



Midsomer Norton Town Council

Health, Safety and

Welfare Policy & Guidelines

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1. HEALTH SAFETY & WELFARE POLICY

MIDSOMER NORTON TOWN COUNCIL (MNTC) has a Health and Safety Policy to protect all of its employees, visitors, contractors and users of premises, and to encourage safe working practices. This document explains the Policy and the systems that have been set up, within the organisation, to make sure that the Policy is working.

Please read this document carefully, and make sure you understand it. If you want to discuss safety matters generally, or have a particular problem, you should consult the Town Clerk.

2. STATEMENT OF HEALTH, SAFETY and WELFARE POLICY

DECLARATION

MIDSOMER NORTON TOWN COUNCIL hereby gives notice of its acceptance of responsibility as an employer to pursue a policy which ensures, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees, tenants, contractors, visitors, and others who may be affected by the Council's activities, and declare their intention to meet the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and all other relevant statutory provisions.

The Council recognises that accident prevention is an essential element of good work practice and that its pursuit benefits the efficiency of the Council's operations, as well as the welfare of its employees. It is recognised that effective prevention of injury and damage requires commitment at every level. Appropriate preventative and protective measures are, and will continue to be, implemented following the identification of work-related hazards and assessment of the risks associated with them.

Expert advice will be sought as necessary when determining health, safety and welfare risks and the measures required to guard against them.

3. OBJECTIVES

Midsomer Norton Town Council's objectives in this respect are to:-

1. Provide and maintain workplaces which are without undue risk to the Health and Safety of any employee, contractor or visitor;
2. Provide a working environment of a standard that will ensure the Health and Safety of its employees and other persons who are likely to be affected by the Council's activities;
3. Assess the risks to the Health and Safety of employees and of anyone else who could be affected by the Council's work activities, record the significant findings of such assessments and make them available to employees and contractors. The compilation and implementation of practical codes of safety and health practice and conduct will be based on these risk assessments;
4. Provide, where appropriate, equipment, tools and plant which are safe and without undue risk to health;
5. Institute procedures for the reporting of defective equipment or other hazardous conditions, and for the rectification of such defects;
6. Make proper arrangements for the safe use, handling and storage of all articles and substances used by the Council;
7. Promote the instruction and training of employees in matters of health, safety and welfare, so as to enable them to recognise and avoid hazards at work;
8. Inform employees, contractors, visitors of the risks associated with MNTC work activities by means of notices and instructions, and to clearly describe the work methods necessary to minimise the likelihood of injury or of adverse effects on health;
9. Provide and maintain, where appropriate, safety equipment and protective clothing and ensure that employees are informed of their obligation in respect of its use;
10. Provide First Aid equipment, facilities and training, and to make such other emergency provisions as are necessary to ensure the Health and Safety of all employees, visitors and others allowed access to the Council's premises;
11. Institute a procedure for the recording of all accidents and instances of ill health occurring as a result of the Council's activities and ensure that such incidents are investigated;
12. Provide satisfactory welfare and amenity facilities and make such arrangements as may be necessary to ensure the welfare of employees whilst at work;

- 13.** Advise all employees and contractors of their obligations in Health and Safety matters and of the penalties for acting in such a way as to endanger the safety, health or welfare of themselves or others;
- 14.** Establish an organisation with responsibility for making this Policy effective.
- 15.** Ensure that accident prevention within the Council is an integral part of operational management;
- 16.** Ensure the proper direction and control of all persons other than employees allowed access to the Council's premises and also ensure they are not put at risk by the Council's work activities;
- 17.** Control the use of contractors on the Council's premises, and ensure that contractors work to safety rules at least of the same standard as those laid down through this Policy;
- 18.** Arrange for Health and Safety inspections of all premises and other areas at regular intervals, with reporting of findings and recommendations to the Members of the Council;
- 19.** Maintain arrangements with employees for joint consultation and participation in matters relating to their Health and Safety. The Council recognises the importance of employer/employee consultation;
- 20.** Keep the Health, Safety and Welfare Policy under constant review and make improvements, additions and amendments that from time to time may be deemed necessary or desirable.

4. **ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. The **Midsomer Norton Town Council** will:-

- (a) Receive health, safety and welfare reports from the Town Clerk;
- (b) Consider overall trends and issues likely to effect the Council;
- (c) Monitor the Health and Safety performance of the Council and compliance with legislation;
- (d) Promote a positive Health and Safety culture within the Council;
- (e) Ensure that adequate resources are available to discharge the Council's health, safety and welfare commitments;
- (f) Where necessary, give assistance to the Town Clerk in carrying out inspections in the interests of effective Health and Safety management;
- (g) Undertake in conjunction with the Town Clerk safety inspections, investigation of accidents, incidents, near misses, and other dangerous occurrences and forward reports of legally notifiable cases of disease to the appropriate authority.

2. The **Town Clerk**, on behalf of the Members of the Council, is to co-ordinate the implementation of the Health, Safety and Welfare Policy. The Town Clerk will:-

- (a) Advise on planning and development of Health and Safety training to meet the Council's requirements.
- (b) Advise on prevention of injury or ill health to personnel and damage to plant/equipment.
- (c) Advise on legal requirements affecting health, safety and welfare, and implementation of the Health, Safety and Welfare Policy.
- (d) Carry out routine site inspections, reporting on failures to meet the standards set and situations where employees are put at risk from inadequate Health and Safety facilities.
- (e) Maintain a central record containing such statutes, approved codes of practice, guidance notes, certificates, risk assessment reports, terms of reference, accident reports and investigations as are relevant.
- (f) Foster at the work place an understanding that injury prevention and damage control are an integral part of Council business and operational efficiency.

- (g) Make arrangements for carrying out suitable and sufficient risk assessments in relation to work activities to eliminate or control risks to the Health and Safety of employees.
 - (h) Ensure that all staff are fully aware of, and instructed in their responsibilities as imposed by, regulations, codes of practice and Council procedures, and take steps so far as is reasonably practicable to ensure that they are properly implemented.
 - (i) Ensure that all works carried out on Council premises and that all plant, machinery and equipment where relevant complies with statutory requirements and approved or agreed standards.
 - (j) Ensure that staff are conversant with the Council's accident or damage reporting procedures and the reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences as specified by regulations. Also, ensure that the cause of any accident and/or dangerous occurrence is thoroughly investigated and that effective follow-up action ensues.
 - (k) Provide adequate First Aid supplies and facilities in accordance with current regulations, and ensure that a responsible person is appointed to take control of the situation.
 - (l) Ensure that statutory notices as required are displayed and that all statutory registers are provided and used.
 - (m) Ensure that periodic statutory tests, inspections and where applicable maintenance of premises are carried out and the appropriate records kept.
 - (n) Ensure that adequate fire precautions and appliances are in place and that, in the event of an emergency, staff are conversant with the fire drill to ensure that the building/premises are vacated as quickly as possible.
 - (o) Make available and enforce the use where necessary of safety equipment and protective clothing, in accordance with current regulations.
 - (p) Ensure that all staff are competent to carry out their duties safely having received adequate information, instruction and training and where necessary that they hold a valid certificate of competence.
 - (q) Ensure that all employees are properly supervised and have been instructed and trained with regards to specific regulations and the relevant system of work and adequate training records kept.
 - (r) Ensure that regular consultation with the workforce takes place on matters such as the introduction of any measure that will affect their Health and Safety.
3. All **employees** are to take reasonable care of their own safety and that of any one else who may be affected by their work activities, and are required to cooperate

with Midsomer Norton Town Council in the fulfilment of its duties with regard to health, safety and welfare at work.

