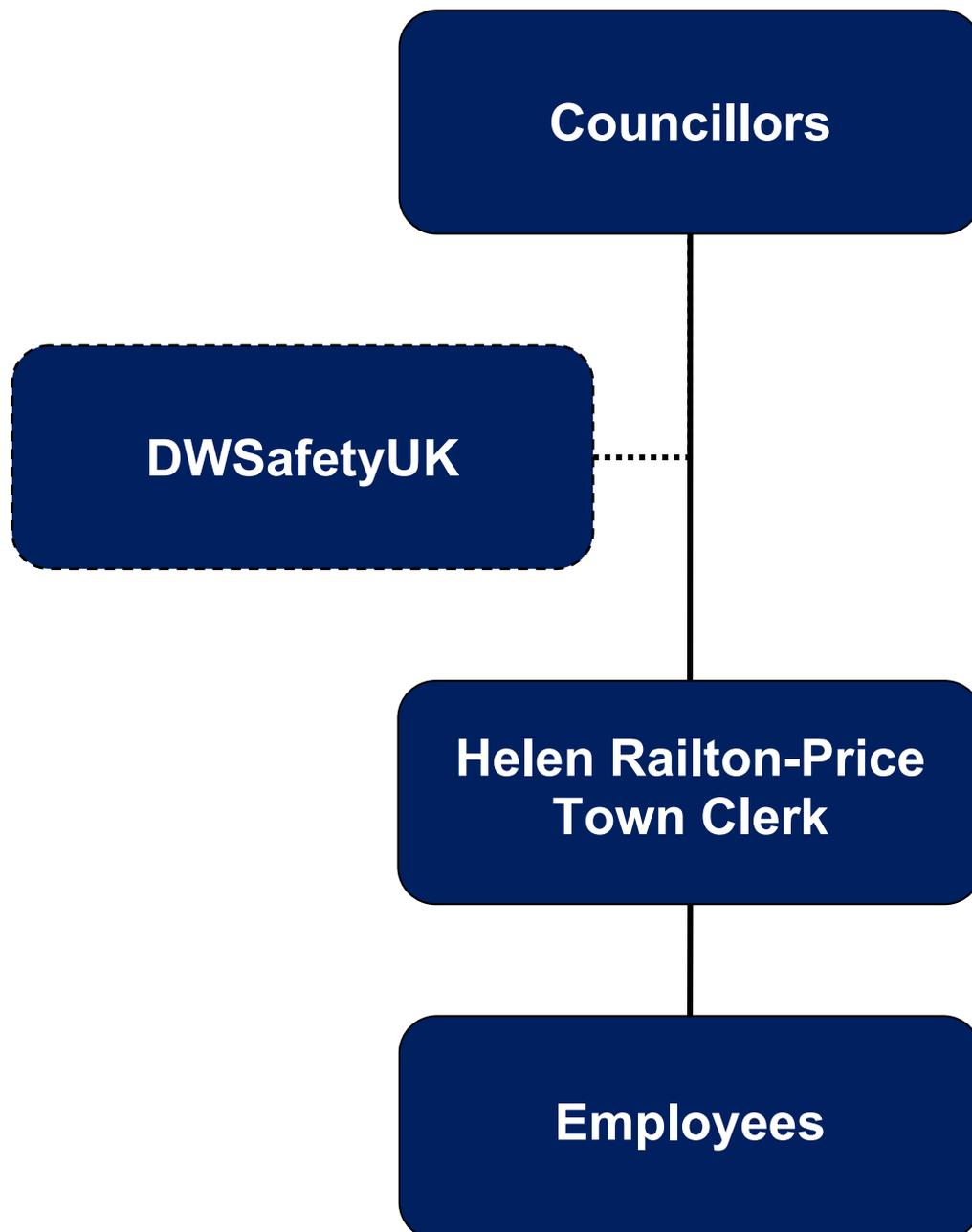
## **Disciplinary Procedures**

It is our policy to discipline those who do not fulfil their health and safety responsibilities adequately. All employees will be given comprehensible information, instruction and training to ensure that they are fully aware of their duties.

We will not hesitate to instigate disciplinary procedures against any employee at any level who fail in their responsibilities in respect of health and safety. This will occur even if they have been injured as a result of an accident caused by their own carelessness.

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# HEALTH & SAFETY ORGANISATION CHART



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## Assignment of Individuals

In order for our arrangements to be effective, individual duties and responsibilities will be clearly identified.

There will be a logical delegation of duties throughout the organisation with the Director assuming a policy-making and guiding role with line managers taking a more active part in day-to-day management issues.

The individuals listed below, have been allocated general and specific health and safety responsibilities within our policy.

Responsibilities will fall into two categories:

- **GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES**
  
- **SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES**

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## General Responsibilities

The following individual posts have been allocated general health and safety responsibilities within the terms of our policy:

- Councillors
- Clerk
- Employees

They will also be required to monitor their areas of control as well as the performance and activities of subordinates to ensure that acceptable standards are maintained.

The Councillors shall be responsible for ensuring;

- The objectives outlined within our health and safety management system are fully understood and observed by persons under their control.
- Responsibilities for health and safety are clearly defined and allocated/delegated to the appropriate levels within the organisation.
- The health and safety policy is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary and any changes are brought to the attention of all persons under their control.
- They make a commitment to improving health and safety in the organisation and demonstrate this by the priority which they give to safety issues, and by their own behaviour
- The health and safety policy is brought to the attention of all employees under their control, and ensure that they are made aware of all hazards and the means of controlling those hazards

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The Town Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring;

- They make a commitment to improving health and safety in the organisation and demonstrate this by the priority which they give to safety issues, and by their own behaviour
- They bring the health and safety policy to the attention of all employees under their control, and ensure that they are made aware of all hazards and the means of controlling those hazards
- That competent persons are employed to assist the employer in carrying out his statutory responsibilities
- The development of health and safety procedures and objectives and adequate resources are made available
- That managers are adequately trained and capable
- They carry out audits of their areas of responsibilities/organising audits to be carried out
- The objectives outlined within our health and safety management system are fully understood and observed by persons under their control.
- Persons under their control carry out their assigned responsibilities and review their performance accordingly.
- The allocation of the necessary resources within their control and ensure that appropriate equipment is available.
- That accidents and near-misses are recorded and investigated and all relevant documentation are kept
- That audits and workplace inspections are undertaken and equipment is maintained in a safe condition

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The Employees shall;

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions
- Co-operate with management to meet the employer's legal duties and work in accordance with our procedures
- Not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interest of health, safety or welfare and refrain from actions (or inactivity) which might endanger themselves, or others
- Demonstrate their commitment by their behaviour and co-operate in the investigation of accidents and incidents
- Use all equipment safely, including that provided for their personal protection and report to management any defects in equipment or other dangers immediately, or as soon as it is safe to do so
- Comply with all safety instructions or procedures and not undertake any tasks that they are not trained for

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## **Specific Responsibilities**

Individual posts have been allocated SPECIFIC Health and Safety responsibilities within the terms of our Health and Safety Policy.

Specific responsibilities have been identified within each operational control procedures by the person ultimately responsible for health and safety.

