



Okehampton Town Council

# Okehampton Town Council

## Health and Safety Policy

It is our policy to provide, so far as is reasonably practicable:

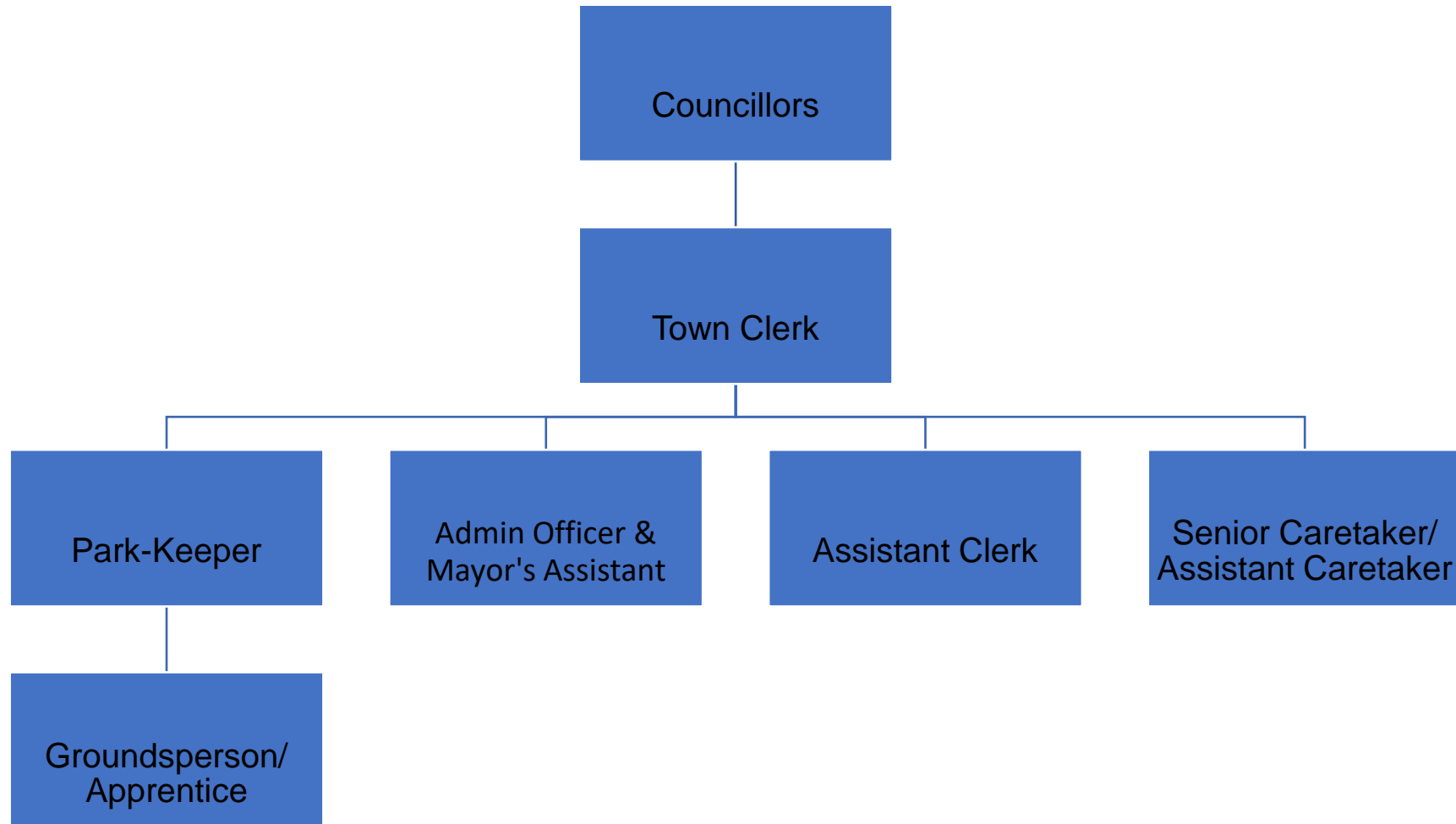
- A workplace and work activities that will be safe for our employees, visitors and others who may be affected by what we do.
- Safe plant, equipment and systems of work.
- Safe use, handling and storage of articles and substances.
- Instruction and training for and consultation with our employees.
- A safe working environment.
- Adequate facilities and welfare arrangements.
- Sufficient resources to implement the policy and the assignment of responsibilities.

Employees are reminded that they have a duty to take all reasonable steps for their health and safety and other people who may be affected and to co-operate with arrangements in all matters relating to health and safety.

This policy will be kept up-to-date and reviewed at least annually.



# Health And Safety Organisational Chart



## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Town Clerk**

The Clerk is the designated person with overall responsibility for health and safety within the Council and will ensure that:

- our Health and Safety Policy is implemented, monitored, developed, communicated effectively, reviewed and amended as required
- suitable and sufficient funds, people, materials and equipment are provided to meet all health and safety requirements
- adequate insurance cover is provided and renewed
- competent persons are appointed to provide health and safety assistance and advice
- an adequate system of maintenance exists and operates to keep premises, plant and work equipment in a safe condition
- statutory examinations are planned, completed and recorded
- there is regular communication and consultation with staff on health and safety issues
- an effective training programme is established to ensure staff are competent to carry out their work in a safe manner
- safe systems of work are developed and implemented
- accidents, ill health and 'near miss' incidents at work are recorded, investigated and reported
- safety issues raised are thoroughly investigated and, when necessary, further effective controls implemented and communicated to staff
- contractors engaged are reputable, can demonstrate a good health and safety record and are made aware of relevant local health and safety rules and procedures
- effective contingency plans are in place with a designated competent person in charge of the planning and control measures for situations involving imminent danger

### **Town Councillors**

The Councillors have the ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of Okehampton Town Council but discharges this responsibility through the Clerk down to individual managers, supervisors and employees.

The Council has nominated the Clerk to have special responsibility for health and safety.

The Council will ensure that:

- they provide a lead in developing a positive health and safety culture throughout the organisation

- all its decisions reflect its health and safety intentions
- adequate resources are made available for the implementation of health and safety
- they will promote the active participation of workers in improving health and safety performance
- they will review the health and safety performance of the Council on an annual basis
- provide an adequate budget enabling safety inspection, testing, training and the provision of PPE

### **Park-Keeper/Caretakers**

The Manager/Supervisor will ensure that in their areas of control:

- they actively lead the implementation of our Health and Safety Policy
- they supervise their staff to ensure that they work safely, providing increased supervision for new and young workers
- safe systems of work are developed and implemented
- risk assessments are completed, recorded and regularly reviewed
- accidents, ill health and “near miss” incidents at work are investigated, recorded and reported
- they communicate and consult with staff on health and safety issues
- they encourage staff to report hazards and raise health and safety concerns
- safety training for staff is identified, undertaken and recorded to ensure staff are competent to carry out their work in a safe manner
- issues concerning safety raised by anyone are thoroughly investigated and, when necessary, further effective controls implemented
- premises, plant and work equipment are maintained in a safe condition
- personal protective equipment is provided, staff instructed in its use and that records are kept
- adequate arrangements for fire and first aid are established
- any safety issues that cannot be dealt with are referred to the Clerk for action
- welfare facilities provided are maintained in a satisfactory state
- hazardous substances are stored, transported, handled and used in a safe manner according to manufacturers’ instructions and established rules and procedures
- health surveillance is carried out and records are kept

- contractors engaged are reputable, can demonstrate a good health and safety record and are made aware of relevant local health and safety rules and procedures
- health and safety notices are displayed
- agreed safety standards are maintained particularly those relating to housekeeping
- health and safety rules are followed by all

### **Employees**

All employees must:

- take reasonable care of their own safety
- take reasonable care of the safety of others affected by their actions
- observe the safety rules
- comply with the Health and Safety policy
- conform to all written or verbal instructions given to them to ensure their personal safety and the safety of others
- dress sensibly and safely for their particular working environment or occupation
- conduct themselves in an orderly manner in the work place and refrain from any antics or pranks
- use all safety equipment and/or protective clothing as directed
- avoid any improvisations of any form which could create an unnecessary risk to their personal safety and the safety of others
- maintain all equipment in good condition and report defects to their supervisor
- report any safety hazard or malfunction of any item of plant or equipment to their supervisor
- report all accidents to their supervisor whether an injury is sustained or not
- attend as requested any health and safety training course
- observe all laid down procedures for processes, materials and substances used
- observe the fire evacuation procedure and the position of all fire equipment and fire exit routes

## **Accident Investigation and Reporting**

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

A near miss is an unplanned event that did not cause injury or damage but had the potential to do so.