Each employee, therefore, will be responsible for:-

- (a) Making themselves familiar with and conforming to relevant Health and Safety instructions at all times.
- (b) Not interfering with or misusing anything provided in the interest of health, safety and welfare.
- (c) Reporting to the Town Clerk incidents that have led to, or may lead to, injury or damage, and any hazardous defects that they notice in the course of their duties.
- (d) Assisting as required in the investigation of accidents or incidents.
- (e) Wearing the appropriate protective equipment where required.
- (f) Reporting of any circumstances at work that could lead to injury or ill health.

TRAINING

The **Town Clerk** is responsible for ensuring that all members of staff are given the appropriate information, instruction and training to enable the activities of the Council to be carried out safely. Staff will be trained in the safe use of work equipment, and only suitably trained persons will be authorised to use any specialist equipment. A record will be kept of all training provided and training needs will be kept under ongoing review.

Signed:..... TOWN MAYOR AND CHAIR OF COUNCIL

Dated:.....

Signed:..... TOWN CLERK

Dated:.....

5. **CONTRACT WORKERS**

It is the Council's policy that when contractors are used, they will represent the Council in the same way as direct labour and are required to work to the Council's policy.

Arrangements are made to ensure that they are acquainted with, and adhere to, the Council's Health, Safety and Welfare Policy, and any other procedure or special instructions which may be in force relevant to specific operations.

A copy of the Policy and other relevant information is given to the sub-contractor upon acceptance of terms and conditions of the contract agreement.

Discussions as necessary will take place with the Town Clerk to ensure complete understanding of our procedures.

Adequate supervision will be necessary to complement the provision of information, instruction and training if required for ensuring that the Council's Policy is strictly adhered to.

It is a requirement to report all accidents, however minor. Serious accidents or major incidents should be reported immediately to the Town Clerk.

Should a contractor use a sub-contractor for any works, it is a requirement for them to conduct their work activities in such a way as to ensure that other persons are not exposed to risks to their health and/or safety.

6. OFFICE SAFETY

Offices are not regarded as 'dangerous places' but everyday objects are potential causes of injury to both employees and visitors. Matters such as the following should be borne in mind.

- (a) Furniture and equipment should be sensibly positioned so as not to impede movement around the office. Chairs should not be tilted backwards so excessively as to lift the castors off the floor.
- (b) Leads from telephones, computers, etc. should not be allowed to become tripping hazards.
- (c) Floors, stairs and doorways should not be obstructed and should be clear of litter, etc.
- (d) Carpet defects should be reported to the relevant person and dealt with promptly.
- (e) Filing cabinet and desk drawers should not be left open.
- (f) Heavy items should be placed in the lower filing cabinet drawers, in order to avoid making the cabinet unstable.
- (g) Chairs, etc. should not be climbed on to reach a high item, window, etc. Steps or a ladder should be used.
- (h) Faulty electrical equipment must be reported to the appropriate person. Staff should not attempt to carry out their own repairs.
- (i) Developers and toners must be used in accordance with the instructions and skin contact should be avoided.
- (j) The correct type of fire extinguisher should be readily available and prominently wall-mounted.
- (k) Fire exits should be unobstructed and fire doors closed.
- (l) The Health and Safety Information for Employees notice should be completed and displayed.

7. VISITORS

You are personally responsible for any visitors you invite onto Council premises throughout the entire period of their visit. All visitors must be signed in and accompanied by a member of staff throughout this time.

In the event of an emergency, you must personally conduct your visitor(s) to a place of safety.

Visitors must be advised of the fire evacuation procedure should the alarm activate during their visit.

Special consideration should be given to “vulnerable individuals” with medical conditions. In these cases, you should offer appropriate assistance, for instance by ensuring that they have easy access into and around the building and informing a First Aider in the event of an accident.

8. ACCIDENT REPORTING

When an accident/incident occurs, action must be taken. Injuries must receive prompt attention, and any immediate danger should be alleviated.

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) and the Social Security Act 1975 require organisations to record accidents/incidents and also to investigate and report to the nearest office of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) accidents which result in the following:-

- (a) FATALITIES;
- (b) SPECIFIED MAJOR INJURIES (see RIDDOR leaflet);
- (c) EMPLOYEES BEING ABSENT FROM WORK FOR MORE THAN 3 DAYS;
- (d) REPORTABLE INDUSTRIAL DISEASES; (see RIDDOR leaflet)

The organisation is also required to investigate and report any dangerous occurrences (see RIDDOR leaflet).

EMPLOYEES RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the duty of all staff who have an accident/incident or witness an accident/incident to another employee, visitor or member of the public to ensure that everything possible is done to minimise damage, particularly injury to persons.

Therefore:-

- (a) Obtain First Aid treatment for the injured person,
- (b) Ensure that the accident/incident is reported to the Town Clerk/Office Manager,
- (c) Record the accident/incident by filling in the Accident Book.

The **Town Clerk** will:-

- (a) Establish whether the circumstances or the result of the accident/incident are immediately reportable under RIDDOR as a major injury or as a dangerous occurrence;
- (b) Investigate the accident/incident and ensure that all necessary steps have been taken to prevent any immediate further injury or damage to property;
- (c) Ensure that an entry in the Accident Book has been made;
- (d) Take what steps are necessary to remedy the cause of the accident/incident to prevent a reoccurrence;

- (e) Ensure that if an injured employee is absent from work, or unable to carry out their normal work for more than three days (not including the day of the accident) form F2508 is completed and sent to the nearest office of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) within ten days of the accident.

9. **FIRST AID**

The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 place a general duty on employers to make, or ensure that there is made, adequate First Aid provision for their employees if they are injured or become ill at work.

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) has issued an Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) to accompany these regulations.