These have been identified and evaluated from our Risk Management procedures and are listed in Part 3 of our health and safety management system.

They will be required to monitor their areas of control as well as the performance and activities of subordinates to ensure that acceptable standards are maintained.

## **Health and Safety Assistance**

To assist us in our undertaking we have appointed DWSafetyUK as Health and Safety Consultants to provide competent advice and guidance.

## **Communication**

The responsibilities identified above shall be communicated to all employees in line with operating procedure internal and external communication.

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# **SECTION 3**

# **HEALTH & SAFETY INFORMATION**

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## **3.1 CODE OF CONDUCT – GENERAL SITE RULES**

The Code of Conduct set out below is designed to cover the main areas of the required standards of behaviour and performance. The code includes our General Site Rules, which all employees are required to comply with, and examples of misconduct which the organisation normally regards as Gross Misconduct. A breach of our rules will render an employee liable to disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure. An instance of Gross Misconduct may render an employee liable to dismissal without notice.

The rules below and the examples of misconduct are not exhaustive. Employees are under a duty to comply with the standards of behaviour and performance required by the organisation, and to behave in a reasonable manner, at all times.

### **General Health and Safety Rules**

1. Whilst at Tewkesbury Town Hall and Watson Hall ensure all the safety signs and notices are obeyed.
2. Ensure all bags and clothing is stored appropriately using the designated areas provided.
3. Do not act in any way which could endanger yourself or others.
4. Only suitably trained and authorised persons are permitted to use the tools, equipment whilst on site.
5. Before using any item for the first time (once authorised) please read the appropriate risk assessment. If you do not understand any area of the assessment, please contact the health & safety representative.
6. Do not invite any persons into the building without authorisation from management.
7. Report unsafe conditions to management or the Health and Safety representative immediately.
8. Do not leave items in aisles, walkways stairways, work areas, or other points of egress.
9. Never block or obstruct fire escape routes and exits. Practice good housekeeping at all times.
10. Promptly report all accidents/injuries/incidents to management and the designated first aider/appointed person.

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- Site Specific

1. All staff must ensure they are inducted onto the site prior to work commencing.
2. When applicable, ensure the lone working procedure is complied with at all times and regular contact is maintained with your management.
3. Ensure all relevant personal protective equipment when required.
4. It is forbidden to possess or consume alcohol, drugs or other intoxicants on site or to be under their influence.
5. Smoking is forbidden other than in designated areas identified by smoking permitted signs.
6. All accidents / incidents / near misses must be reported to the Town Clerk Immediately.
7. Report unsafe conditions the Town Clerk or the Health and Safety representative immediately.
8. All waste must be deposited in the correctly

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## 3.2 GENERAL SAFETY - HOUSEKEEPING

Employers have a duty to provide and maintain a safe working environment. Employees can play an important part in this.

### Housekeeping

#### General

- Do not rush about, this causes accidents.
- Do not run on site.
- Don't fool around. Horseplay causes accidents.
- Do not rush around blind corners, especially if you are pushing or carrying a load in front of you.

#### Waste and rubbish

- All site areas should be kept clean and in a tidy condition.
- Accumulations of waste and rubbish can cause slip, trip and vermin problems. There is a legal requirement to remove accumulations of rubbish on a daily basis
- If you cause any rubbish or waste or spill anything, YOU are responsible for clearing it up.
- Use the appropriate skips remembering that some rubbish has to go into dedicated skips for waste removal and recycling purposes.

#### Spillages

- If you cause a spillage, take the appropriate steps to clean it up.
- If you come across a spillage, don't just leave it for someone else to fall over it. Take whatever action is necessary to clear it up. Tell your manager, warn employees, barrier off the area.
- Always report chemical spills immediately.

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## Obstructions

- Never cause an obstruction to any walkway, stairwell, fire exit, fire point, first aid box or any area where someone might need emergency access.
- Don't allow gangways to be obstructed by items projecting onto them.
- Close all filing cabinet drawers.
- Close doors behind you.

## Storage

Ensure that all items are stored in their correct location.

Don't leave things lying about; do not overload cabinets, drawer's etc; do not place articles on the top of filing cabinets, cupboards etc.

### **Two areas of particular importance are:**

- Slips and trips
- Working at height

## **Slips and trips**

Slips and trips are the most common cause of major injuries at work. They occur in almost all workforces. 95% of major slips result in broken bones and they can also be a precursor of other accident types such as falls from height.

### Remember:

- Keep walkways clear
- Avoid trailing cables
- Report trip hazards

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## Working at height

Falls from height are the most common cause of fatal injury and the second most common cause of major injury to employees. The Working at Height Regulations require employers have a duty to carry out risk assessments, avoid working at height wherever possible, provide safe platforms and arrest systems (if necessary) and ensure that employees are appropriately trained.

Main areas of concern are

- Falls from height when changing the flag over. Fall restraint to be used. Steps are to be used when accessing and egressing this area. High risk
- Accessing the roof space in Watson Hall. High Risk
- Only trained employees to use ladders and steps.

For the majority of employees, working at height involves the use of leaning ladders or step-ladders. Here are a few safety tips:

Leaning Ladders set-up

- Do a daily pre-use check (include ladder feet)
- Secure ladders
- Ground should be firm and level
- Have a strong upper resting point (not plastic guttering)
- Floors should be clean and not slippery

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### Leaning Ladders in-use

- Short duration work (maximum 30 minutes)
- Light work (up to 10 kg)
- Ladder angle 75 – 1 in 4 rules (1 unit out for every 4 units up)
- Always grip the ladder when climbing
- Do not overreach
- Do not work off the top three rungs

### Stepladders set-up

- Daily pre-use check (feet included)
- Ensure there is space to fully open
- Use any locking devices
- Ground should be firm and level
- Floors should be clean and not slippery

### Stepladders in-use

- Short duration work (maximum 30 minutes)
- Light work (up to 10 kg)
- Do not work off the top two steps (top three steps for swing-back/double-sided stepladders) unless you have a safe handhold on the steps
- Avoid side-on working
- Do not overreach

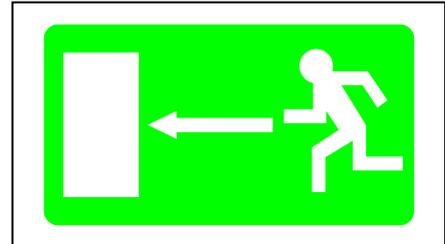
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### 3.3 FIRE

Fire safety at work is always vitally important. You should make sure you know what to do to prevent a fire in the workplace and your means of escape if a fire does break out.

You should:

- Know what action to take on discovering a fire or hearing the fire alarm and the arrangements for calling the fire brigade. Read your “Fire Action Notice”.



- Know the evacuation procedures and assembly points.
- Familiarise yourself with escape routes and fire exit signs. Never obstruct escape routes, gangways or passages.
- Know the locations and types of fire extinguisher available and how to use them.



- Report any instances of increased risk.
- Keep fire doors closed to stop the spread of fire, heat and smoke.
- Smoking is prohibited at all work places.
- Make sure cigarettes are fully extinguished.
- Report any thoughts you may have on reducing risk.
- Remind yourself on a regular basis of fire safety issues.
- Set a personal example of good fire safety.



