

Health and Safety Policy For Staff and Volunteers



To be reviewed annually

Sustain : The alliance for better food and farming

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

CONTENTS

Part One: General statement of policy

Part Two: Organisation of health and safety

Responsibilities of:

- The Co-ordinator
- The Office Manager
- Project Officers
- All Staff

Part Three: Arrangements and Procedures

- Office safety procedure
 - General Guidance
 - Work Areas
 - Lifting
 - Office Equipment
 - Electricity
 - Kitchen Equipment
- Use of Display Screen Equipment
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)
- Asbestos
- Fire Procedure
- First Aid Procedures
- Reporting of Accidents
- Policy Monitoring

PART ONE: GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

This policy is reviewed annually. Any revisions to this document will be immediately brought to the attention of all employees. Our policy is to provide healthy and safe working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all our employees and volunteers, and to provide all training and information as necessary. