

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY



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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY DOCUMENT

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READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

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1. Responsibilities

The responsibilities of Officers and Elected Members of Reading Borough Council (the Council) are set out in this Policy. Every member of staff has a minimum of a Level 1 responsibility. The level of every individual's safety responsibilities will be stated in their Job Description. Managers will ensure that they allocate the appropriate safety responsibilities to their staff.

1.1 Training

The Council provides health and safety training to enable staff to discharge their responsibilities. This training is administered and monitored by the Learning & Development Team. All staff are required to have satisfactorily completed the appropriate training within three months of being appointed to a position.

1.2 Induction Training

All new starters with the Council go through the Council induction programme that introduces them to the Council health and safety team and impresses upon them the Council's desire that they work safely.

As part of the induction into specific areas of work, staff must be shown the relevant Codes of Practice, risk assessments relevant to their work area and Local Safety practices for their job and instructed in fire safety, first aid and accident reporting procedures. This basic local induction covering the Council's safety practices and procedures must be carried out during the first four weeks of a new starter's employment.

1.3 Provision, Inspection and Maintenance of Work Areas and Equipment

Work places and equipment will be suitable for the purpose and, as far as is reasonably practicable, free from risks of injury.

Where the safety of work places and equipment is dependent on proactive inspection and maintenance, a programme will be established for a competent person to carry out the necessary works (e.g. portable appliance testing - PAT). All appropriate records and relevant test certificates will be maintained.

2. Organisation.

The following section details how Reading Borough Council manages its health and safety responsibilities.

2.1 Council Health and Safety Committee

The Council Health and Safety Committee is responsible for driving improvements in the control of health and safety risks. The Committee is made up of senior managers and Union Safety Representatives/Branch Secretaries and is chaired by the Managing Director. It is the primary point of consultation between Unions and senior management on health, safety and welfare matters. The Committee also enables elected member participation in the health and safety process.

The Committee reviews health and safety standards in the Council and produces monitoring reports to the Council Management Team (CMT). It also reviews this Policy to ensure that it remains relevant to the Councils work activities and in particular it:

- Develops and monitors the Council's performance against the Council Health and Safety Action Plan
- Reviews the safety performance of the Council and Directorates against their declared targets (Action Plans).
- Reviews the statistics on work-related accidents, incidents and health & safety training.
- Examines reports on significant accidents and incidents.
- Considers the implications of legislative changes.
- Considers general correspondence and advice from the Health and Safety Executive and other relevant agencies.
- Considers reports on corporate health and safety matters submitted by safety representatives or managers.
- Approves Corporate Codes of Practice.
- Recommends to CMT initiatives to improve the safety performance of the Council.
- Ensures that minutes of the meetings are available to all Managers, Staff, Union Representatives and the Local Joint Forum detailing action points where necessary.

None of this detracts from the responsibilities of Levels 4 & 5 Managers to enact and monitor health and safety arrangements and in particular, to ensure that the requirements of this Policy are being fulfilled.

2.2 Directorate Health and Safety Committees

Each Directorate has its own Safety Committee, chaired by a Head of Service. Service managers and Union Safety Representatives make up each Committee. There will be sufficient representation from managers at Level 3 to ensure that all services are represented. The Chairs of these Committees will be members of the Council Health and Safety Committee.

These Committees review safety matters of Directorate concern. In particular the Committees:

- Develop, drive and monitor a Directorate Health and Safety Action Plan (having regard to the priorities within the Corporate Action Plan).
- Present to the Council Health & Safety Committee the Directorate Health & Safety Action Plan, identifying any significant risks and demonstrating what action has been taken to control those risks.
- Recommends to the DMT initiatives to improve the safety performance of the Directorate.
- Review the Directorate's accidents, incidents and health and safety training.
- Establish and manage a programme for Level 3 self-audits and monitor the progress of actions needed to control significant risks.
- Receive reports from managers or Union Safety Representatives and offer advice or direction to resolve issues.
- Ensure that minutes of the meetings are circulated detailing action points where necessary.