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## Types of Fire Extinguishers

There are several types of fire extinguisher available and your place of work should have sufficient types and numbers suitable for the risks present.

### Water extinguishers - Red body or Red Body with Red Label

- Used for general types of fire involving paper, wood, cardboard, etc. - 'Class A fires'.
- These extinguishers must not be used for fires involving electricity or flammable liquids or for fat fires.
- They are operated by aiming the nozzle at the base of the fire. The fire is extinguished using a sweeping action. As progress is made, the jet is directed progressively higher until the fire is out.

### Carbon Dioxide extinguishers - Black body or Red body with Black Label

- Carbon dioxide extinguishers are mainly used for fires involving electrical equipment 'Class C fires', but to some degree can be effective on other fire types.
- Carbon dioxide extinguishes flames by depriving them of oxygen. As with most extinguishers, the jet should be aimed at the base of the fire but care should be taken to ensure that the flames are driven away from you.
- It should be remembered that gas makes a loud noise when the extinguisher is used, getting louder as it empties
- The gas coming out of the nozzle is very cold and often freezes like snow.
- Care must be taken to ensure that the skin does not come into contact with the gases as cold injury can occur. Always hold the nozzle at the correct place, taking care not to put your fingers near or over the end. Do not hold the black horn if a rigid pipe and horn is fitted.
- Squeeze the trigger in bursts to extinguish the flames.
- Although carbon dioxide is not poisonous, it will decrease the amount of oxygen in the air so should not be used in a confined space or suffocation may result. Likewise it should not be directed at persons.

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Dry Powder extinguishers - Blue body or Red body with Blue Label

- Normally these are used for flammable liquid fires
- They can be used for Flammable Gas fires 'Class C fires' however it is not advisable to extinguish gas fires unless the gas supply can definitely be shut off (or a serious explosion risk may be created) – it is recommended you leave this type of fire to the Fire Services.
- They can also be used for paper, wood, cardboard, etc. 'Class A fires'.
- They should be used in a similar way to water by directing the nozzle at the base of the fire. The flames are then forced down and away from you.
- Be careful when using powder extinguishers in a confined space as the dust can form clouds which can be difficult to see through, and may affect breathing.
- Some specialised powders are for flammable metals 'Class D fires' and should be used as directed on the extinguisher

Foam extinguishers (including Aqueous Film-Forming Foam (AFFF)/Spray foam) - Cream body or Red body with Cream Label

- Foam extinguishers are ideal when used on a contained burning liquid as 'Class B (I) fires. If used correctly, they form a blanket over the liquid preventing oxygen reaching the liquid, thereby extinguishing the flames.
- Correct operation is essential, as the foam has to be directed to the sides of the container allowing it to fall onto the liquid and spread across the surface.
- N.B. If directed at the surface it will usually sink.
- Foam can also be used instead of water. AFFF is frequently is considered a suitable replacement for water.

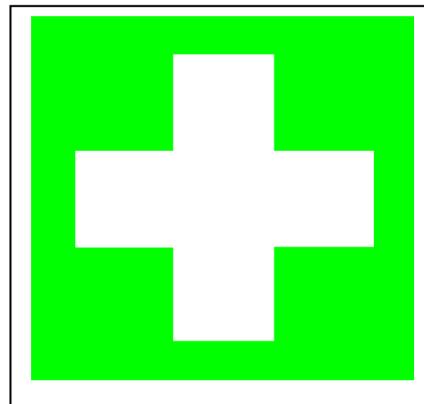
## Fire Extinguisher Chart

Extinguisher		Type of Fire					
Colour	Type	Solids (wood, paper, cloth, etc)	Flammable Liquids	Flammable Gasses	Electrical Equipment	Cooking Oils & Fats	Special Notes
	Water	✓ Yes	✗ No	✗ No	✗ No	✗ No	Dangerous if used on 'liquid fires' or live electricity.
	Foam	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✗ No	✗ No	✓ Yes	Not practical for home use.
	Dry Powder	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	✗ No	Safe use up to 1000v.
	Carbon Dioxide (CO2)	✗ No	✓ Yes	✗ No	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	Safe on high and low voltages.

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## 3.4 FIRST AID – ACCIDENT RECORDING

People at work can suffer injuries or fall ill. It is important that they receive immediate attention and that an ambulance is called in serious cases. First aid can save lives and prevent minor injuries become major ones. It does not include giving tablets or medicines to treat illness.



In first aid terms, an appointed person is the person who takes charge when someone is injured or falls ill, including calling an ambulance if required. They should also look after the first aid equipment e.g. re-stocking the first aid box. Appointed persons should not attempt to give first aid for which they have not been trained.

A first aider is someone who has undergone a training course administering first aid at work and holds a current first aid at work certificate. A first aider can undertake the duties of an appointed person.

Remember:

- Find out who the appointed persons or first aiders are
- Find out where the nearest first aid box is kept

### FIRST AID PERSONNEL

It is a lawful requirement for an employer to provide an adequate number of suitably trained persons.

When considering your risk, the following should be evaluated and appropriate allowances made -

- The operations undertaken at the place of work,
- Your location in relation to obtaining medical assistance - response time(s),
- The number of persons employed/present at any one time,
- Holiday and or periods of sickness/absence cover,

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The persons selected should be trained to the required standard by an authorised/recognised body for this purpose, either to the standard of 'First Aider' or an 'Appointed Person'.

Training should be provided through an agency approved by the Health and Safety Executive; usually the local St John Ambulance, St Andrew's Ambulance or the Red Cross provides local training courses.

The number of persons depends on the number of employees and the risks to which they are subjected. A high number of office personnel may require less cover than substantially lower numbers in engineering where the risks are likely to be greater. However, cover should be provided even for a low number. Even though the risk of an accident is low, there is always the possibility of a serious medical condition such as a heart attack, epilepsy or diabetes.

#### FIRST AID MATERIALS AND CONTAINERS/KITS

The details of first aid materials/supplies are stated on a preceding page.

It is general practice for a recognised and qualified person to take care of the first aid containers/kits supplied by Tewkesbury Town Council.

It is good practice to have extra first aid containers/kits for the temporary replacement of an under-stocked or soiled one.

This is particularly appropriate for first aid boxes kept in vehicles.

A record should be kept of the date it was inspected and the required contents of the box.

Additional first aid materials and equipment may be required such as:

- Scissors,
- Adhesive tape,
- Disposable aprons,
- Individually wrapped moist wipes,
- Sterile eye solution (minimum 1 litre),
- Blankets, and
- Specific personal protective equipment for the first aid personnel attending.

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## ACCIDENT RECORDING

The qualified person who carries out the first aid treatment should ensure that the injured person or his representative makes the appropriate entry in the accident/incident record book.

A nominated member of staff will inspect the accident/incident record books periodically and update accident statistics. This periodic review will assist in allowing formal remedial action to be taken to reduce the risk of a repeat accident.

All accidents, no matter how small, should be reported in writing in the Accident Report Book. It is the responsibility of the injured person to ensure that this is done.

The first aider should keep a treatment register giving details of dates/times and type of treatments administered.

