



Health & Safety Policy

Policy Statement

1. It is the policy of the Council to provide and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy working environment (to include plant, equipment, the safe storage and handling of articles and substances, the provision of welfare facilities and systems of work) for all employees. The Council will strive continually to improve its Health & Safety performance and systems.
2. Through this policy, the Council intends to reduce risks to employees and others who may be affected by work activities to as low a level as is reasonably practicable. This will be achieved through the Council's risk assessment process, as required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
3. The Council recognises the need to provide suitable and sufficient information, instruction, supervision and training to ensure that workers are competent for the health and safety of themselves, other workers and any other person who could be affected by work activities. It will understand the risks and endeavour to control them through good management.
4. The Council will encourage co-operation and involvement in Health & Safety at all levels of the organisation through staff induction, training and regular updates.
5. The Council will provide adequate resources to manage risks.
6. The Council will take steps to minimise accidents and occurrences of work-related ill health.
7. The Council will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees and others who may be affected by its activities.
8. The Council will take steps to protect the environment in the implementation of this policy.

1. Statement of General Policy on Occupational Health & Safety

- a) Regulation 5 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires that appropriate arrangements be made for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of preventative and protective measures for health and safety.
- b) The Council recognises its obligations to meet this requirement by producing a General Policy Statement which is to be made available to every employee. Employees will be expected to familiarise themselves with the Statement, which should be read in conjunction with the Council's Risk Management Policy.

2. Safety Management

The Town Clerk is to ensure that a systematic approach is adopted to the management of health and safety.

Health and safety within the Council is ultimately the responsibility of the Town Clerk. They may appoint a nominated person to assist with the implementation, monitoring and administration of the Council's Health & Safety arrangements. In Diss Town Council this role is undertaken by the Facilities & Buildings Manager.

Line Managers, in conjunction with the Town Clerk, will be responsible for:

- a) Control – management procedures, disciplinary procedures, checks and monitoring of procedures.
- b) Co-operation – consultation and involvement with staff, development of performance standards.
- c) Communication – the policy, information about safety and how it is managed.
- d) Competence – training.

3. Objectives

Periodically the Facilities & Buildings Manager will, based on the outcome of risk assessments, set specific objectives to be met for continuous improvement in health and safety performance.

4. Risk Assessment

Safety management will be built on a careful assessment of risks arising from all activities carried out by the Council workforce. The Facilities & Buildings Manager is responsible for carrying out assessments, identifying what training and specialist equipment is required, and identifying ways to minimise risk through risk assessments.

5. Measuring Performance

The Facilities & Buildings Manager is to measure safety performance against the objectives. Monitoring should involve checking safety management against the Council's policy to ensure it is adequate and is being fully implemented. Reactive monitoring, such as accident statistics, ill-health records, insurance claims and defect reports, should also be measured.

6. Audit and Reviews

All components of safety management should be subject to review from time to time to ensure they remain valid and effective. Changed factors should be considered, for example, new legislation, new working practices, availability of equipment, new personnel, audit results and similar matters.

7. Assessment, Control and Monitoring

The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring the Council's obligations are met in respect of assessment, control and monitoring of:

- a) **HEALTH AND SAFETY ADMINISTRATION** – including the appointment and support of competent persons, basic documentation and records.
- b) **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES** – accidents, first aid, fire risk assessment and evacuation procedures.
- c) **GENERAL RISKS AND CONTROLS** – manual handling, display screen equipment, personal protective equipment, portable electrical appliances, managing visitors, work equipment, slips, trips and falls, and substances hazardous to health.
- d) **PREMISES MANAGEMENT** – electricity, gas and water supply, the work environment, lifts and mechanical lifting equipment, ladders, waste disposal, vehicle inspection and maintenance.

8. Risk Assessment (see also separate Risk Management Policy)

The Town Clerk has a responsibility to ensure that all areas of risk within their area of responsibility are covered. A schedule of activities and associated hazards in the workplace will be produced by the Facilities & Buildings Manager to include:

- a) The potential risks (hazards which might be identified and associated with causes of accidents).
- b) The persons at risk.
- c) The risk rating.
- d) Action already taken to control risk.
- e) Action/procedures to be taken to minimise risk.

All risk assessments are to be reviewed at least annually and following any significant change, incident or identified risk, to ensure they remain relevant and adhere to current legislation.

9. Workplace / Equipment Inspections

An inspection log for each building and open space should be compiled by the Facilities & Buildings Manager and made available to the Health and Safety Executive and other authorised officers on request.

The log will include details of:

- a) Workplace areas that require inspection.
- b) Equipment and, in particular, safety equipment.
- c) The frequency of inspections of workplace/equipment.
- d) The dates of inspection and the name of the person undertaking the inspection.
- e) Maintenance contracts and inspection dates.