2.3 Role of Trade Unions

Trades Unions have the following rights under the health and safety legislation:

- To investigate potential hazards and dangerous occurrences.
- To examine the causes of accidents at work
- To investigate complaints relating to employees' health, safety and welfare at work
- To make representations to the employer about the above and other general matters affecting health, safety and welfare of employees
- To carry out inspections of the workplace
- To represent employees in consultations with the Health and Safety Executive, or other enforcing agencies and to receive information from the H.S.E.
- To attend meetings of Safety Committees.

- In order to carry out the above functions an employer is required to allow Safety Representatives time off with pay, suitable facilities and assistance.

Union representatives sit on both the Council and Directorate Safety Committees and participate fully in the discussion and decision making process through these bodies. Safety Reps are actively encouraged to carry out safety inspections and accident investigations, either independently or in conjunction with management. Safety representatives should also be invited and involved in the annual health and safety self-audit process.

2.4 Corporate Health and Safety Team.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team's primary role is to ensure that, as an employer, Reading Borough Council complies with all relevant health and safety legislation and that the Council conducts its work activities in such a manner as to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees, customers and visitors to Reading. It achieves this by providing technical advice, formulating and promoting the Council's health and safety policies and procedures and monitoring and auditing the Council's safety performance.

The Team provides a range of functions, including:

- Advising on corporate safety strategies
- Auditing and monitoring Health and safety performance
- Assisting with self-audits of high risk areas where necessary
- Producing and reviewing Corporate Codes of Practice
- Providing advice on risk assessments and Local safety practices
- Providing health and safety training and development
- Providing technical/legal advice and information
- Carrying out inspections, risk assessments and investigations (proactive and reactive)
- Investigating accidents and incidents
- Supporting safety committees and management teams
- Consulting with staff and their representatives
- Liaising with outside bodies including enforcement agencies

3 Documentation

The Authority has developed a series of health and safety documents that detail safe working practices and procedures.

3.1 Codes of Practice

The Codes of Practice (CoPs) cover the main safety risks faced by staff, visitors, contractors and members of the public arising from the work activities of Reading Borough Council. The CoPs are generic and provide information on how to control the risks involved within a particular activity. The Council Health and Safety Committee issues the CoPs. Representatives from the Directorate Health and Safety Committees, service areas and unions contribute to the formulation of the CoPs.

The responsibility for putting the Codes into practice resides with Service Managers. Relevant Codes of Practice are available to all staff.

3.2 Local Safety Practices

Whenever a risk assessment has been carried out on a local work activity or on a piece of equipment and a significant risk has been identified, then a Local Safety Practice (LSP that sets out a safe system of work must be prepared (making suitable reference to CoPs). All staff shall be provided with copies of the LSPs that are relevant to their work area or activities. Suitable information, instruction or supervision shall be provided to enable staff to follow the adopted safe working practice.

Before LSPs are adopted, they should be submitted to the appropriate Directorate Health and Safety Committee for approval.

LSPs will need to be reviewed during the risk assessment process (see 3.3 below).

3.3 Risk Assessments

Level 2 managers will carry out risk assessments and involve relevant staff in the process. During their self-audit, Level 3 managers will ensure that all risk assessments are being reviewed annually or whenever there has been a significant change.

Risk assessments can be generic for low risk areas (e.g. general office work). For other higher risk areas a specific risk assessment must be carried out. Specific risk assessments can be for a particular task, job role or person.

Where a member of staff has a disability or a pre-existing medical condition (and may be adversely affected by the work activity), or is a new or expectant mother or is a young person (under 18 years of age) then a specific risk assessment will be carried out.

A specific risk assessment will be required where a customer has individual needs or challenges that present health and safety risks to either themselves, staff or others.

A Local Safety practice will be prepared when complex control measures are needed to reduce a significant risk of injury or loss (see 3.2 above).

Risk assessments will be recorded by the person carrying them out and made available to staff and others by the relevant Manager. Risk assessments will be checked during the Health and Safety Self- Audits.

Risk assessments need to be reviewed when:

- A set period of time has passed. (At least annually);
- When new technology or ways of working affect the risk;
- When the risk materially changes;
- Following an accident or incident when the adopted methods of working were being followed;
- There are changes in legislation or guidance.