The **ACOP** requires employers to assess hazards in the workplace and make appropriate provision based upon that assessment. In the working environment these First Aid provisions should take into account employees, visitors, and users of premises

An organisation, in accordance with the requirements of the First Aid Approved Code of Practice, will need to provide suitable and sufficient First Aiders or Appointed Persons at all of its premises, ensuring that adequate First Aid cover is always maintained and available.

A First Aider is a person who holds a current First Aid Certificate approved by the HSE. The most familiar approved qualifications are those provided through courses organised by the Red Cross and St. John's Ambulance Brigade.

An Appointed Person is someone authorised to take charge of the situation if there is an injury or illness (and generally would have received emergency First Aid training).

The names of all such persons should be displayed at strategic points and also on or beside any First Aid box.

FIRST AID BOXES

First Aid boxes should contain a sufficient quantity of suitable First Aid materials and nothing else.

First Aid boxes should be designed to protect the contents from damp and dust and should be clearly marked with a white cross on a green background.

First Aid boxes which form part of an establishment's First Aid provision should only contain those items which First Aiders have been trained to use.

First Aiders and Appointed Persons are responsible for ensuring that First Aid boxes contain the correct type and quantity of First Aid materials.

It must be emphasised that First Aid boxes should NOT contain drugs of any kind including Aspirin or similar painkillers, and such medicines should NOT be issued by First Aiders to staff, or any other person treated, as there is a danger of adverse reaction in some cases. This extends to antiseptic creams or liquids, lotions etc. which may aggravate injuries in some cases.

First Aid boxes will be provided in all office locations and each First Aider will also be supplied with a suitable First Aid box.

FIRST AID BOXES

Recommended type and quantities of items for First Aid boxes:-

ITEM	Number of Staff and Visitors				
	1-5	6-10	11-50	51-100	101-150
Guidance card:	1	1	1	1	1
Individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings:	10	20	40	40	40
Sterile eye pads, with attachments:	1	2	4	6	8
Triangular bandages:	1	2	4	6	8
Sterile coverings for serious wounds (where applicable):	1	2	4	6	8
Safety pins:	6	6	12	12	12
Medium sterile unmedicated dressings:	3	6	8	10	12
Large sterile unmedicated dressings:	1	2	4	6	10
Extra large sterile unmedicated dressings:	1	2	4	6	8

Midsomer Norton Town Council will ensure appropriate First Aid provision for its activities and premises.

10. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

FIRE

In the presence of fire, panic and the urge to get away are natural reactions. Information about the action to take, and practice in that action, is essential to ensure the optimum response in the event of a fire.

Practice fire drills will take place at regular intervals, and will be logged with the time taken to evacuate recorded.

Copies of notices giving simple guidance on what to do in the event of fire should be displayed in all workplaces and premises where persons could be at risk from fire. Staff should familiarise themselves with the instructions shown.

ACTION ON HEARING THE ALARM

- (a) **EVACUATE THE BUILDING** by the nearest available exit, ensuring all persons under your control leave with you.
- (b) **DO NOT** collect personal belongings (e.g. coats and bags)
- (c) **DO NOT** run or panic - there is no need. Move swiftly but calmly.
- (d) **CLOSE THE DOOR** if you are the last person to leave a room.
- (e) **PROCEED** to your designated assembly point.
- (f) **DO NOT RE-ENTER** or allow other persons to enter the building until told to do so by a person in authority.

IF YOU DISCOVER A FIRE

- (a) **OPERATE THE ALARM** from the nearest call point.
- (b) **ENSURE ALL PERSONS** under your control **EVACUATE** the building.
- (c) **IF AND ONLY IF** you judge the use of a nearby extinguisher by you likely to be effective, **USE IT:**

DO NOT TAKE PERSONAL RISKS

If it is not safe to use an extinguisher, **LEAVE IMMEDIATELY** following the procedure set out above.

- (d) **REPORT** the whereabouts of the **FIRE** to the person in charge of your **ASSEMBLY POINT**.

ALL MEMBERS OF STAFF:-

Make sure **YOU** know the locations of the fire exits and fire fighting equipment within the building. In an emergency the prime responsibility for **YOU** is getting yourself and persons under your immediate control out of the building.

As soon as the fire alarm has been sounded, a call must go out to the Fire Service either by the person raising the alarm, or by way of other persons given this duty.

Members of staff should be trained in the use of basic fire fighting equipment, e.g. fire extinguishers and hose reels.

BOMB THREATS

In the event of a bomb threat, you will be asked to thoroughly check your area for something that should not be there or is out of place and cannot be accounted for. If a suspicious object is found you must:

- Ensure it is not touched, picked up or moved or in any way disturbed.
- If possible leave a “suspect bomb” notice near (but not touching) the object.
- Move away from the object to the designated control point.
- Inform your manager immediately.

Any decision to evacuate the premises will be taken quickly, possibly in liaison with the emergency services. The assembly point will be well away from the likely area of the bomb blast. You will be asked to leave the building by the usual exit route. Suspect objects must not be touched.

11. CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH (COSHH)

WHAT IS A SUBSTANCE HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH?

Within your working environment, there are numerous substances which fall into the category "Hazardous to Health", e.g. CLEANING MATERIALS, WEEDKILLER, SOLVENTS, FIXATIVES, TONER, 'TIPPEX', etc. These products will be labelled as dangerous in several ways, i.e. VERY TOXIC, TOXIC, HARMFUL, IRRITANT or CORROSIVE in line with the Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging) Regulations 1994, and are labelled as such by an orange square with a black symbol in it, with one of the words listed above written underneath.

WHAT DOES COSHH REQUIRE?

- Assess the risk to health arising from work and what precautions are needed.
- Introduce appropriate measures to prevent or control the risk.
- Ensure that control measures are used and that equipment is properly maintained and procedures observed.
- Inform, instruct and train employees about the risks and the precautions to be taken.

ASSESSMENT

You need to know what the risk is and the extent of the risk, before deciding what, if anything, you need to do about it.

The assessment must be a systematic review:-

- What substances are present and in what form?
- What harmful effects are possible?
- Where and how are the substances actually used?
- What harmful substances are given off as a by- product of use?
- Who could be affected, to what extent and for how long?
- Under what circumstances?
- How likely is it that exposure will happen?

HAZARD DATA SHEETS

All relevant information on substances used at work must be obtained from suppliers.

This information, along with your assessment findings, should be formulated onto a HAZARD DATA SHEET, clearly showing the safe system of use and all the necessary protective measures to ensure safe use of the substance.

This data must be made available to all employees likely to use or come into contact with the substance.

12. ELECTRICITY AT WORK

The Electricity at Work Regulations lay down broad guidelines about safety of electrical systems and electrical equipment.