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## CONTENTS OF BASIC FIRST AID KITS/CONTAINERS

Our First Aid boxes contain the following:

	Number
Leaflet on Basic advice on first aid at work	1
Individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings (Assorted Sizes)	20
Sterile eye pads	2
Individually wrapped triangular bandages (Preferably Sterile)	4
Medium sized Individually wrapped sterile unmedicated wound - dressing approx. 12 cm x 12 cm	6
Large sterile Individually wrapped unmedicated wound dressing- approx. 18 cm x 18 cm	2
One pair of disposable gloves	1
Safety Pins	6
Individually wrapped medi-wipes	10

First aid boxes are inspected monthly and the results recorded on the appropriate form.

All deficiencies must be reported to a responsible person so that replacement items can be arranged.

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## 3.5 WORK EQUIPMENT

Work equipment is almost any equipment used by an employee at work including:

- hand tools such as screwdrivers, knives
- other equipment such as ladders and water pressure cleaners.

Employer's duties include ensuring that work equipment is:

- suitable for use, and for the purpose and conditions in which it is used;
- maintained in a safe condition for use so that people's health and safety is not at risk;
- inspected in certain circumstances to ensure that it is, and continues to be, safe for use. Any inspection should be carried out by a competent person and a record kept until the next inspection. You may be required to carry out and record daily inspections on certain items of work equipment.

Employers also need to ensure that people using work equipment have received adequate training for the particular equipment.

Risks created by the use of work equipment should be eliminated where possible or controlled by:

- taking appropriate 'hardware' measures, e.g. providing suitable guards, protection devices, markings and warning devices, system control devices (such as emergency stop buttons) and personal protective equipment;
- taking appropriate 'software' measures such as following safe systems of work (e.g. ensuring maintenance is only performed when equipment is shut down etc), and providing adequate information, instruction and training.

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## Remember

- Read and understand your employer's risk assessment
- Ensure that you only operate (or maintain) work equipment where you are competent to do so
- Work within any safe system of work
- Use guards at all times
- Ensure maintenance is carried out safely e.g. isolate or remove the power source

## Training

Before someone uses an item of plant, machinery or equipment you must be adequately trained and in some circumstances, be of a certain age.

The operator of the equipment should be trained in the hazards associated with the machine as well as in the method of operating it.

## Operating

The machine must be operated in the prescribed manner and in conformance with the manual supplied by the manufacturer or supplier of the machinery.

It is illegal to remove anything from the machine that is provided in the interests of safety. It is also very dangerous.

Ensure that you know how to stop the machine before starting it and how to disconnect it from its power sources, electricity, gas, air, etc. before operating it.

Report any dangerous situations you observe and do not operate the machine until the hazard has been removed.

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## 3.6 Manual Handling

### General

Everyone who has to lift or carry, and that includes most employees should be trained in the correct way to do it.

Every person should follow the guidance below when lifting or carrying.

### Method

- Keep your back straight, bend the knees and lift using the strong muscles in the leg.
- Keep objects as close to your body as you can, ensuring that where possible, the narrowest side is facing forward.
- When pushing or pulling keep your back and arms straight, tuck your chin in and use your front foot to balance you whilst you thrust with your back foot.
- Wherever possible use mechanical means of lifting.
- Remember when carrying large items, you may be unable to see where you are walking. Always check your route before starting.
- Keep the heaviest part of the load to the body when lifting or carrying.
- Wear suitable protective equipment but remember that gloves which are too big may cause problems if your fingers do not reach the end. Never 'snatch' a load or drag it off a surface when lifting. If it is too heavy, you will drop it or cause serious injury.

Manual handling injuries can occur wherever people are at work – on farms and building sites, in factories, offices, warehouses, hospitals, banks, laboratories, etc. Manual handling injuries are the most common reason for absence from work.

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Here are some practical tips for good handling technique for lifting:

- *Think before lifting/handling.* Plan the lift. Can handling aids be used? Where is the load going to be placed? Will help be needed with the load? Remove obstructions such as discarded wrapping materials. For a long lift, consider resting the load midway on a table or bench to change grip.
- *Keep the load close to the waist.* While lifting keep the load close to the body for as long as possible. Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the body. If a close approach to the load is not possible, try to slide it towards the body before attempting to lift it.
- *Adopt a stable position.* The feet should be apart with one leg slightly forward to maintain balance (alongside the load, if it is on the ground). You should be prepared to move your feet during the lift to maintain your stability. Avoid tight clothing or unsuitable footwear which may make this difficult.
- *Get a good hold.* Where possible the load should be hugged as close as possible to the body. This may be better than gripping it tightly with hands only.
- *Start in a good posture.* At the start of the lift, slight bending of the back, hips and knees is preferable to fully flexing the back (stooping) or fully flexing the hips and knees (squatting).
- *Don't flex the back any further while lifting.* This can happen if the legs begin to straighten before starting to raise the load.
- *Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways* especially while the back is bent. Shoulders should be kept level and facing in the same direction as the hips. Turning by moving the feet is better than twisting and lifting at the same time.
- *Keep the head up when handling.* Look ahead, not down at the load, once it has been held securely.
- *Move smoothly.* The load should not be jerked or snatched as this can make it harder to keep control and can increase the risk of injury.

- 
- *Don't lift or handle more than can be easily managed.* There is a difference between what people can lift and what they can safely lift. If in doubt, seek advice or get help.
  - *Put down, then adjust.* If precise positioning of the load is necessary, put it down first, then slide it into the desired position.
  - Here are some practical points to remember when loads are pushed or pulled.
  - *Handling devices.* Aids such as barrows and trolleys should have handle heights that are between the shoulder and waist. Devices should be well-maintained with wheels that run smoothly.
  - *Force.* As a rough guide, the amount of force that needs to be applied to move a load over a flat, level surface using a well-maintained handling aid is at least 2% of the load weight. You should try to push rather than pull when moving a load, provided you can see over it and control steering and stopping.
  - *Slopes.* You should enlist help from another worker whenever necessary if you have to negotiate a slope or ramp, as pushing and pulling forces can be very high.
  - *Uneven surfaces.* Moving an object over soft or uneven surfaces requires more force. Again, you should enlist help from another worker whenever necessary.
  - *Stance and pace.* You should keep your feet well away from the load and go no faster than walking speed. This will stop you becoming too tired too quickly.

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## 3.7 DSE – Display Screen Equipment

Definition of a designated “User” of DSE:

Employees will be considered to be “users” when one or more of the following criteria apply:

- they use DSE regularly and continuously, typically for more than an hour at a time
- they depend on display screen equipment to do the job, i.e. there is no alternative way of doing the job
- they need additional training and/or particular skills in the use of display screen equipment to do the job
- fast transfer of information between operator and screen is important
- the work being done requires a high level of attention and concentration and the consequences of error may be serious for the business.