3.4 Record Keeping

Adequate, accurate and consistent health and safety records shall be maintained. The Level 3 manager is responsible for ensuring that there are suitable and sufficient records of their team's activities. Records may be kept on computer or in hard copy, but must be readily available and secure. The following records are required.

- a) All risk assessments relevant to the section. (NB When a risk assessment relates to an individual member of staff or customer, it should be kept securely.)
- b) All Local Safety Practices relevant to the section.
- c) Statutory and manufactures' recommended inspection records for fire safety, asbestos management, Legionella control, electric and gas installations, portable appliance tests, lifts and lifting equipment, powered gates, local exhaust ventilation, work equipment and vehicles. (Note: Property Services will hold many of these records when they are providing a planned preventative maintenance service.)
- d) Records identifying the health and safety training received by every service/team member with dates and details. These should include acknowledgement by each staff member that he or she has seen and understood the relevant risk assessments, CoPs and LSPs. (Training courses arranged through the Learning & Development Team will be recorded centrally.)
- e) Copies of all self-audits and inspections carried out within the service/team.
- f) Records of all accidents and incidents reported within the service/team, together with investigation findings and records of remedial actions undertaken.

- g) Copies of any correspondence with the HSE or other enforcement authority relevant to the service.

4 Health and Safety Performance

A range of performance indicators is used to monitor safety performance of the Council. A Council Action Plan has been established to achieve its targets.

Each Directorate will develop their own specific targets that are included in their own Health and Safety Action Plans. Service areas will incorporate these targets into their Service Plans. Progress with declared targets is monitored via the Council and Directorate Health and Safety Committees and the Council Management Team.

Managers will ensure that where their direct reports have specific health and safety duties these will form part of the normal Appraisal and 1:1 performance management process.

4.1 Health and Safety Self-Audit - Service Managers

A health and safety self-audit system has been established in the form of a questionnaire and guide. Service managers (Level 3) must carry out an audit of each service area at least annually. Action plans shall be prepared to rectify any shortfall. Where the self-audit identifies that a Level 3 manager's direct reports have actions to complete, progress with those actions will be monitored through the normal Appraisal and 1:1 performance management process.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team will, on a risk basis, participate in the audits. Union Safety Representatives are encouraged to contribute to the audit process. Managers shall engage their staff in the process as well.

4.2 Health and Safety Inspections - First Line Supervisors/Managers

A standard health and safety inspection form is available. Service areas can use this form or prepare their own if they require a more area-specific version. First line supervisors/managers (Level 2) will carry out safety inspections of every area under their control, and at appropriate intervals (frequency will be dependent on the level of risk but should as a minimum occur annually). Action plans should be prepared to rectify any shortfall. Where remedial action is beyond the scope of the Level 2 manager's authority, they will report the issues to their line manager (or appropriate Level 3 manager). Where the risk identified by the safety inspection is deemed to be sufficiently serious and it cannot be resolved, a report shall be made to the appropriate DMT and Directorate Health and Safety Committee.

It should be noted that Union Safety Representatives have the right to carry out their own separate safety inspections.

4.3 Accident/Incident and Near Miss Reporting, Investigation and Monitoring

All accidents/incidents and near misses shall be recorded (either electronically on Iris or on the standard paper form). Service areas are responsible for reporting any accidents, dangerous occurrences or disease that are required to be notified to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) (*Refer to CORP 001 - Accident Reporting*).

Managers will investigate all accidents/incidents and near misses to establish whether additional procedures are needed to prevent the likelihood of recurrence. Risk assessments, LSPs, training, instruction or levels of supervision may need to be reviewed following the investigation.

Periodically, managers must review the accidents and incidents that have occurred in their service areas to try and identify any trends. Where a trend has been identified, remedial action shall be instigated.

Accident/Incident statistics are reviewed at the Directorate and Council Health and Safety Committees.

4.4. Control of Contractors

Reading Borough Council expects that contractors working for the Council shall work to the same high safety standards as our employees and shall not put themselves, the Council's staff or members of the public at risk. In order to achieve this, whenever the use of contractors is being considered, an assessment of their health and safety capabilities will be made by looking at policies, procedures, risk assessments and their history of health and safety compliance.

Contractors at work will be checked regularly for safe working. The Council reserves the right to stop the work if a contractor is found to be operating in an unsafe manner.