The regulations apply to and are enforceable in respect of all places of work where electricity is used.

The main duty of employers is to ensure that the systems for distribution of electricity are constructed and maintained so as to prevent danger.

Within most working environments, large numbers of portable electrical equipment are in use at any given time, e.g. P.C.s, printers, photocopiers, kettles, drills, heaters, power tools, extension leads and kitchen equipment etc. All of these will be plugged into the fixed installation electrical system.

FIXED ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS

When a system is first installed, the electrical supply authority require a "Certificate of Compliance" before it can be connected to the mains supply. This is a certificate issued by a qualified electrician, stating that certain tests have been carried out, and that the system is in a fit state to be connected.

A copy of this certificate should be available for all of the buildings that the Council uses.

After this initial Certification the fixed wiring should need comparatively little attention. Re-testing at least every 5 YEARS should be sufficient unless any assessments show otherwise. Copies of the re-test certificate should be attached to the electrical equipment register/inventory.

PORTABLE ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

When an appliance is purchased, it will have been tested to ascertain that it is suitable for the purpose for which it was made, as indicated by a BSI "Kite" or BEAB Approved Mark on the equipment. So long as the equipment is to be used for the job it was designed, initially very little needs to be done.

A register of portable electrical appliances (all items with a plug) will be set up. All existing and any new equipment should be individually marked with an identification number and entered into the register. A competent person (the Council may appoint a Contractor) will regularly check all such equipment and a record of such checks should be kept.

Electrical equipment that has not been so checked and recorded should **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES** be connected to the Council's electrical supply circuitry. Similarly, contractors, etc. should provide for inspection up to date documentary proof of the electrical integrity of their electrical equipment. Staff should be instructed that their

own personal electrical equipment should not be connected to the Council's electrical supply without express permission having first been given and the equipment tested and recorded as it would have been had it been the Council's property.

13. THE MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK REGULATIONS

These regulations provide a general framework of regulations and codes of practice for the management of Health and Safety at Work which are wide-ranging and overlap with many pieces of existing legislation.

Aspects covered included:-

- Risk assessments
- Health and Safety arrangements
- Health surveillance
- Health and Safety assistance
- Procedures for serious and imminent danger
- Information for employees
- Co-operation and co-ordination
- Persons working for others, and self-employed persons
- Capabilities and training
- Employees duties
- Temporary workers

The Town Clerk will:-

- (i) Ensure that the appropriate risk assessments are carried out and recorded where necessary. These assessments will include persons at particular risk, such as young persons and new or expectant mothers;
- (ii) Implement, monitor and review preventative and protective measures;
- (iii) Ensure that emergency procedures are in place and are formally recorded;
- (iv) Ensure that the appropriate information, instruction and training is provided.

All employees have a duty to:-

- (i) Take reasonable care for their own and others Health and Safety;
- (ii) Use all work items in accordance with training and advice;
- (iii) Co-operate with their employer with regard to Health and Safety matters;
- (iv) Report accidents and dangerous incidents;
- (v) Notify their employer of any shortcomings in Health and Safety arrangements.

14. THE WORKPLACE (HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE) REGULATIONS

These regulations apply to almost all workplaces.

The Town Clerk will ensure that:-

- Workplaces and work equipment are maintained and cleaned.
- Workplaces are "suitably and sufficiently" ventilated and lit, and a reasonable temperature maintained.
- Employees have "sufficient" workspace and workstations are "suitable" for them.
- Floors, staircases and escalators are safe.
- Persons are protected against falls (or falling objects).
- Windows and doors are safe (safety glass where necessary) and safe to open (and clean).
- Pedestrians are protected from vehicles.
- "Suitable and Sufficient" sanitary conveniences and washing facilities (including showers where required) are provided.
- Wholesome drinking water is provided.
- Accommodation for outdoor clothing is provided (including changing rooms where necessary).
- Suitable facilities are provided for staff to rest, especially for any person at work who is a pregnant woman, nursing mother or non-smoker.

All employees have a duty to:-

- Act in such a way as not to jeopardise their own, other employees or any other person's, health, safety or welfare.

15. THE HEALTH AND SAFETY (DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT) REGULATIONS

These Regulations deal with the Health and Safety requirements when working with Display Screen Equipment (DSE). They are intended to protect staff who habitually use DSE as a significant part of their work. They are concerned not only with the effect that display screens may have on eyesight, but also the prevention of muscle and joint problems due to poor job and workplace design, and the physical and mental stress caused by prolonged continuous use. See Appendix D – Display Screen Equipment for further information.

This may mean, if the workstation assessment finds it necessary, the provision of new chairs, footstools, document holders, etc., or the revision of work patterns and assurance that any new DSE equipment is suitable.

The Office Manager will:-

- Assess workstations and reduce risks to Health & Safety;
- Ensure that workstations meet minimum requirements;
- Plan work to ensure breaks or changes of activity occur during prolonged use;
- Arrange for eye tests if requested by staff who qualify and if necessary provide corrective glasses needed specifically and solely for use with DSE;
- Provide information and training for DSE users.

All employees have a duty to:-

- Inform their employer of any medical condition that may affect, or be affected by, their use of DSE.
- Ensure that workstations and DSE are suitably adjusted so as to minimise Health and Safety risks.

16. THE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AT WORK REGULATIONS

The **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations** require employers to identify and assess the risks to Health and Safety present in the workplace, so enabling the most appropriate means of reducing those risks to an acceptable level to be determined. There is in effect a hierarchy of control measures, and PPE should always be regarded as the "last resort" to protect against risks; engineering controls and safe systems of work should always be considered first.

However in some circumstances PPE will still be needed to control the risk adequately, and these Regulations will then take effect.

The Town Clerk will:-

- Assess the need for PPE;
- Select the most suitable PPE;
- Provide, maintain and store PPE correctly, and replace it as necessary;
- Ensure that information, instruction and training is given;
- Ensure proper use and the reporting of loss or defect of PPE.

All employees have a duty to:-

- Ensure that they use, maintain and store PPE in accordance with any instructions or training that they have received.

17. THE MANUAL HANDLING OPERATIONS REGULATIONS

The Regulations apply to any means of transporting or supporting a load (including the lifting, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving thereof) by hand or by bodily force.

The term 'load' includes any person or animal.

They require a process of:-

- (a) Avoiding the need to lift and carry wherever possible;
- (b) Assessing those operations that are unavoidable;
- (c) Reducing the risk of injury.

There are NO SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS such as weight limits, but an informal assessment will indicate which activities will need a more thorough assessment to be undertaken.

Ways of reducing risk could include:-

- (i) Improving the environment;
- (ii) Providing information on safe lifting techniques;
- (iii) Considering individual capabilities;
- (iv) Using mechanical aids.