10. Accident Reporting

- a) Every accident, no matter how minor, is to be reported. For safety monitoring purposes and with a view to accident prevention, near miss incidents should also be reported.
- b) The Town Clerk/Facilities & Buildings Manager is to ensure that an accident reporting system is in place and understood by all employees. Reports are to be completed immediately after emergency treatment of the injured person and should be signed by the injured person where possible and/or by the person making the report.
- c) Reports should be examined when completed and recommendations made to prevent recurrence. Recommendations should be noted on the accident record and reported to the Executive Committee.
- d) Fatal accidents, specified injuries, dangerous occurrences and accidents resulting in more than seven consecutive days' incapacity for work are reportable to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). These reports will be made by the Town Clerk.

11. Procedures

Following assessment of potential workplace hazards, the Council will maintain suitable procedures, risk assessments, safe systems of work, guidance documents and training arrangements to provide employees with the information, instruction and supervision necessary to work safely.

11.1 Fire Precautions

- a) The Town Clerk is responsible for compliance with fire legislation, specifically the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- b) Fire safety inspections and analysis of potential fire hazards are completed by competent, suitably qualified contractors on a regular basis, and appropriate action taken as a result of those inspections.
- c) Fire Risk Assessments will be reviewed regularly and whenever significant changes occur to the premises, activities or occupancy.
- d) Fire extinguishers are provided and correctly sited to meet statutory and insurance requirements. All fire equipment is regularly tested and serviced by specialist contractors.
- e) All fire exits and escape routes are clearly marked.
- f) Fire awareness training is arranged tri-annually, and all employees are expected to attend.
- g) See also the Fire Safety Policy.

11.2 First Aid

- a) In order to comply with the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981, the Facilities & Buildings Manager should assess all premises and areas of work and ensure there are adequate first aid supplies in convenient and accessible places to meet emergencies that may arise.
- b) On commencement of employment, all staff are to be informed of the first aid provision, and any changes are to be brought to the attention of all employees.
- c) The names of suitably trained personnel are to be displayed at the Council Offices and the Facilities & Buildings Workshop. The minimum requirement for trained first aiders for the Council is two within the Facilities & Buildings Team and two within the Council Offices.

11.3 Manual Handling

In order to comply with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, the Town Clerk will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision are available to staff to avoid injury. Employees should note:

- a) Staff must ask for help and/or training if there is any risk of injury to themselves or damage to the object being handled.
- b) Where handling aids are provided, they must be used.

11.4 Electrical Appliances

Arrangements will be made by the Facilities & Buildings Manager for all electrical appliances to be inspected and tested on a regular basis by a competent person in accordance with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.

Before using any appliance, the user should check:

- a) All safety guards which are a normal part of the appliance are fitted and in working order.
- b) Power supply cables/leads are intact and free from cuts and abrasions.
- c) The electrical appliance carries a valid electrical safety testing label.
- d) Defective equipment must never be used and must be reported immediately.

11.5 Equipment

Regular monitoring ensures that work equipment is maintained in efficient working order and good repair. Where machinery or equipment has a maintenance log, it is kept up to date. This is the responsibility of the Facilities & Buildings Manager.

- a) Employees must not modify work equipment.
- b) Employees using equipment will be given adequate training before use.
- c) Employees using equipment will wear appropriate PPE provided by the Council.

11.6 Chemicals, Solvents and Detergents

- a) In accordance with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH), the Facilities & Buildings Manager will assess the health risks arising from hazardous substances. Safety data sheets are supplied with all such materials and employees using them will be informed accordingly.
- b) Employees should familiarise themselves with the hazards associated with materials and precautions to be taken in the event of spillages, splashes or other incidents. Employees will use the appropriate PPE provided by the Council when using hazardous substances. COSHH assessments and safety data sheets will be maintained and made accessible to relevant staff.

11.7 Display Screen Equipment

a) To ensure compliance with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, the Facilities & Buildings Manager will assess the workstations of employees who are regular DSE users and make any necessary adjustments in relation to:

- i. Workstation design.
- ii. Visual issues arising from work.
- iii. Working arrangements to reduce eye strain and fatigue.

b) Corrective measures will be taken where necessary. The Council shall ensure that eligible employees are provided with an appropriate eyesight test carried out by a competent professional. See also the Eye Test & Glasses Policy.

11.8 Lone and Isolated Working

- a) Under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, all employees have a duty to take reasonable care for their own safety and that of anyone else who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
- b) Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places a duty on the Council to assess risks arising from work activities. Relevant risk assessments will be maintained by the Facilities & Buildings Manager.

12. Welfare

Employees are reminded that:

- a) Any person who is under medical supervision or taking prescribed medication, and who has been certified fit for work, should notify their Line Manager of any known side effects or temporary physical limitations which could affect their safety or the safety of others. Appropriate duties may be assigned where necessary.
- b) Employees or councillors must not attend Council premises, meetings or undertake Council duties whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Any employee found breaching this requirement may be subject to disciplinary action. Concerns regarding councillors will be dealt with in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct and, where appropriate, referred to the Monitoring Officer.