5 Levels of Responsibility for Health and Safety

Level 1

5.1 All staff

- Must act in a manner to protect and promote their own health and safety and that of colleagues, members of the public and others.
- Must co-operate with the efforts of management to ensure effective health and safety.
- Must attend training provided, read documentation provided and put into practice all instruction intended to ensure effective safety.

- Must report all accidents/incidents, near misses and hazards immediately to their line manager.
- Must respect and make proper use of all equipment provided.
- Must wear any personal protective equipment (PPE) that has been provided.
- Must refer any health and safety issues they feel they are not authorised to deal with to the next level of responsibility.
- Must carry out any specific health and safety duties that have been allocated to them as part of the normal work activity. Where for any reason those duties cannot be carried out, they must report these issues to their line manager immediately.

5.2 Level 1 Training

Whilst all staff have Level 1 responsibilities, employees at Levels 4 and 5 are not required to undertake Level 1.

Level 1 training is designed to inform staff about the practices and procedures contained within this Policy and to provide sufficient knowledge for them to be able to carry out their work in a safe manner. The training should be completed within three months of starting a new job.

Within the first four weeks of employment, a new starter's supervisor will devise a health and safety training plan in consultation with them. A copy of this training plan must be retained. In devising the training plan, the supervisor, in conjunction with the new starter, will identify any health and safety training that is appropriate for the duties of the post.

The training plan will be tailored to each individual's specific post and it must contain every element of health and safety that they will need training in. The plan must also show:

- 1) All elements of the job that can be undertaken prior to training taking place.
- 2) The tasks that can only be carried out with supervision prior to training taking place.
- 3) Tasks that must not be carried out until training has been completed.

Level 2

5.3 First line supervisors/managers - all Level 1 responsibilities plus:

- Will implement this Policy, relevant Codes of Practice, risk assessments and Local Safety Practices in the area under their control.
- Will ensure that health and safety work is prioritised to meet declared targets.

- Will support and monitor the safety performance of those reporting to them, in particular through the 1:1 and Appraisal performance management process.
- Will undertake safety inspections at appropriate intervals in the area under their control and will take action to correct problems identified.
- Will establish and enforce safe systems of work for all tasks under their control.
- Will ensure that any statutory records that are required, are accurate and consistent.
- Will carry out and periodically review the risk assessments relevant to their section.
- Will carry out investigations into accidents and incidents, when required to do so.
- Will ensure that new staff understand all relevant risk assessments, Codes of Practice and LSPs at a 1:1 meeting in the first four weeks of their employment and ensure that there are appropriate records of this are in place.
- Must refer any health and safety issues they feel they are not authorised to deal with to the next level of responsibility.

5.4 Level 2 Training

Health and safety training for Level 2 supervisors should be completed within three months of starting the job.

The purpose of the training for Level 2 staff is to ensure that they have the knowledge and ability to supervise and manage all Level 1 personnel that they are responsible for.

The training will consist of the Level 1 course, and a number of core modules that every Level 2 must undertake. Additional modules are available for specific tasks.

The mandatory modules that must be undertaken are 'Risk Assessment/Safety Inspection' and when required to investigate accidents and incidents, 'Accident Investigation'.

Level 3

5.5 Service Managers - all Level 1 responsibilities plus:

Authorisation to carry out certain Level 3 responsibilities may be made to one or more managers within the Service. The relevant Level 4 manager will make this choice, based on the risks and responsibilities within the Service.

- Will take responsibility for the implementation of this Policy in the areas under their control.
- Will ensure that suitable health and safety targets are contained within service plans, Appraisals and 1:1's.

- Will carry out a Health & Safety Self-Audit of their area at least annually to ensure that:
 - All statutory and manufactures' recommended inspections and records for fire safety, asbestos management, Legionella control, electric and gas installations, portable appliance tests, lifts and lifting equipment, powered gates, local exhaust ventilation, work equipment and vehicles are in place. (Note: Property Services will hold many of these records when they are providing a planned preventative maintenance service.)
 - All appropriate risk assessments for their area are carried out, recorded and reviewed.
 - All accidents and incidents within their area are thoroughly investigated and any remedial actions carried out.
 - Health and safety information is effectively communicated within their area
 - Their staff to receive adequate and appropriate training and supervision.
 - Relevant Codes of Practice are followed and that Local Safety Practices are prepared and put in place as required.
 - Suitable health and safety monitoring is carried out during projects and contracts.