The Town Clerk will:-

- (a) Identify all staff who are involved in manual handling operations;
- (b) Carry out an informal assessment to identify all those activities that involve a potential risk and therefore require formal assessment.

Most everyday manual handling operations will not involve risk and therefore will require no further assessment unless there is a significant change in the operation.

All employees have a duty to:-

- (a) Make use of all appropriate equipment provided for them, in accordance with the training and instructions that their employer may have given them. Such equipment will include machinery and other aids provided for the safe handling of loads.
- (b) Follow safe systems of work laid down by their employer for the handling of loads.

18. LIFTING AND HANDLING

Many accidents and injuries in the workplace can be linked to lifting objects in the wrong way. If lifting and carrying objects is a regular part of your job, or if you have any doubts about how to handle an object safely, you should check with your manager.

Before attempting to lift an object, you should consider whether this is really necessary, and also whether there is an alternative method available. For instance, always make use of any suitable mechanical handling aids, such as trolleys if these are provided for the task, rather than bearing the load yourself.

Make sure you have an idea of the weight of the object before trying to lift or move it. If possible, get someone to help you.

Lift items in easy stages, for example from floor to knee, then from knee to carrying position. Reverse this lifting method when you set the load down.

Hold heavy objects close to the body, lifting with the legs and keeping the back straight. This avoids placing excessive strain on your back.

Grip loads with palms, not fingertips, and avoid changing your grip whilst carrying. If you need to change your grip, put the object down first.

Other manual handling tips include the following:

- Do not stand holding a heavy object. If there is a delay then put it on a platform of suitable height.
- Do not jerk and shove, as twisting the body may cause injury.
- Do not carry a load under one arm supported by the hip.
- Do not continue trying to lift a load that causes a feeling of strain.
- Do not let the load obstruct your view. Make sure the route is clear before you start moving.
- Beware of slippery floors and obstruction.

Please note that you are at greater risk if you are pregnant, have just returned to work from childbirth, or are suffering from any illness. In these circumstances you should not attempt to move anything. Instead you should ask for someone else to move the item.

19. THE PROVISION AND USE OF WORK EQUIPMENT REGULATIONS

Work equipment means any machinery, appliance, apparatus or tool and any assembly of components which, in order to achieve a common end, are arranged and controlled so that they function as a whole, e.g. lawn mower, portable drill, hand saw, soldering iron, hammer, socket set and computer.

The regulations impose a duty to inspect work equipment where incorrect installation, deterioration due to working conditions, or exceptional circumstances could produce a significant risk. Examples of this include ladders, saws, grinding machines, and tractors. The need for a regular inspection should be determined by risk assessment.

The results of any inspections must be recorded, and this should include the type and model of the item, its usual location, the date of inspection, any faults found and action taken, and the date of repair etc.

The Town Clerk will ensure that: -

- Work equipment is suitable.
- Equipment is maintained in an efficient state of good repair.
- Suitable information, instruction and training is provided in respect of the safe use of work equipment.
- There is suitable and adequate guarding of all dangerous parts of machinery, and that these are maintained in efficient working order and good repair.
- Work equipment is provided with, where appropriate, starting and stopping controls and emergency stop controls.
- Controls on equipment that are easily identified as to what each control does and on which equipment it has effect.
- Equipment is capable of being isolated from its source of energy.
- Work equipment is stable.
- Adequate lighting is provided at any place where a person uses work equipment.
- Marking of warnings on work equipment are clearly visible and unambiguous, easily perceived and easily understood.
- **All employees have a duty to:-**
 - (i) Use correctly all work items provided by their employer in accordance with the training and instructions they receive to enable them to use the items safely;
 - (ii) Not interfere with or misuse anything provided for their health, safety and welfare.

20. LONE WORKING POLICY & GUIDANCE

INTRODUCTION

The *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974* requires the Town Council to provide a safe environment, safe equipment and safe systems of work for its employees and those working on its premises. These requirements are applicable to all work situations and particular attention must be paid to situations where staff are working alone or outside normal working hours.

Working alone can introduce or enhance hazards, e.g. lack of assistance if needed, first aid cover, emergency situations, violent attack etc. There are inevitably tasks within the Town Council where staff work by themselves and frequently lone working may occur in the evening and at weekends.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Town Council acknowledges that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of its employees and contractors when working alone. Suitable risk assessments shall be undertaken to identify risks to the lone worker and measures shall be introduced to minimise those risks wherever reasonably practicable.

Staff shall be provided with information, instruction and training as appropriate in order to minimise risk when working remote from colleagues or other persons and / or outside normal working hours.

The Town Clerk shall ensure lone working situations are identified, appropriate risk assessments undertaken, additional control measures introduced and staff are provided with the necessary information, instruction and training.

GUIDANCE

Risk Assessments

Where significant hazards exist, risk assessments of work activities shall be undertaken to comply with the requirements of the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*. Where those work activities are likely to be undertaken by a lone worker or outside normal working hours then these factors should be considered in the assessment. It may be the case that merely by working alone, out of hours, risks are introduced even for a non-hazardous work activity which had not been subject to a formal risk assessment.

Risk assessments shall be undertaken by the Town Clerk.

Particular consideration shall be given to:

- (a) assessing if the work is a "one man" job
- (b) the remoteness or isolation of the workplace
- (c) any problems of communication
- (d) the possibility of violence or criminal activity by intruders
- (e) the nature of possible injury
- (f) emergency egress (e.g. are fire exits open out of hours?)

Control Measures

To address the additional risks (if any) identified in relation to a lone working situation the Town Clerk shall introduce appropriate control measures to eliminate or minimise the risks.

Such control measures may include:

- authorisation of staff to work alone / out of hours
- pre-work inspections of work area to ensure provisions for emergencies are in place, i.e. escape routes open, fire fighting and first aid equipment
- logging in / out system with caretakers
- provision of communication equipment
- periodic check-in arrangements or visits by other staff
- information and training.

Clearly the types of control measures will vary depending on the type of work, location, experience of the worker and local conditions. It is likely, however, that written procedures will need to be established to define the safe system of work when personnel work alone or outside normal hours.

Having defined a safe system of work and informed staff and others affected (see below) a further control is a periodic audit to ensure the defined procedure is being followed.

Information and Training

It is the responsibility of the Town Clerk to ensure that all employees and others working within their area of control receive the necessary information, instruction and training for them to work safely.

For lone or out of hours working employees and other workers shall be advised of:

- the risks involved,
- the use of any special equipment (e.g. cordless phone ie. mobile, two way radios, personal alarms),
- emergency procedures,
- the provisions for first aid;
- the requirements of the defined system of work.