It is our policy to investigate:

- All accidents resulting in any reportable injury or losses of any assets
- Accidents, however minor
- All near-misses

A documented investigation will take place for selected incidents with witness statements and photographs taken where appropriate.

Certain accidents causing injury, diseases and dangerous occurrences are reportable to the enforcing authority under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013. A list of reportable incidents can be found on [www.hse.gov.uk/riddor](http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor)

Reporting of such an incident is done online via the [www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/report](http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/report) portal

## **Alcohol and Drug Abuse**

No alcohol can be consumed on the premises at any time unless under the permission of the Town Clerk.

Anyone found taking alcohol or drugs on the premises or whilst working without permission is guilty of gross misconduct and will be disciplined accordingly.

The Council reserves the right to require employees to undertake a medical test if it considers there to be a safety implication.

## **Asbestos**

The Policy of Okehampton Town Council is to:

- Produce and maintain an Asbestos Register that is available to all staff, contractors and property users.
- Promote awareness of the hazards associated with asbestos.
- Produce a Management Policy and Procedures Plan.
- Periodically review the plan to ensure that any areas of asbestos requiring it, are sealed, encapsulated, inspected, monitored, labelled or removed.
- Ensure the Council's Policy conforms to Regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2012.

## **Consultation and Training**

The Company is committed to providing employees with adequate information, instruction and training. Staff meetings will be held regularly with feedback and suggestions welcomed from all staff members.

A mixture of both internal and external training will be provided and;

- We will ensure that all newly appointed or promoted staff receive an efficient induction into their jobs.
- We will provide training to increase the productivity and performance of existing staff, ensuring that they are updated in line with new legislative requirements, techniques and technology.
- Training needs will be reviewed at least once a year.
- Records of training will be kept for all employees.

## **Contractors**

All contractors working on our premises and land are required to comply with appropriate rules and regulations governing their work activities.

Before any work is undertaken a risk assessment and method statement are requested.

## **COSHH**

We recognise that some substances have the potential to cause ill health and we will introduce measures to identify any such substances our employees use or are exposed to in the course of their work.

Where practical alternatives exist, we will not use harmful substances.

Substances that we must use will be assessed and control measures introduced to prevent risk.

Employees will be advised of the risks, provided with the appropriate protective equipment and trained accordingly.

COSHH safety data sheets are produced and information is readily accessible.

## **Display Screen Equipment**

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

To achieve this objective the Council will:

- carry out an assessment of each user's workstation
- implement necessary measures to remedy any risks found as a result of the assessment

- provide adequate information and training to persons working with display screen equipment
- endeavour to incorporate changes of task within the working day, to prevent intensive periods of on-screen activity
- review software to ensure that it is suitable for the task and is not unnecessarily complicated
- arrange for the provision of free eye tests when requested, at regular intervals thereafter and where a visual problem is experienced
- arrange for the supply, free of charge, of any corrective appliances (basic spectacles) where these are required specifically for working with display screen equipment
- advise existing employees, and all persons applying for work with display screen equipment, of the risks to health and how these are to be avoided
- investigate any discomfort or ill-health believed to be associated with the use of display screen equipment and take appropriate remedial action
- make special arrangements for individuals with health conditions that could be adversely affected by working with display screen equipment

Employees must:

- comply with the instructions and training given regarding safe workstation set-up and use, including the need for regular changes of activity or breaks and the use of the equipment provided
- inform their line manager of any disability or health condition which may affect their ability to work using display screen equipment or be affected by working with DSE (this information will be treated confidentially)
- report to their line manager any discomfort or health concern believed to be associated with the use of DSE (this information will be treated confidentially)

### **Driving At Work**

Driving is an integral part to some roles within the Council and has inherent risks associated with it which drivers should be made aware of.

The Council is committed to reducing the risks its staff face or create when driving at work and therefore will:

- ensure risk assessments are completed and that journeys are planned
- not put unreasonable time constraints on travel
- ensure those driving for business are competent (and where required, authorised) and fit



- provide any additional training that may be deemed necessary to reduce driving related occupational risks
- require drivers to agree to allow the company to check licences online

Where providing Council vehicles:

- maintain them to the required legal standard and ensure suitable for their purpose
- provide and maintain additional tools and equipment necessary for the purposes of the journey
- provide them with regard to safety and the environment i.e. higher ENCAP ratings, lower emissions, better fuel consumption
- provide access to breakdown support and recovery

### **Implementation**

The Council asks its entire staff to play their part, whether they use a company vehicle, their own or a hire vehicle.

Driving is an integral part to some roles within the Council.

The Council is committed to reducing the risks its staff face or create when driving at work and therefore will:

- Not put unreasonable time constraints on travel.
- Ensure those driving for business are competent (and where required, authorised) and fit.
- Require drivers to annually submit copies of their current driving licence and confirm they are physically fit to drive.
- Maintain the vehicles owned by the council to the required legal standard and ensure suitable for their purpose.

### **Drivers**

Drivers will remain responsible for their safety and others must comply with the Highway Code and Road Traffic Act.

It is the responsibility of drivers to inform the Town Clerk of:

- Anything that could affect their driving, e.g. health conditions or injuries, use of prescribed medication.
- Changes to licence such as; limitations, offences recorded, period bans.
- Vehicle defects that affect ability/safety to drive.
- Any accidents/incidents that occurred whilst driving on behalf of the Council.

- Be physically fit and not under influence of any alcohol or drugs that may affect the ability to drive.
- Have had an eye test in the last two years and be using any corrective appliance.
- Adjust their driving position, head restraints and mirrors to ensure maximum comfort and safety.

Whilst driving, drivers must: -

- Drive in accordance with the applicable law and with consideration for the safety of passengers and other road users.
- Remain in control of the vehicle at all times.
- Not smoke in a Council vehicle.
- Only use electronic devices, e.g. mobile phones, satellite navigation, mp3 player, when set up to do so, i.e. using a hands-free device.
- Never use any handheld electronic device, e.g. mobile phone, satellite navigation, mp3 player.

**Office based staff should:**

- Not expect staff to answer calls when they are driving. Leave a short message and await the return call.

**Electricity at Work**

All electrical systems on our premises will be inspected to ensure there is no danger.

Portable appliances will be given a thorough electrical test by a competent person at fixed intervals, which reflect the potential risks associated with the class of appliance.

The fixed wiring installation supplying electrical sockets, lighting or other wired in equipment will be inspected by a competent electrician at least every five years.

Any hirer of the premises will be required to produce evidence that electrical equipment being brought on to the premises is PAT tested

**Fire Safety**

We will put in place arrangements for the assessment of risks from fire and appropriate control measures to minimise the risks identified. These measures will include the following arrangements, procedures and controls.

- Regular inspection of the premises for fire safety.
- Adequate means of detecting and warning of a fire
- Fire extinguishers will be placed at clearly signed fire points.
- Emergency exit routes will be kept clear at all times.

- We will train in the use of extinguishers, procedures for fire drills and evacuation
- Records of training and drills will be kept.
- Undertake an annual fire risk assessment
- Regular inspection of the premises for fire safety.

### **First Aid**

We recognise our legal duty to make sufficient provision for first aid to employees.

We will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that there are an adequate number of trained first aiders.

Lone workers will also have their needs considered in respect of first aid.

In the event of anything other than minor injuries, medical assistance must be sought.

### **Legionella**

Okehampton Town Council accepts it has a responsibility to protect employees, contractors, members of the public and others who may be affected by its business operation against the risk of *Legionella* infection (legionellosis), arising from plant, equipment, facilities, work, or work- related activities and will implement the procedures below to ensure this responsibility is met.

[Refer to Okehampton Town Council's Water Safety Plan.](#)

### **Lone Working**

#### **Definition**

The definition of Lone Working for the purposes of this document refers to situations where staff, in the course of their duties, work alone or are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance.

Lone working will be avoided where possible, and managed when it is necessary for members of staff to work alone. Any concerns should be directed to the Town Clerk.

Okehampton Town Council will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that employees who are required to work alone or unsupervised for significant periods of time are protected from risks to their health and safety. This includes apprentices who are subject to the same employment terms and conditions as other employees, volunteers and Councillors.

Okehampton Town Council will determine, by risk assessment, those activities where work can be done safely by an unaccompanied person. This will include the identification of hazards from means of access and/or egress, plant, machinery, goods, substances, environment and atmosphere, etc.

Particular consideration will be given to:

- The remoteness or isolation of work location

- Any problems of communication
- The possibility of interference, such as violence or criminal activity from other persons
- The nature of injury or damage to health
- Known/identified medical concerns in relation to individual employees

### **Information and Training**

Those affected will be given all necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to recognise the hazards and appreciate the risks involved with working alone.

Employees will be required to follow the safe working procedures implemented by the Council, including:

- Checking that the work being carried out has been subject to risk assessment and if there are any specific requirements in place to reduce or eliminate any identified risks. Some tasks may have been identified as requiring the assistance of a second person or prohibited from being a lone working activity.
- When working alone, e.g. in an isolated area, another employee must be aware of their location and the expected time frame necessary to complete the task.
- If possible, contact with a nominated person at regular intervals should be arranged before undertaking the task, e.g. via use of a mobile. If there is no mobile phone connectivity, then an alternative method of checking in must be arranged
- Employees must not put themselves at risk; if they do not feel safe they must discuss the situation with the Town Clerk or line manager

### **Nominated Person**

Any person nominated to be the contact for a lone worker must ensure contact is received after the allotted time.

If the allotted time passes without and no contact has been made, the nominated person must seek to make contact with the lone worker;

- Contact lone worker using established method
- Visit last known location, if the lone worker is not there
- Visit other likely places of work and/or contact next of kin to attempt to establish whereabouts
- Emergency services

### **Risk assessments**

Risk Assessments will be reviewed annually or earlier if any significant changes take place, following an accident/incident or following any concerns being raised. Any review should ensure that existing control measures are adequate and check if any additional controls are needed.

### **Manual Handling**

Manual handling risks are present in most aspects of work.

We will undertake risk assessments in respect of all manual handling operations identified as having a significant risk and will strive to reduce these risks as far as possible.

Training in lifting techniques will be provided for staff involved in all operations identified as having a significant risk.

### **Noise**

Certain activities generate noise such as the use of equipment and machinery however it is the exposure over a long period of time that is most likely to cause harm.

The Council will assess the level of exposure and put the appropriate level of control in place which may include replacing the noisy equipment or it may be a simple of providing ear protection for individuals.

All employees affected by noise will be provided with information, instruction and training.

### **Occupational Ill Health**

We will take all reasonably practicable measures to prevent our employees from suffering any adverse health risks. Early detection of adverse health risks associated with our activities allows the council to confirm that adequate controls measures are in place.

Where, by risk assessment, it is considered appropriate we will provide health surveillance by qualified medical professionals.

All employees considered to be at risk will be required to comply with all reasonable requests for medical surveillance.

The frequency of surveillance will be determined by several factors which may include the individual's susceptibility to harm. This will be discussed with the health professional and a programme of testing put into place.

Annual monitoring for HAVS is undertaken for those members of staff who could be affected by regular use of such equipment.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

PPE will be provided where our risk assessments show that a risk cannot otherwise be avoided.

It will only be used where it is not reasonably practicable to modify the activity, the process, or the method of work to prevent risk.

PPE will be maintained and replaced as necessary to ensure its effectiveness. Employees must report loss or obvious defects in PPE as soon as practicable.

### **Radon**

Radon testing will be carried out in ground floor offices on a five yearly basis, the results of which will be reported to the council.

Should results be above the recommended safe levels the Council will consider the action to be taken in line with legislation.

### **Risk Assessment**

We will carry out suitable and sufficient assessments of the risks to the health and safety of our employees and to others who might be affected by our work activities.

### **Safety Inspections**

Safety inspections, as applicable, will be arranged at appropriate intervals. All safety equipment will be regularly tested to ensure effectiveness

### **Smoking At Work**

Exposure to second-hand smoke, also known as passive smoking, increases the risk of lung cancer, heart disease and other illnesses. Ventilation or separating smokers and non-smokers within the same airspace does not stop potentially dangerous exposure.

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

Smoking is prohibited throughout the entire workplace with no exceptions. This includes Company vehicles that are used by more than one employee. This policy applies to all employees, customers and visitors.

For the purpose of this Policy e-cigarettes or “Vaping” is classed as smoking and is subject to the same restrictions

### **Stress Management**

We recognise that stress is an increasing factor in our daily lives.

The definition of stress is “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other demands placed upon them” This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.

The Council will attempt to identify the stressors within the workplace and control them wherever possible, it will consult with staff on issues and train individual Line Managers in good management practices

The Council will provide confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by work related issues

It is every employee’s responsibility to raise concerns to either your Line Manager, or Town Clerk and accept counselling when recommended. For further information refer to the Workplace Stress Management Policy.

### **The Indoor Environment**

It is our policy to provide a working environment that is safe and comfortable.

### **The Outdoor Environment**

#### **Trees**

The Council are responsible for numerous trees situated around the town and acknowledge its responsibility to ensure they are well maintained.

Trees are of great benefit to the Town and the overall risk to human safety is extremely low, however the Council does have a duty of care and will undertake a balanced and proportionate approach to tree safety.

- Independent Inspection – The Council on a regular basis will arrange for all trees under their control to be assessed by a suitably qualified person with expertise in tree management. The Council will react accordingly to the recommendations with regards to tree maintenance.
- Visual Inspection – Depending on the recommendations of the expert report the Council will undertake regular visual inspections at appropriate intervals. The interval will be dependent on condition, location and size of the tree.

All inspections will be documented.

### **Play Areas and Skate Parks**

The Council recognises the need to keep the play areas and equipment safe for the users and as such will continue to do the following :-

- Daily inspection (on working days) by Park-Keeper of the Play Areas, the Skate Park will be inspected on a weekly basis
- Annual Independent Inspection.

### **Cemetery**

The Council is responsible for the newest Cemetery adjacent to All Saints Church, separate risk assessments and policies for safe working and access to this area are in place.

Inspection of Memorials in accordance with the relevant policy are undertaken at least annually.

### **Visitors**

Our policy regarding the control of visitors on our premises is that:

- We must be aware that the visitor is on the premises.
- Visitors are the responsibility of the Council whilst on the premises.

All visitors must comply with any instructions given to them.

### **Work Equipment**

We will, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that all work equipment is safe and without risk.

To minimise the risk of injury from work equipment we will:

- Carry out risk assessments of all equipment in use and all new or second hand equipment purchased.

- Carry out inspections to ensure all safety critical features remain fully effective.
- Ensure that all maintenance procedures are kept up-to-date.
- Provide suitable training.

### **Young Persons/Okehampton Town Youth Council**

We will pay special regard to the needs of any young persons by risk assessing the tasks we are asking them to do and take into account their inexperience and immaturity.

Refer to the separate Health and Safety Policy for the Youth Council.

### **Arrangements**

- Overall and final responsibility for health and safety is that of the Town Council
- Day to day responsibility for ensuring the policy is put into practice is delegated to the Town Clerk
- Our nominated Competent Person is James Hallam Insurance Brokers
- The following employees are responsible for health and safety in their areas:-

<b>Name</b>	<b>Area with the Responsibility of</b>
Town Clerk	Property Committee
Park-Keeper	Parks Committee

- Employees should report any health and safety concerns to the Town Clerk
- The Town Clerk will be responsible for ensuring any risk assessments as required by regulations are undertaken.
- Action required to reduce or control the risks will be approved by the Town Clerk
- The Town Clerk will be responsible for ensuring that employees are made aware of the findings of the risk assessments and any control measures identified.
- Any defects in plant, equipment, buildings or systems should be reported to the Town Clerk
- The Health and Safety Law Poster is displayed in the Town Hall and the Park-Keepers office