Designated “Users” will be entitled to:

DSE Assessment

- a formal and recorded DSE assessment of their DSE work-station and their DSE duties before commencement of DSE work and at a reasonable frequency (normally 12 months unless otherwise specified).
- Adequate health and safety training in the use of the workstation upon which they are required to work

DSE Eyesight checks and Corrective appliances

- a DSE eye and eyesight check at the employer’s expense (*Max. cost - limit applies*) on request, either whilst using DSE equipment or prior to becoming a user and at a reasonable frequency (normally approximately 2 yearly - with a minimum interval of 12 months unless otherwise specified by an optometrist)
- a basic set of corrective appliances (usually single focal length pair of spectacles) at employer’s expense (*Max. cost - limit applies*) on request at a reasonable frequency if required for DSE work (normally approximately 2 yearly - with a minimum interval of 12 months unless otherwise specified by an optometrist).

You may/will normally be required to initially pay an optometrist for the eye and eyesight check and/or corrective appliances – claim reimbursement as below. If you voluntarily choose more expensive suitable option(s) you thereby agree to pay the associated extra cost(s).

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Claim to entitlement and Claim for reimbursement:

- to claim entitlement to eyesight check and/or for corrective appliances you must apply to/get prior approval from your Manager to go for an eye and eyesight check etc. Frequency and cost limits etc. will be explained to you on your application to your Manager.
- to submit claim for reimbursement for eyesight check and/or corrective appliances you should apply to your Manager – Documentary evidence of eyesight check, and where appropriate requirement for and purchase of corrective appliances, from the optometrist must be presented with valid receipt(s) for any expenditure. Re-imburement will be in line with reasonable policy, methods, timescales and financial limits.

The following points should be considered when using display screen equipment (DSE)

- Ensure that your chair is suitable and provided support for your back.
- The height should be adjustable, as should the back and back support height.
- Always set the chair to your own particular requirements.
- If your feet do not touch the ground with comfort, use a foot rest.
- Organise your work, if possible, so that you have occasional breaks away from the screen.
- Adjust the screen settings to suit yourself.
- Position the screen so that there is no glare.
- Report equipment or software faults immediately.
- Set the keyboard so that it is comfortable and use wrist supports when required.
- Use carefully positioned holders for your work when you are copy typing.
- Make full use of the equipment provided, and adjust it to get the best from it and to avoid potential health problems.

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Here are some practical tips:

#### Getting comfortable

- Adjust your chair and VDU to find the most comfortable position for your work. As a broad guide, your forearms should be approximately horizontal and your eyes the same height as the top of the VDU.
- Make sure you have enough work space 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 are 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 over-stretch your fingers. Good keyboard technique is important.

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## 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.
- Software should display 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 unlikely to cause eye strain (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 is frequent, rearrange your workstation).
- Most jobs provide opportunities to take a break from the screen, e.g. filing or photocopying. Make use of them. Frequent short breaks are better than fewer long ones.

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## 3.8 PPE – PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT



### Clothing

Clothing in this sense covers the things that people wear including jewellery etc.

The wearing of some jewellery can cause hazards to people whilst at work. Hanging chains can catch in moving machinery, rings can catch when lifting or carrying, earrings can affect the fitting of earmuffs, and watches can snag on moving machinery.

Loose clothing can get caught in moving machinery or be hooked onto passing vehicles. Hanging ties/cuffs can get caught in moving machinery.

If required, wear the protective overalls provided. These not only keep your personal clothing clean, but also reduce the risk of being caught. Sometimes there is a legal obligation to wear overalls.

### Issue

All personal protective equipment (PPE) is issued on an individual basis.

No one should use PPE issued to someone else

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## Wearing PPE

Wherever possible, the necessity to wear PPE will be reduced by removing the reason at source. Where this is not possible, or where engineering solutions may take time to implement, the wearing of PPE may be compulsory.

Disciplinary action will be taken against anyone who is not using their PPE in the circumstances for which it has been issued and when it is required.

## Care of PPE

There is a legal requirement on anyone issued with PPE to take care of it and to take steps to have it maintained or replaced when necessary. In some circumstances, the only way your health and safety can be ensured is by requiring you to use personal protective equipment (PPE). The decision to use PPE is only made when other means of controlling risks have been considered and found impractical. It is a last line of defence. You will be supplied with, and trained in the proper use of, suitable PPE and have the risks and control measures involved in your work will be explained to you. You will be expected to take care of the PPE issued to you, store it safely and report any defects to a responsible person.

Here are some examples of PPE

### Head Protection:

- Helmets used to protect against falls.
- Helmets used to protect against falling objects or impact with fixed objects.

### Eye/Face Protection:

- Safety spectacles.
- Goggles.

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Foot Protection:

- Safety boots and shoes.
- Clogs.
- Wellington boots.
- Anti-static footwear.
- Conductive footwear.

Hand & Arms:

Gloves and Gauntlets (protection against cuts, temperatures, hazardous chemicals), vibration, sharp objects etc.

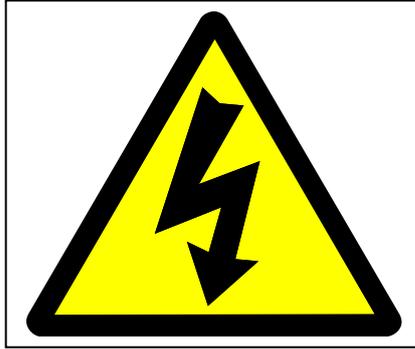
Clothing for the Body:

- Overalls, etc., to protect against hazardous substances.
- Clothing to protect against, cold, heat, bad weather.
- High visibility clothing.

Once issued with PPE, you have a duty to wear it in circumstances for which you have been trained. You may be subject to disciplinary procedures if you do not do so.

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## 3.9 Electricity



Electricity can kill. It can also cause serious injury, burns, fires and other damage.

- Switch off appliances
- Unplug appliances that are infrequently used
- Only use the appliance for its intended purpose
- Use the appliance in a safe and stable position
- Check that portable electrical equipment that you use at work bears a current PAT test sticker.
- Do not place items on an electrical appliance that could cause it to overheat or obstruct cooling air supplies
- Position leads, extension leads and plugs to avoid tripping hazards.
- If you use a multi-socket extension lead, do not overload it and make sure it is fused
- One extension lead is enough! Never add a further extension lead
- Use an extension lead of appropriate length but always fully uncoil a wind-up extension lead before use
- Report any damaged sockets, light switches or other fittings and do not use them until they have been competently repaired
- Never attempt electrical repairs or alterations unless you have been trained and authorised to do them

- 
- If you bring electrical equipment in from home it needs to be PAT tested before it is plugged in at work
  - Visually check electrical appliances before use (see checklist below) and don't use any damaged items. (95% of faults on portable electrical appliances can be seen.)

Remember to switch off and unplug any appliance before you carry out the following visual checks:

#### Appliance

- Obvious damage to casing
- Obvious damage to grommet, sleeving or other protection at the point where the lead passes through the casing
- Obvious damage to switches
- Loose screws or other parts
- Water damage, evidence of past spills of liquid, or other contamination

#### Leads

- Cuts, punctures or abrasion
- Discolouration or distortion which might indicate overheating
- Hardening of the outer insulation
- Kinks
- Taped or other non-standard joints.