It is the responsibility of the employee to adhere to the safe system of work and to report any difficulties, failure of equipment or general concerns on health and safety issues to his line manager.

21. DRIVING GUIDANCE

If you need to drive in connection with your work, you must obey the Highway Code and all traffic regulations.

Before a long trip, make sure that there is nothing wrong with your vehicle. Cars should have 1.6 millimetres of tread depth across 75% of the pattern around the tyre.

When driving, take regular breaks for example fifteen minutes for every two hours of driving. You should not drive long distances after a full day's work. If in doubt, arrangements should be made for overnight accommodation.

Plan your route, and stay on main roads if possible. Tell someone at the other end what time you expect to arrive and do not pick up hitchhikers. Keep your doors locked when driving in built up areas.

Loose valuables should be stored out of sight. After dark, if you have to park, choose a well-lit, busy place. When returning to your vehicle have your key ready before you get to your car.

Remember that it is a criminal offence to drive a motor vehicle if you cannot read a standard number plate in good daylight from 20.5m (67 feet) away. If you need glasses or contact lenses to do this, you must wear them every time you drive.

You must not drink and drive when driving on Council business. If you do, you will be subject to appropriate action (including dismissal), being taken in line with the Council's disciplinary procedure and in addition to any legal prosecution that may result.

If you are involved in an accident that causes injury or that may give rise to possible police action and/or an insurance claim then you must report the circumstances as soon as possible to your manager.

Hand-held mobile telephones must not be used whilst driving, park in a safe place and turn off your engine before using one. See Appendix C Policy Relating to Mobile Communication Equipment.

22. APPENDIX A – FIRE SAFETY POLICY

Statement of Policy

Fire has the capability to cause multiple fatalities and extensive property damage. A serious fire could result in extensive disruption of the work of the Council and would involve losses that would be only partially covered by insurance.

Fire safety involves preventative measures, which attempt to ensure that a fire does not start, and precautions which are aimed at minimising the effects of fire on people and property. Although fire safety legislation tends to concentrate on precautions, prevention should take a high profile. Ensuring safety of electrical appliances is important as overload or faulty electrical equipment can overheat and start a fire.

The Council will take steps to ensure that prevention of fire is given a high priority and that fire precautions do at least meet the minimum standards required by the Fire Precautions Act 1971 and the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997. Steps taken in relation to fire precautions will include the provision and maintenance of adequate means of escape from buildings, means of fighting fire, fire alarm systems, emergency lighting, and where appropriate automatic fire detection.

Fire risk assessments are required under the Management of Health and Safety At Work Regulations 1999. These regulations also require emergency plans to be drawn up and people nominated to implement them (reg. 8).

The provision of information and training and the holding of fire drills are also recognised as being important.

Organisation and Arrangements

The Manager at the Midsomer Norton Community Trust – leaseholders of the building

- For the Town Hall only, will act as Fire Warden for the whole building;

Office Manager

- will ensure that new staff recruited or transferred to their areas are aware of local fire action and emergency evacuation procedures;
- will arrange that new staff under their control attend health and safety induction training;
- will ensure that quantities of flammable solvents used in areas under their control are kept to minimum, that flammable solvent cupboards are provided where quantities in any work room exceed 5 litres and that larger quantities are stored in flammable solvent stores.

The Manager at the Midsomer Norton Community Trust will ensure that:-

- fire risk assessments are carried out for the building under their control;
- adequate emergency plans are prepared for the Town Hall site;
- fire drills are held at the Town Hall site at least once per year and that such fire drills are effective in evacuating persons from the buildings. The active involvement of all staff and hirers of the Town Hall is seen as important in order to ensure that fire drills are given a high profile and to ensure co-operation of staff and the public;
- fire fighting equipment, fire detection and alarm systems and fire action notices are suitable and sufficient for the buildings;
- fire safety signs, including fire equipment signs and signs indicating exit routes and doors, are provided in each building. Such signs will comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996;
- waste material of a flammable nature is consigned to rubbish bins or skips. These bins and skips will, so far as possible, be kept in designated areas away from buildings in order to minimise the effects of arson. Emptying of bins and skips will be arranged at sufficiently frequent intervals to ensure that the need for overflow storage is minimised;
- will ensure that fire extinguishers installed in Council workplace are inspected and maintained by a competent person at regular intervals. This will be carried out annually. Records of the inspections and any reports provided by the competent person will be kept for at least five years;
- will ensure that, when defects in fire fighting equipment are notified (e.g. a discharged extinguisher), action is taken to rectify the defect;
- will ensure that fire alarm systems, detection system, automatic fire doors and emergency lighting systems are inspected and tested by a competent person at regular intervals and repaired as necessary. Intervals are not to exceed one year. Records of the inspection and test, and also of any repairs made, will be kept for at least five years;
- will ensure that maintenance involving “hot work” i.e. welding, cutting, brazing, etc is not undertaken without a permit to work signed by a competent person.
- will ensure that portable electrical equipment (but not the fixed installation) is inspected for safety by a competent person at regular intervals. Records of the inspections and any inspection reports provided by the competent person will be kept for at least five years;

- will ensure that the fixed electrical installation is inspected for safety by a competent person at regular intervals. Records of the inspections and any inspection reports provided by the competent person will be kept to at least five years;
- will ensure, so far as is practicable, all new building work and alterations to existing premises that are carried out under his control are carried out in accordance with the fire safety requirements of the Building Regulations 1991.

The Manager at the Midsomer Norton Community Trust has a key role to play in fire prevention and in checking that fire precautions are in good working order. They will:

- ensure that flammable waste materials are not permitted to accumulate within the workplace, that waste paper bins are emptied at least twice a week, and that rubbish bins and skips are kept in a safe location and are emptied at sufficiently frequent intervals to prevent overflow of rubbish;
- ensure that escape routes are kept clear at all times, that fire doors are kept closed and that fire exit doors are kept unlocked while the building is occupied;
- carry out regular visual inspections of fire fighting equipment provided in their buildings and ensure that the Office Manager is notified of any defective equipment.

Health and Safety and Welfare Officer (Town Clerk)

The Health and Safety and Welfare Officer will:-

- carry out assessments of the risk to health and safety of staff and members of the public who may be affected by fire. Review these assessments periodically and in the light of significant changes;
- work with other members of staff to ensure suitable emergency plans are prepared for each location;
- administer a budget to provide funds for the provision of fire safety training and information;
- develop and present suitable staff induction training for health and safety which will include training on fire safety and in particular the measures to take on discovering a fire and on hearing the fire alarm;
- in conjunction with supervisors, organise practical fire safety training for employees.