### **Arrangements**



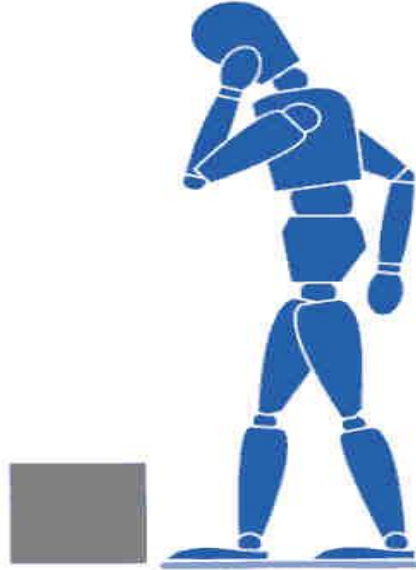
- Induction training for new employees is the responsibility of the Town Clerk/Park-Keeper
- Job training will be co-ordinated by the Town Clerk/Park-Keeper
- The training plan will be reviewed at least annually
- Training records are kept in the Town Clerk's office
- The first aid boxes are kept in the Town Hall main office and first floor kitchen, the Charter Hall kitchen and in the Park-Keepers office, tractor and van.
- The Accident forms are kept In the Town Hall and the Park Keepers Office
- All accidents should be reported to the Town Clerk
- the Town Clerk will conduct an accident investigation
- Emergency escape routes are checked weekly by Caretaker
- Fire safety checks are carried out weekly by Caretaker
- Fire extinguishers are maintained by Chubb
- The fire alarm is tested weekly by Caretaker

## **Manual Handling**

### **PRINCIPLES OF GOOD HANDLING TECHNIQUE**

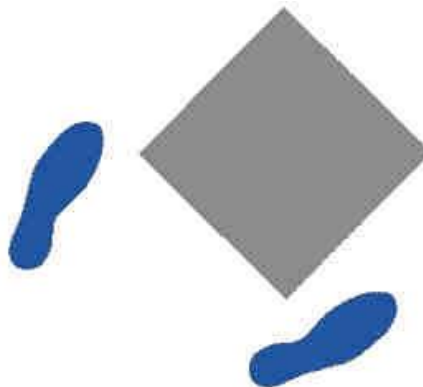
#### **1 Planning**

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



#### **2 Feet**

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



#### **3 Knees**

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

#### **4 Back**

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

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

## 5 Arms

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



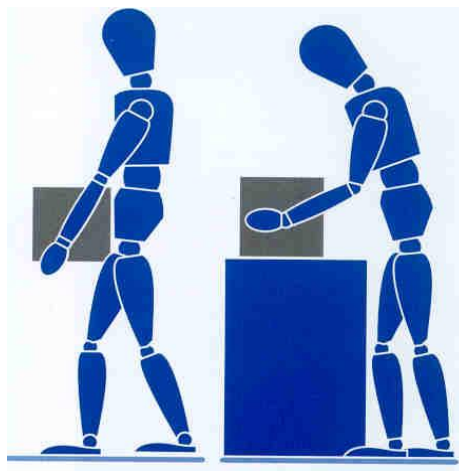
## 6 Hands

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

## 7 Head

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

## 8 Moving the load



- Keep the load as close to the trunk for as long as possible, and where relevant, keep the heaviest side of the load close to the body. Slide the load towards you if required.
- Lift smoothly
- Move the feet not the trunk when turning to the side, i.e., don't twist.

- Put the load down and then slide the load into the required position if necessary.

## 9 Team Handling

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



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

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

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

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

Some practical tips:

### **Getting comfortable**

- Adjust your chair and VDU to find the most comfortable position for your work. As a broad guide, your 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 is directly facing windows or bright lights. Adjust curtains or blinds to prevent unwanted light.
- Make sure there is space under your desk to move your legs freely. Move any obstacles such as boxes or equipment.
- Avoid excess pressure from the edge of your seat on the backs of your legs and knees. A footrest may be helpful, particularly for smaller users.

### **Keying In**

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

### **Using a mouse**

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

### **Reading the screen**

- Adjust the brightness and contrast controls on the screen to suit lighting conditions in the room.
- Make sure the screen surface is clean.

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

### **Posture and breaks**

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

## **Ladders and Stepladders**

This guidance is to help you:

- know when to use a ladder;
- decide how to go about selecting the right sort of ladder for the particular job;
- understand how to use it;
- know how to look after it; and
- take sensible safety precautions.

When is a ladder the most suitable access equipment?