#### Plugs

- Physical damage, cracks, holes in casing, bent pins
- Discolouration or distortion which may indicate overheating
- Outer insulation layer of lead is not secured within the plug casing. In this case you may see the coloured insulation on the wires

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## 3.10 HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

### Use of hazardous chemicals

Only use hazardous chemicals if you are authorised to do so, have received adequate training in the risks associated with them and have the associated hazard data sheets available.

Only use hazardous chemicals for the task intended. Unauthorised use could result in mixed chemicals giving off dangerous fumes or undergoing a violent reaction

### Storage of hazardous chemicals

Hazardous chemicals must only be stored in the containers intended for such storage. The hazard warning labels appropriate to the contents should be clearly displayed on the container.

### Hazard Data Sheets

There must always be COSHH assessment sheets posted or available where hazardous chemicals are stored, handled, transported and or used.

These must be kept up to date and must describe the chemical, its reaction, what to do in an emergency, how to dispose of the chemical, how to dispose of the container etc.

### Empty Container

Containers, which have held hazardous chemicals, can be as dangerous as the chemical itself if it contains residue.

Always follow the supplier's instructions when disposing of the empty container.

### Buying hazardous chemicals

The person who buys or supplies hazardous chemicals within Tewkesbury Town Council has a duty to obtain the necessary hazard data sheet and to ensure that it is distributed.

### What are hazardous substances?

Hazardous substances include most hazardous chemicals (including waste and by-products), biological agents and any dust.

Harmful substances that employees may come across and which are covered by COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations) include the vast majority of commercial chemicals, many of which have a warning label.

NEW Pictogram	Number	Hazard Class (CLP)	OLD 'CHIP' Symbol
	GHS-01	Explosives Self-reactive substances and mixtures, types A, B Organic peroxides, types A, B	 Explosive
	GHS-02	Flammable gases, aerosols, liquids or solids Self-reactive substances and mixtures Pyrophoric liquids and solids Self-heating substances and mixtures Substances and mixtures, which in contact with water emit flammable gases Organic peroxides	 Highly/Extremely flammable
	GHS-03	Oxidising gases, liquids and solids	 Oxidising
	GHS-04 NEW	Compressed gases, liquids and solids Liquefied gases Refrigerated liquefied gases Dissolved gases	No current symbol
	GHS-05	Corrosive to metals Skin Corrosion Severe eye damage	 Corrosive

	GHS-06	Acute toxicity (Cat 1 - 3)	  Toxic/Very Har
	GHS-07 NEW	Acute toxicity (Cat 4) Skin and eye irritation Skin sensitisation specific target organ toxicity Respiratory tract irritation Narcotic effects	 Harmful/Irritant
	GHS-08 NEW	Respiratory sensitisation Germ cell mutagenicity Carcinogenicity Reproductive toxicity specific target organ toxicity Aspiration hazard	  No current specific symbol Use either
	GHS-09	Hazardous to the aquatic environment	 Dangerous for the environment

Examples may include:

- cleaning - bleach and other cleaning agents with a warning label (note that household washing-up liquid has no warning label and so is not covered);
- building maintenance - wood dust, glues and adhesives, solvents, paints, and oils;
- grounds maintenance/gardeners – pesticides and chemical fertiliser;
- healthcare - medicines and biological agents (note that COSHH does not cover patients receiving medicine as part of their treatment);
- transport - oils and fuels; and
- office work/printing - printer/photocopier toner, inks, and paper dust.

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When considering hazardous substances, remember: that they may come in various forms (gas, liquid, and solid), each of which may be more or less hazardous; that some may contain hazardous impurities; and that exposure to more than one substance at the same time may have additional or worse effects.

Some hazardous substances have separate specific laws covering them and are not covered by COSHH, asbestos and lead for example. Substances which are dangerous just because they are explosive, flammable, or radioactive are also not covered.

### The Effects on Health

There are three main ways a substance can enter the body: inhalation (breathing it in), absorption (through the skin), and ingestion (swallowing it).

The effects on health may develop quickly (acute) and be easily seen or may take years (chronic), making linking the ill-health to the exposure difficult. The effect may develop at the area where the substance enters or comes in contact with the body (local) or it may affect unrelated parts of the body (systemic). Workers may suffer: irritation perhaps leading to dermatitis, sensitisation possibly leading to asthma, a loss of consciousness if overcome by toxic fumes, infection by bacteria, and long-term effects such as cancer. According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), exposure can result in "discomfort, pain, time off work and, all too often, premature retirement and early death."

### Employees Duties

These include:

- making proper use of any control measures e.g. wearing gloves, etc.
- following safe systems of work
- abiding by local rules
- reporting defects in safety equipment.

**Remember, if you are in any doubt about using a hazardous substance – ASK!**

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## 3.11 Violence and Aggression

Although instances of violence at work have been decreasing in recent years, personal safety remains a high priority especially for people who occasionally work alone. People who work alone should consider the following:

- Always tell someone where you are going, who you are meeting and when you expect to return
- Prepare yourself for difficult meetings by finding out everything you need to know before arriving and planning in your mind how you are going to deal with it
- Do not meet aggression with aggression
- Do not enter a building, particularly someone else's home if you don't feel comfortable or safe
- If driving, ensure you belong to a national breakdown service and that you know where you are going and how to get there
- Always check the identity of people visiting you in your own office or home. Where possible arrange not to be alone or instigate a "buddy" system where someone checks up on you
- Record the name and contact details of people you are meeting

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## 3.12 Alcohol and Drugs

### Alcohol

People under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst at work are liable to either injure themselves or their colleagues.

Even a small amount of alcohol consumed at lunchtime can reduce reaction times and may cause errors of judgement when operating plant, machinery or equipment. In addition, the perception of risk can be reduced.

The “morning after” condition can also lead to serious incidents and accidents, lack of concentration and carelessness.

### Drugs

The use of drugs may lead to a risk to health and safety.

Be aware that many drugs that are prescribed for medical conditions can also have adverse side effects which can be detrimental to health and safety.

The warning 'This drug causes drowsiness - do not operate machinery' is common on prescription tablets but not always heeded. There can be other effects, which can also cause a hazard in the workplace such as a feeling of cold, sweating, clammy hands etc.

Always tell your direct senior if your Doctor has prescribed drugs or medication which could affect your work performance.

Drugs do not have to be prescribed to cause side effects.

Most cold cures will cause drowsiness.

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## Medical conditions

All medical conditions should be explained to your 'senior' and the First Aiders.

Any condition, which could affect your work, should be explained so that adequate measures can be taken to reduce the risk of the condition causing an accident i.e.

- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Angina
- Hypertension, etc.

## Disciplinary matters

Remember that it will be a disciplinary offence to present yourself for work under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Disciplinary action may well be taken if you fail to disclose any permanent or temporary condition caused by medicines or illness that could affect the health and safety of yourself or others.

It could also be a breach of legislation for which action could be taken

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### **3.13 SAFETY SIGNS AND SIGNALS**

There is a legal requirement to provide signs in certain circumstances in line with the Health and Safety (Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996. We will comply with this requirement.

#### Notices & posters

There is a legal requirement to provide and display certain statutory notices including the “Health and Safety - What you Should Know” poster.

These are displayed in the workplace, as is our Employers Liability Insurance certificate.