All staff

All staff will:-

- respect the no-smoking rule within Council buildings;
- refrain from bringing privately owned portable electric heaters into the Council buildings. Other high fire risk equipment such as gas, paraffin or solid fuel heaters should not be brought into the workplace. In situations where it is necessary to do this permission should be sought from the relevant line manager;
- ensure that sufficient clear space is maintained in rooms where they have control either on a temporary (e.g. for a meeting) or permanent basis to allow persons in the room to move freely to the exits of the room;
- in the event of discovering a fire or hearing the fire alarm, take appropriate action in accordance with fire action notices or other instructions and training that they have received;
- where appropriate, will assist members of the public to leave the buildings in an orderly manner and proceed to the appropriate assembly point.

The Manager at the Midsomer Norton Community Trust as Designated Fire Warden

The task of the fire warden is primarily to assist with emergency evacuation of the building and to check that their designated areas are clear of people. The prime function of a fire warden is not to fight fire. In certain cases and where a fire is small, prompt action by a person properly trained to use extinguishers can help to prevent more extensive damage. Fire wardens will:-

- in the event of the fire alarm sounding, assist and encourage others including members of the public to leave the buildings in an orderly manner and proceed to the appropriate assembly point (see fire action notices for the building);
- report the state of their designated area (e.g. clear, someone trapped, etc) to the person taking the role call at the assembly point;
- providing they have received appropriate training, use extinguishers to tackle fires, but only where the fire is small and they are confident that it can be tackled safely. The question of whether to tackle a fire or not has to be left to the judgement of the individual. It must always be remembered that it is vitally important to raise the alarm first before tackling any fire.

23. APPENDIX B – SAFE HANDLING OF SHARPS POLICY STATEMENT

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 imposes statutory duty on employers to ensure in so far as is reasonably practicable the health and safety of their employees whilst at work. This duty also extends to the employee to take care of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts and omissions.

Sharps include needles, razor blades, broken glass or other items that may cause a laceration or puncture.

The risks of problems consequent upon a needlestick injury are low. Essentially, the hazards are of straightforward bacterial infection and blood borne virus infections such as viral hepatitis (B, C, D and G) and HIV.

PRACTICE

It is the policy of the Town Council (in so far as is reasonably practicable) that the following points are implemented when dealing with Sharps:

Used sharps should be handled as little as possible to minimize the risk of injury

- **Always wear disposable Latex gloves.** Latex can reduce the risk of transmission of a blood borne virus by 50% from a contaminated needle. Sharps safe gloves should be worn over the latex gloves. A pair of forceps or other suitable tool must be used to pick up any sharps. Pincer poles should be used for handling bedding and clothing.
- Used needles **must not** be manually re-sheathed, bent or broken prior to disposal.
- All sharps containers **must** be correctly assembled and labelled clearly to identify source and used according to the manufacturers' instructions.
- Sharps **must never** be carried in the hand to the point of disposal, but either carried in a tray or a sharps container brought to the sharp.
- Sharps **must not** be passed by hand between staff.
- Sharps bins **must** be stored in a location that precludes unauthorized access.
- Sharps bins **must** always be sent for incineration.

EMPLOYEES

The co-operation of all employees is vital to achieve the Town Council aims. **Every employee must realise** that he/she has a legal duty while at work:

- To take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and other persons;
- To co-operate with the Town Council in all matters relating to health, safety and welfare.

GENERAL

In accordance with Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Town Council will,

- Review the working of this policy annually;
- Amend and update the policy as necessary. Communicate any changes to all employees;
- Provide this written statement on its general policy on Health and Safety and the organisation and arrangements for carrying it out.

24. APPENDIX C – POLICY RELATING TO MOBILE COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT

1. Mobile communications equipment (“the equipment”) provided by the Town Council for the use of employees remains the property of the Town Council at all times;
2. The equipment provided may be withdrawn from use at any time and shall be surrendered to the Town Clerk upon demand. This provision includes surrender for the checking of call logging on the equipment, should this be required by the Town Clerk;
3. The primary purposes for the provision of the equipment are for reasons of the Health and Safety of employees, especially when working alone, and to improve the efficiency of operations. Mobile communications equipment shall not be used unnecessarily or when cheaper fixed means of communication are easily available;
4. It shall be the responsibility of the employee to ensure that the equipment and any ancillaries provided are available for use during working hours (and if “on call” for any reason) and that any batteries are charged and in a useable condition;
5. There is no need for mobile communications equipment to be hand held whilst driving a vehicle. Employees are reminded that the use of hand held mobile communications equipment whilst driving is an offence and any employee observed driving and using hand held mobile communications equipment at the same time (whether this is provided by the Council, or otherwise) may be subject to disciplinary action;
6. Employees shall, at all times, operate the equipment provided within the terms and conditions set out by the communications network operator. These terms and conditions will be provided to each employee;
7. Employees may receive personal calls during working hours but these must be kept to a minimum in number and be of short duration only. Employees may make personal calls on the equipment but, except where absolutely necessary, these calls should not be made during working hours. Any such calls made during working hours should again be of minimum duration. The Town Clerk will monitor the monthly itemised invoices and all calls made by employees will be charged at the applicable operator’s tariff and payable to the Council on demand. Employees are warned that the cost per minute can be high. Any employee found to be not adhering to the above guidelines or failing to pay any sums due within a given period of time may be subject to disciplinary action;
8. International telephone calls (either from or to the UK) shall not be made on equipment provided by the Council without the prior consent of the Town Clerk. Neither shall the equipment be placed on a “Global Roaming” footing or “unlocked” from the operator’s network (for which a fee is payable) without the prior written consent of the Town Clerk. If consent is given the employee shall be fully

responsible for all fees, charges and call costs incurred. Whilst on leave the Town Clerk may require an employee to temporarily surrender the equipment provided;

- 9.** If any equipment provided is lost, damaged or stolen, or there is some other problem that the employee is unable to resolve related to the equipment, the Town Clerk/Town Council Office should be notified at the earliest opportunity. Where equipment is provided with a security code to prevent unauthorised use this code shall be used and the facility shall not be switched off for convenience. When equipment has gone missing and it is not possible to contact the Town Clerk/Town Council Office within a reasonable period of time and there is a belief that the missing equipment might be misused the employee should be familiar with the procedure for advising the network operator of the loss to ensure no misuse occurs. The Police should be advised as soon as possible of any theft. The employee's attention is particularly drawn to the network operator's terms and conditions in respect of the loss of phones from vehicles and public places;
- 10.** The decision of the Town Clerk on all matters relating to the provision use and management of mobile communications equipment and all related matters shall be final.

25. APPENDIX D – DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT

Introduction

All employers are under a general duty to assess the risks to the health and safety of their employees and to anyone else who may be affected by their activity, so that necessary preventative measures can be identified and actioned. As part of this general assessment, work with display screen equipment (DSE) must be assessed against the requirements of the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (the Regulations).