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

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

On a **ladder** where you cannot maintain a handhold, other than for a brief period of time, other measures will be needed to prevent a fall or reduce the consequences of one. On **stepladders** where a handhold is not practicable you will need to consider whether it is safe to work or not.

Is it a safe place to use a ladder or stepladder?

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

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

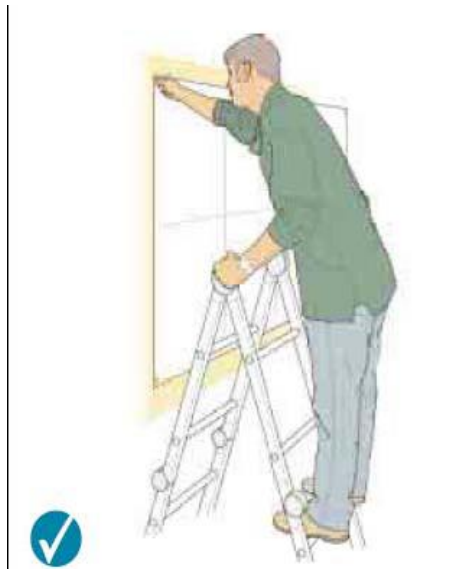
Never stand ladders or stepladders on moveable objects, such as pallets, bricks, lift trucks, tower scaffolds, vans, stacks of paper or boxes etc. If the ladder or stepladder won't reach, you need to use a more suitable type of access equipment.

### **Safety in use – stepladders**

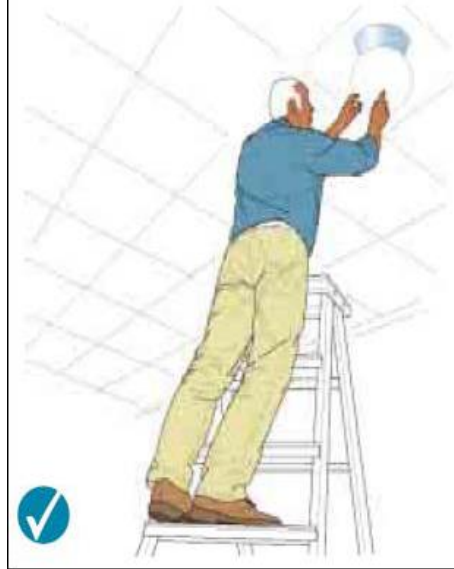
On a stepladder **do not**:

- overload it – you and anything you are carrying should not exceed the highest load stated on the stepladder;
- use it in locations where the restraint devices cannot be fully opened. Any locking devices must also be engaged;

- use the top two steps of a stepladder, unless a suitable handrail is available on the stepladder;
- don't use the top three steps of swing-back or double-sided stepladders, where a step forms the very top of the stepladder.



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



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

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



Incorrect – steps side on to work activity



Correct – steps facing work activity

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

- the height of the task;



- a safe handhold still being available on the stepladder;
- whether it is light work ;
- whether it avoids side loading;
- whether it avoids overreaching
- whether your feet are fully supported; and
- whether you can tie the stepladder.

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

### **Is the ladder or stepladder safe to be used?**

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

- have no visible defects.
- have a current detailed visual inspection (look for an inspection label).
- are suitable for work use. Use Class 1 or EN 131 ladders or stepladders at work because domestic (Class 3) ones are not normally suitable for use at work;
- have been maintained and stored in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

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

### **Pre-use checks**

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

- all the ladder feet are fitted;
- the feet are in good repair (not loose, missing, splitting, excessively worn, secure etc);
- the feet are clean - the feet should be in contact with the ground. Ladder feet should also be checked when moving from soft/dirty ground (e.g. dug soil, loose sand/stone, a dirty workshop) to a smooth, solid surface (e.g. paving slabs), to ensure the foot material and not the dirt (e.g. soil, embedded stones or swarf) is making contact with the ground;
- all the screws, bolts and hinges are secure;
- on a stepladder, that the "spreaders" on the ladder can be locked into place.
- There are no other obvious signs of damage such as cracks.

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

### **Storage**

When storing ladders and stepladders, store them in a well ventilated area to prevent sagging and warping. Store straight ladders in flat racks or on wall brackets, don't hand them from the rungs. Store step ladders in the closed, vertical position.

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