#### Fire signs

Fire signs detailing the means of escape from our premises are displayed over every exit door leading from our premises. The outside of the final exit doors are marked to indicate that they are a means of escape route from the premises and so have to be kept clear at all times.

There are fire procedure notices posted around the premises and at every fire point detailing the action to take should a fire occur or the alarm sound.

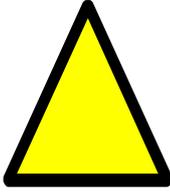
Each fire point is marked with a sign detailing what each fire extinguisher is to be used for.

#### Hazard and information signs

There is a legal requirement to ensure that the signs can be seen, so they must not be obscured and must be kept clean at all times.

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## TYPES OF SIGNS



### Warning Signs (Hazards)

This type of sign warns of hazards and will be displayed wherever a hazard is likely to exist.



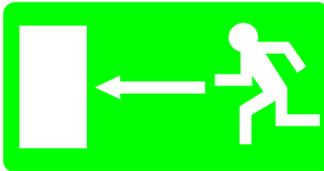
### Prohibition Signs (Must NOT do)

This type of sign is posted where something is prohibited.. Failure to conform to this could result in a serious accident, disciplinary action, or prosecution.



### Mandatory Signs (Must do)

This type of sign is posted where something must be done; PPE to be worn, route to be followed, etc.



### Emergency Escape, or First Aid, Signs

This type of sign indicates what action is required in an emergency.



### Fire Fighting Equipment Signs

This type of sign indicates where fire fighting equipment is located.



### Road Traffic Signs (Hazards)

This sign shows Road Traffic warnings.

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### 3.14 WORK AT HEIGHT

A place is 'at height' if a person could be injured falling from it, even if it is at or below ground level. There is no such thing as a '2 metre rule'.

'Work' includes moving around at a place of work (except by a staircase in a permanent workplace) and will include use of ladders for access/egress.

Is working at height really necessary? Could the task be brought to a lower level? Remember - what goes up can come down (usually much faster) don't let it be you.

Make sure you are medically fit to work at height.

Ladders are only suitable as a working platform for simple short tasks. It is much better to get a more substantial platform.

Independent ladders should be set at 75 degrees to the horizontal, 1:4 (one unit out for 4 units up) on a firm level surface and should have a handhold, or extend 1200 mm, beyond a step-off.

Ladders should be secured at the top wherever possible, side or bottom stabilisers or ties may be suitable. A person may "foot" the bottom of a ladder when necessary (they should wear a safety helmet against falling objects).

Wear suitable footwear with a defined heel when using a ladder and avoid climbing with tools or materials in your hands – use a tool belt or haul using a rope

Do not over-reach when using ladders (or over guard-rails on work platforms). Do not use the top step/platform of a stepladder unless it has a knee frame

Use roof-ladders on pitched roofs and provide fall prevention edge protection on flat roofs

Work platforms must have guard-rails, mid-rails and toe boards if there is risk of falling.

Traditional scaffolding and tower scaffolds must be designed, erected, modified or dismantled by competent persons (do not modify, remove parts or add sheeting etc.)

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Mobile access equipment such as mobile elevating work platforms (MEWP) such as “cherry pickers” and “scissor lifts” must only be operated by competent trained and authorised persons

Suspended access equipment and work platforms such as cradles, bosun’s chairs and rope access equipment must only be operated by competent trained and authorised persons

All access and work platforms must be examined by a competent person and checked daily by the user or a responsible person such as a supervisor etc. Any damage etc. must be reported and put right before use

Where the risk of a fall is not totally eliminated then fall prevention and fall-protection systems such as restraint and fall-arrest PPE (full-body harnesses and shock-absorbing lanyards) and safety nets must be used if there is risk of falling. Use when erecting / dismantling scaffolding.

Check PPE every time before you use it. If damaged, or if you are in doubt, don’t use it until it has been confirmed as serviceable or replaced. Do not repair or modify PPE unless you are trained, competent & authorised to do so – your life may depend on it!

Attach fall-arrest harness lanyards to a suitable anchorage that can take a fall loads. Do not attach yourself to a scaffold tower since a fall may cause it to overturn. Where practicable attach at a high point so as to minimise a fall distance

Make sure you have emergency arrangements to rescue a suspended fallen person (long periods of suspension can kill)

Wherever there is a risk of a fall, including where there are fragile materials at or near your place of work then measures must be taken to prevent falling from or through them. Look out for warnings of fragile materials- remember that many materials get weaker with age.

Look out for falling materials from above. Do not throw materials or tools on or from working platforms etc. Use debris chutes where provided.

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Beware of obstructions and overhead hazards. Remember when working at height some obstructions bring special hazards that were previously beyond normal reach:

- electrical power cables & conductors such as busbars - electrical shock & burns either through direct contact or close proximity leading to arcing of current;
- pipes carrying steam, compressed air or chemicals – release of contents or high or low temperature;
- radio and radar aerials – electromagnetic / microwave heating etc.;
- radiant and infrared “black” heaters - burns and heating;
- moving machinery (e.g. cranes) & powered drive mechanisms (e.g. belts, chains, shafts etc.) – impact or entanglement etc.

Injury may be caused by obstructions and overhead hazards during the erection, use or dismantling of access equipment. Note: An injury from an obstacle or overhead hazard (or other cause) whilst working at height may have a serious further consequence – a fall that may prove more harmful than the original incident

All lifting equipment used must be examined by a competent person and checked periodically

Communications may be more difficult when working at height, especially with others at low level. Make sure you have verbal or signal communications and that all persons understand them.

The weather may seriously hinder or even prohibit working at height, think about the risks that come from strong winds, rain, ice, frost, snow, lightning - if in doubt check before starting work or halt during work if the risk becomes unacceptably high. Ensure you have adequate lighting at night.

Make sure you have sufficient time to complete your task whenever possible, don't risk serious injury by rushing. If you must leave the task or leave work platform unattended ensure that unauthorised persons cannot gain access to the work platform or otherwise come to other harm.

**Remember - Falls from height can (and do) kill and injure many people each year.**

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## 3.15 ASBESTOS AWARENESS

### What is asbestos?

Asbestos was used extensively as a building material in the UK from the 1950's through to the mid-80's. It was used for a variety of purposes and was seen as an ideal material for fireproofing and insulation.

Any type of building built before 2000 (houses, factories, offices, schools, hospitals etc.) could contain asbestos. Past exposure is now responsible for about 4000 people in the UK dying from asbestos related cancers every year. This figure is expected to rise with the majority of these work related deaths being associated with people in the building trades.

Asbestos is the name used for a range of natural minerals. There are three main types of asbestos:

- Blue – Crocidolite.
- Brown – Amosite.
- White - Chrysotile.

The type of asbestos cannot be identified just by its colour. Asbestos has been used in a very large number of products, many of which have been used in buildings. Some products have one type of asbestos in them while others have mixtures of two or more. All types of asbestos can be dangerous and potentially fatal if breathed in.

### Why is it dangerous?

Asbestos is made up of thin fibres. These can break down into much smaller and thinner fibres. The smallest fibres cannot be seen with the naked eye but they can be breathed in.