13. Training

- a) All new employees will be shown the location of first aid equipment, fire exits and fire equipment and instructed on relevant safety issues. The employee's Line Manager will ensure that a Health & Safety awareness programme is incorporated into the induction process, supported by the Facilities & Buildings Manager where appropriate.
- b) Safe working practices as laid out in the procedures manual or code of practice must be explained and demonstrated where necessary before a new employee undertakes their full duties.
- c) All staff must be made aware of their responsibilities for health and safety as defined in this document and associated procedures. Failure to comply with Health & Safety policies and procedures may lead to disciplinary action.
- d) Employees must report any equipment or premises defects they discover and any malpractice identified in the course of their work. See also the Whistleblowing Policy.
- e) Safety training, including fire awareness, manual handling and first aid, should be considered essential where relevant to an employee's role and incorporated into the overall training and development programme.
- f) Attendance at all Health & Safety training and instruction shall be documented and recorded on employees' personnel files.

14. Information and Communication

- a) The current statutory Health and Safety Executive information poster, or equivalent information, shall be displayed in the office and workshop and brought to the attention of new employees. Relevant Health & Safety guidance should be made available to staff as required.

- b) The Town Clerk must ensure that all employees, including temporary and casual workers, are provided with comprehensive and relevant information regarding identified health and safety risks and any preventative or protective measures.
- c) The Town Clerk and Facilities & Buildings Manager must ensure they keep up to date with changes in Health & Safety legislation and guidance.

15. Disciplinary Action

- a) The Town Clerk must make it clear to all employees that contravention of the Health & Safety Policy and related documentation constitutes a disciplinary matter and may result in dismissal for serious or repeated breaches.
- b) Any employee leaving their workplace because of serious, imminent or unavoidable danger will not be dismissed or disadvantaged for doing so.

16. General Safety

- a) The Council aims to provide a healthy and safe working environment. This can be achieved through the support of all employees by:
 - i. Complying with general safety rules.
 - ii. Using plant, machinery and equipment safely and properly.
 - iii. Following approved procedures and safe systems of work.
 - iv. Keeping work areas clean and tidy.
 - v. Keeping corridors and escape routes clear from obstruction.
 - vi. Ensuring fire points remain accessible and ready for use.
- b) The Council reminds all employees of their duties under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
- c) Employees also have duties under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to use equipment, materials and substances in accordance with training and instructions and to report risks or shortcomings in protective arrangements.

17. Legal Implications

- a) The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 places general duties and responsibilities on employees, volunteers and elected and co-opted members of the Council.
- b) Any employee, volunteer, elected or co-opted member who behaves in a way that endangers the health and safety of others may be subject to enforcement action by the Health and Safety Executive.
- c) Improvement Notices and Prohibition Notices may be served in respect of a person, which includes both individuals and organisations.
- d) An Improvement Notice will specify the action required to comply with relevant statutory provisions and the timescale for compliance.
- e) A Prohibition Notice may be issued if an inspector believes an activity involves, or is likely to involve, a risk of serious personal injury.
- f) Any employee, volunteer, elected or co-opted member receiving an Improvement Notice or Prohibition Notice issued under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 must immediately inform the Town Clerk.

Diss Town Council

Health and safety legislation generally recognises employers and employees rather than individual job titles. The following paragraphs define Health & Safety responsibilities within the Council.

The Elected Council

The Council will ensure that it has an effective Health & Safety Policy covering areas under its control and that adequate resources are available to implement the policy. Appropriate insurance arrangements and supporting documentation will be maintained.

Town Clerk

The Town Clerk is ultimately responsible for ensuring that this policy is maintained, reviewed and implemented. The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring:

- a) Employees receive appropriate information, instruction and training to carry out their duties safely.
- b) Sufficient resources are allocated through the Council's budgeting process to meet the requirements of this policy.

Safety Officer

The Facilities & Buildings Manager, under the direction of the Town Clerk, is the Council's Safety Officer and is responsible for:

- a) Assessing, controlling and monitoring Health & Safety arrangements.
- b) Coordinating Health & Safety training.
- c) Ensuring adequate fire protection and prevention measures.
- d) Maintaining safety records.
- e) Investigating accidents and dangerous occurrences.
- f) Completing and reviewing risk assessments.
- g) Monitoring Council facilities for Health & Safety issues.
- h) Reporting unresolved Health & Safety matters to the Town Clerk.
- i) Providing staff with relevant information regarding Health & Safety risks.

Employees, Volunteers and Members

All employees, volunteers and members have a duty to:

- a) Familiarise themselves with this policy and associated Health & Safety information.
- b) Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others.
- c) Co-operate with the Council in fulfilling statutory obligations.
- d) Use protective equipment and safety devices provided.

- e) Follow training and instructions.
- f) Report accidents promptly.
- g) Report defects in premises, sites or equipment to the Facilities & Buildings Manager.

Visitors and Contractors

Visitors and contractors must:

- a) Be informed of relevant hazards and precautions when attending Council premises.
- b) Complete site-specific risk assessments where appropriate.
- c) Co-operate with Council Health & Safety arrangements.
- d) Be provided with access to relevant safety information, including asbestos records where applicable.