DSE Workstation Assessment

All DSE workstations must be assessed using a form (available from the Office Manager) to ensure compliance with the Regulations. This can be undertaken by the user.

Where the assessment demonstrates that the workstation is below the standard required then the Office Manager must take remedial action to correct the deficiencies identified. Copies of the assessment must be retained by the Office Manager. Assessments should be conducted whenever the workstation conditions or work practiced significantly change.

Vision and Eyesight Testing

All employees who are DSE users are entitled to an appropriate free vision test and eyesight examination. The following procedure should be used:

- The user should request an appointment for a full eyesight test. The full cost of the eyesight test will be met by the Town Council.
- Where, as a result of an eye and eyesight test, a user is advised (in writing) by a registered ophthalmic optician to obtain corrective spectacles or lenses for work with DSE, authorisation will entitle the user to receive from the Town Council the total cost of a pair of lenses specific to the eye-DSE distance (approx. 600mm) and budget frames.

Note: *The Town Council is only liable to pay for those costs (as stated above, of any spectacles chosen which are attributable to the requirements of the DSE work).*

Information and Training

The regulations require that every user is given adequate information concerning the:

- associated risks to health, and the operational arrangements to minimise risks;
- quality and standards of workstation equipment and how best to operate the workstation and its immediate environment to minimise risks to health (this includes the importance of taking regular breaks away from the screen and carrying out appropriate exercises to reduce the risk of an upper limb disorder).

To meet these requirements, managers must check that all employees, defined as users have:

- received training and that there is a named, trained DSE assessor;
- Received a copy of the Town Council Policy on Working with DSE;
- A copy of the HSE publication “Working with VDU’s” or a copy of the “Working with Display Screen Equipment” fact sheet provided by the OHA.

Training will be provided by the Health and Safety Office and Occupational Health Service in the assessment of the suitability of workstation equipment, the adjustments required to make best use of the equipment and in identifying and reducing the health effects associated with DSE work.

Reporting Injuries Associated with DSE

A member of staff who sustains an injury or suffers a health problem which might be associated with DSE work must report this to his/her manager.

Definitions

Display Screen Equipment: any display screen for letters/numbers/graphics. It includes visual display units (VDUs). TV type picture display screen are not included.

Workstation

an assembly comprising:

- DSE, with keyboard or another input device
- any accessories
- disk drive, telephone, modem, printer, document holder, work chair, work surface;
- immediate work environment around the DSE.

User

there is no strict definition of a user, however an assessment form is given (see Office Manager) which will help to clarify who is a user if a need arises.

26. **APPENDIX E – ASBESTOS POLICY**

Statement of Policy

Asbestos can pose a serious health risk to those exposed to it. The main risk is from inhalation of asbestos dust. Inhalation of asbestos is painless at the time and people affected may not realise that anything is amiss. Asbestos related disease may occur many years after exposure.

Disease is normally associated with long term exposure and may affect groups of workers such as pipe ladders, asbestos strippers, plumbers, electricians and other workers in construction and maintenance.

Environmental exposures, i.e. exposure to dust caused by the work of others, have occurred and there may be some risk to staff and members of the public in the vicinity of work on asbestos if this work is not carried out properly.

Asbestos has been used in various items of equipment from ironing boards to boilers, kilns and furnaces. In buildings asbestos has been used as an insulating material in pipe lagging and sprayed coatings, in composite materials for wall boards and ceiling tiles and in asbestos cement used for roofing sheets, pipes and flues.

Providing the asbestos materials are in good condition and remain undisturbed there is little risk to health. Any operation which could cause asbestos fibres to be released into the air poses a risk to health and steps must be taken to minimise this risk.

The risk from asbestos is of long term health effects, asbestosis, mesothelioma and lung cancer. Asbestos is classified as a category 1 carcinogen.

In view of the serious health risks the Council will endeavour to prevent exposure or, where this is not reasonably practicable, reduce exposure to the lowest level reasonably practicable. The Council will also endeavour to identify where in its property portfolio asbestos is located and to put in place an effective management system to protect employees, contractors and the public.

The main legal requirements are found in the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 1987 (as amended) and the Asbestos (Licensing) Regulations 1983 (as amended). The Asbestos (Prohibitions) Regulations 1992 (as amended) provided an almost complete ban on the importation and supply of asbestos including supply of second hand materials.

Organisation and Arrangements

The Town Clerk will ensure that :-

- work does not expose anyone to asbestos or, where this is not reasonably practicable that exposure is reduced to the lowest level reasonably practicable. The following points expand on how this is to be achieved;

- no work with asbestos, including removal or disposal is carried out without prior consultation with the Health Safety and Welfare Officer. This consultation needs to take place for each and every job;
- a risk assessment and plan of work in accordance with the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations is completed prior to commencement of any work which may involve exposure to asbestos;
- no work with asbestos is to be carried out without the risk assessment and plan of work being first approved by the Health Safety and Welfare Officer;
- no consultant is to be engaged to advise on asbestos related work, including removal, encapsulation, management, surveying, sampling or training of staff without prior consultation with the Health Safety and Welfare Officer;
- no consultant is to be engaged to advise on asbestos related work, including removal, encapsulation, management, surveying, sampling or training of staff unless they are competent to do so. Further advice on appropriate levels of competence may be obtained from the Health Safety and Welfare Officer;
- the use of asbestos containing materials is avoided wherever possible. Where there are suitable alternatives that pose a lower risk to health and safety then these should be used;
- any contractors they engage to undertake work on Council premises where there may be exposure to asbestos are aware of the risks to their health and are competent to carry out the work safely and with minimum risk to themselves and others who may be affected;
- any contractors they engage to undertake work on Council premises where there may be exposure to asbestos are aware of presence of asbestos where it is known or suspected.

The Health Safety and Welfare Officer (Office Manager):

- will liaise staff and others to ensure that all work with asbestos is carried out in a manner which prevents, or if that is not reasonably practicable, adequately controls exposure;
- will liaise with persons in control of work on asbestos containing materials to ensure that an adequate risk assessment has been carried out and a plan of work prepared prior to the commencement of the work;
- will advise on the appropriate level of competence for any contractor or consultant who carries out any asbestos related work for the Council;
- will, on request, advise on the need for repair or removal of asbestos containing materials listed in the asset register or any specialised asbestos register.

All employees who:-

- suspect that a particular task may expose them to asbestos should check with the Town Clerk or the Council Health, Safety and Welfare Officer prior to starting the task;
- work with asbestos containing materials must make proper use of the control measures provided (including personal protective equipment) and must work in accordance with any specific training or instructions given.