- Will liaise with the Corporate Health and Safety Team to ensure that the Council's safety policies and initiatives are appropriate to their area.

- Must refer any health and safety issues they are not authorised to deal with to the next level of responsibility.

- Must attend or be represented at the relevant Directorate Health & Safety Committee.

5.6 Level 3 Training

The health and safety training required for holders of Level 3 posts or those who have been authorised to carry out certain Level 3 duties, should be completed within three months of starting work.

Whilst this course will cover all necessary aspects of Health and Safety that Level 3 managers will need, they can take any of the other modules if they require further and specific knowledge.

Level 4

5.7 Service Heads - all Levels 1 & 3 responsibilities plus:

- Will contribute towards the development of the Directorate Health & Safety Action Plan.

- Will ensure that all Health & Safety self-audits in their service areas are carried out.

- Will ensure that health and safety considerations are made during project planning.
- Will ensure that health and safety risks are considered during the business risk management process.
- Will ensure that suitable resources are available to enable the requirements of this policy to be carried out.
- Will support and monitor the safety performance of those reporting to them, in particular through the Appraisal and 1:1 system.

Level 5

5.8 Managing Director and Directors

- Will take overall responsibility for this Policy and its implementation.
- Will decide upon safety strategy and policy.
- Will take an active leadership role in safety management.
- Will ensure sufficient resources are in place to control health and safety risks.
- Will include appropriate health and safety risks into the Strategic Risk Register (following advice from the Strategic Risk Management Steering Group).
- Will support and monitor the safety performance of those reporting to them, in particular through the Appraisal and 1:1 system.
- Will consult regularly with the Council Health and Safety Committee

5.9 Levels 4 and 5 Training

The training for Levels 4 & 5 is principally based on Business Risk Management. This will enable health and safety to be integrated into the overall risk management process.

However, periodic briefings will be given to keep senior managers apprised of developments. These briefings will also help to identify any trends across service areas.

5.10 Elected Members - The Council

The Leader of the Council holds the portfolio for health and safety.

The Chair of the Personnel Committee attends the Council Health & Safety Committee.

The Council will approve the Health and Safety Policy for the Authority. Consultation on any new policy or amendments of existing policies will normally be through the Local Joint Forum and the Personnel Committee.

CORPORATE CODES OF PRACTICE

- COP 001 - ACCIDENT REPORTING
- COP 002 - BASIC CONSTRUCTION
- COP 003 - ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN
- COP 004 - CASH HANDLING
- COP 005 - CATERING
- COP 006 - CLEANING
- COP 007 - CONFINED SPACES
- COP 008 - CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH (COSHH)
- COP 009 - DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT
- COP 010 - DRIVING VEHICLES AT WORK
- COP 011 - ELECTRICITY AT WORK
- COP 012 - FIRE SAFETY
- COP 013 - FIRST AID AT WORK
- COP 014 - HEALTH AND SAFETY IN OFFICES
- COP 015 - PERSONAL SAFETY& LONE WORKING
- COP 016 - LIFTING OPERATIONS AND LIFTING EQUIPMENT
- COP 017 - MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK
- COP 018 - NEW & EXPECTANT MOTHERS
- COP 019 - NOISE AT WORK
- COP 020 - PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT
- COP 021 - MANUAL HANDLING
- COP 022 - NON-EMPLOYEES
- COP 023 - AGENCY WORKERS
- COP 024 - CONTRACTORS
- COP 025 - WORKING AT HEIGHT
- COP 026 - WORKPLACE HEALTH, WELFARE AND SAFETY
- COP 027 - RISK ASSESSMENT
- COP 028 - SHARPS
- COP 029 - COMMUNICABLE DISEASES
- COP 030 - EXCLUSION & INCIDENT LIST PROCEDURE
- COP 031 - FLEET MANAGEMENT POLICY & PROCEDURES
- COP 032 - SMOKING AT WORK POLICY
- COP 033 - OPERATIONS IN OR AROUND FLOOD WATER