

Raglan Community Council

Health and Safety

Local Councils are, like all other employers, under a duty of care to ensure so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees. The obligation includes amongst others, the maintenance of a place of work and a working environment in a condition which is safe and without risks to health. There is also a duty on employees to behave at work so as not to put at risk other employees or members of the public.

Controlling dangers at work is no different from tackling any other task – recognising the problem, knowing enough about it, deciding what to do, putting the solution into practice. If a council have five or more employees you **must** have a written health and safety policy statement (an example of a policy is annexed to this note). The policy should set out how your council manages health and safety in the organisation. As the Clerk, you are responsible for carrying out risk assessments – careful examinations of what could cause harm to you or other employees of the Council. Issues you should consider includes slip, trips and falls, asbestos, hazardous substances, display screen equipment, noise, electricity, maintenance and building work, fire and stress. Further advice on risk assessments can be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive. In particular they produce a useful leaflet which can be down loaded from their web site (www.hse.gov.uk) called *Five Steps to Risk Assessment*.

You should also carry out 'one-off' risk assessments for special events such as firework displays, community days, fetes or fairs. The principle is the same: identify the risks and take all possible steps to minimise them.

Does Health and Safety concern me?

- All Councils with five or more employees should have a written health and safety policy
- All Councils have to assess the risks from their work activities
- All Councils with five or more employees have to record the significant findings of their risk assessment
- All Councils have to consult their employees or their employees' safety representatives on health and safety matters
- All Councils have to provide health and safety training for employees

The Law

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (SI 1999/3242) (risk assessment)

Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (SI 1996/1513)

Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (SI 1977/500)

What to do if there's an accident at work

If someone has been hurt or fallen ill at work it's important to take care of them straight away, and make any dangerous conditions safe. First-aid means treating minor injuries at work and giving immediate attention to more serious casualties until medical help is available. Through this initial management of injury or illness suffered at work, lives can be saved and minor injuries prevented from becoming major ones. Reporting accidents and ill health at work is a legal requirement. The enforcing authorities use the information to see the big picture of where injuries, ill health and accidental losses are occurring, and to advise on preventive action.

As an employer the Council must provide first aid equipment and facilities appropriate for the circumstances in your workplace. The minimum would be a suitably stocked first-aid box and a person appointed to take charge of first-aid arrangements. You should consider whether your Council might need to provide more than the minimum. You should record all accidents, however minor in an accident book. More serious accidents should be reported to the relevant enforcing authority (normally your district or unitary authority).

The Law

Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 (SI 1981/917)

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (SI 1005/3163) (RIDDOR)

Contractors

It's easy to overlook contractors especially if your council only uses them occasionally. The Clerk is responsible for any contractors who carries out work for your Council. You need to ensure that you have taken reasonable measures to ensure their safety. The issues you should consider include: Does anyone ever have to work on the roof, at a height or on fragile materials? Does anyone have to fault find and repair machinery or equipment when it breaks down? Is there a tank, pit, grave, silo or similar confined space into which someone might go – and would you know if they did? Have you found out whether there is any asbestos in your buildings or plant which could be disturbed

during maintenance or alterations? Does the contractor have the right equipment and clothing for the task and have they undergone the necessary training?

The Law

Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007/320)
Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (SI 1998/2307)
Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (SI 1998/2306)
Confined Spaces Regulations 1997 (SI 1997/1713)

Volunteers

Volunteers are in the same position as contractors, except that they will probably have less experience of using the equipment and are less likely to have protective clothing or to have undertaken training. As Clerk, you are responsible for ensuring their health and safety.

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