Asbestos fibres are only dangerous if they are made airborne and breathed in, but ALL types of asbestos fibres are potentially fatal if breathed in. The fibres that are breathed in can become stuck in the lungs and damage them. This can cause scars that stop the lungs working properly (asbestosis), or it can cause cancer.

The main types of cancer caused by asbestos are cancer of the lung and cancer of the lining of the lung (Mesothelioma).

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These diseases can take from 15 to 60 years to develop and there is no cure for any of them.  
Where do you find asbestos?

### **Where do you find asbestos?**

You are most likely to find it in buildings built or refurbished before 2000. Many thousands of tonnes of asbestos products were used in buildings. Much of it is still there and you cannot easily identify these products from their appearance.

The most common uses of asbestos in buildings were:

- loose packing between floors and in partition walls;
- sprayed ('limpet') fire insulation on structural beams and girders;
- lagging, e.g. on pipe work, boilers, clarifiers, heat exchangers, insulating jackets for cold water tanks, around ducts;
- asbestos insulation board (AIB), e.g. ceiling tiles, partition walls, soffits, service duct covers, fire breaks, heater cupboards, door panels, lift shaft linings, fire surrounds;
- asbestos cement (AC), e.g. roof sheeting, wall cladding, walls and ceilings, bath panels, boiler and incinerator flues, fire surrounds, gutters, rainwater pipes, water tanks;
- other products, e.g. floor tiles, mastics, sealants, textured decorative coatings (such as artex), rope seals, gaskets (e.g. pipe work), millboards, paper products, fire doors, cloth (e.g. fire blankets), bituminous products (roofing felt).

**Remember** – how dangerous the asbestos is depends on the type of asbestos, the type of material it is in, the condition of the material, and how likely the material is to be disturbed.

### **Who is likely to be exposed to asbestos fibres?**

Anyone who disturbs asbestos-containing materials, for example, by working on them, or near them, or enters an area contaminated by asbestos fibres. Research has suggested that the groups most at risk are those who carry out building maintenance and refurbishment work, for example:

- building surveyors;
- demolition contractors;
- builders & construction contractors;

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- roofing contractors;
  - plasterers;
  - shop fitters, joiners, electricians, plumbers, gas fitters, heating and ventilation engineers;
  - painters and decorators;
  - telecommunications engineers, computer installers;
  - fire and burglar alarm installers;
  - general maintenance staff, etc.

### Identifying the presence of asbestos

No employer must carry out demolition, maintenance or any other work which exposes, or may expose, their employees to asbestos in any premises unless they have found out:

- whether asbestos is, or may be, present;
- what type of asbestos it is;
- what material it is in;
- what condition it is in;

If there is any doubt about whether asbestos is present, the employer **MUST** assume that it is present and that it is not only white asbestos.

Where asbestos has been identified signage should be used to warn of its presence.



Whoever has control of a building has a duty to manage the asbestos in their buildings – your employer should be able to tell you who this is. The duty holder has to take reasonable steps to find out if there are materials containing asbestos in the premises and, if so, how much, where they are and what condition they are in. This can – but does not have to – involve a survey.

When working in a building where you suspect the presence of asbestos this information should be readily available to you.

### Information, instruction and training

Every employer must give adequate training (which includes information and instruction) to employees who are, or may be, exposed to asbestos, their supervisors and those who do work to help the employer comply with his legal duties.

This should make them aware of (among other things):

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- the properties of asbestos, its health effects and the interaction of asbestos and smoking;
  - the type of materials likely to contain asbestos;
  - what work could cause asbestos exposure and the importance of preventing exposure;
  - how work can be done safely and what equipment is needed;
  - emergency procedures;
  - hygiene facilities and decontamination.

The training must be given at regular intervals. It needs to be proportionate to the nature and degree of exposure and so should contain the appropriate level of risk.

### **What should I do if I suspect asbestos materials are present?**

If you suspect that there are asbestos materials in a building, you should ask the employer what has been done to determine if such materials are present. Employers can ask to see the results of any inspection or survey done to identify the presence, and condition, of asbestos materials.

Remember that there is only a risk if asbestos fibres are made airborne. This can happen when asbestos materials are damaged or disturbed, or subject to maintenance work.

However, all asbestos-containing materials should be clearly marked, even if in good condition. If you see material which you have reason to believe contains asbestos, it has been damaged and you believe that there is a serious risk of exposure to asbestos fibres, you should ask everyone to leave the area.

But remember not to create more of a risk to people by, for example, causing a panic or leaving something in an unsafe condition.

Remember also that minor damage to some asbestos materials does not always mean that there is a serious risk or that immediate evacuation of the area is warranted, for example minor damage to materials securely bound in a matrix such as textured coatings or asbestos cement. However, damaged edges should be coated immediately, and repaired as soon as possible.

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In any case, you should notify the employer or occupier immediately. No further work should take place until the area is safe. That means that action – appropriate to the risk – has been taken. Such action could be the repair or removal of asbestos or cleaning of the area by a trained person with suitable equipment.

When anyone needs to work in a building built or refurbished before 2000, or with something which may contain asbestos, ask: Is asbestos present?

## **Asbestos kills – protect yourself!**

When working in the construction industry you should be aware of asbestos risk at all times and take appropriate steps to protect yourself and others. The main precaution should take are:

- **Don't work if you are unsure if asbestos is present. Your employer and the client should tell you whether it is. If they have not told you ask them.**
- **Don't work if asbestos is present and you have not received specific training in how to work safely with asbestos.**
- **Don't work if the asbestos materials are sprayed coatings, board or insulation and lagging on pipes or boilers, only a contractor with a licence should work on these materials.**
- **Don't disturb asbestos if you can help it**

You should only work with asbestos if you have had specific asbestos training, the work has been properly planned and the right controls are in place. Remember unless you are a licensed contractor you can only work on asbestos cement, textured coatings and minor asbestos work which legislation clearly states does not require a licence.

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**Remember if you are uncertain at any time STOP WORK and seek competent advice.**

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**IF YOU WORK WITH ASBESTOS REMEMBER SOME BASIC RULES**

**Minimise Dust:**

- ✓ Keep materials damp, not to wet
- ✓ Use hand tools and not power tools
- ✓ Clean as you go, use a special vacuum cleaner and not a brush
- ✓ Double bag asbestos waste and label the bags correctly

**Wear:**

- ✓ Suitable disposable overalls and boots with disposable boot covers
- ✓ A properly fitted suitable mask, such as a FFP3 type

**Don't**

- ✓ Smoke, eat or drink in the work area

**When you have finished work:**

- ✓ **Decontaminate yourself – wipe down your overalls with a damp rag and remove them before removing your mask**
- ✓ **Put disposable items, such as your overalls, in asbestos waste bags and dispose of the correctly**
- ✓ **Don't take any overalls or contaminated items home to wash**

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# DECLARATION

## HEALTH AND SAFETY HANDBOOK

I have read the Health and Safety Handbook and fully understand the health and safety arrangements and my responsibilities and obligations to ensure their compliance.

I understand that persistent disregard of the rules, regulations and recommendations may lead to Disciplinary action.

.....

(Print Name)

.....

(Signature)

.....

(Date)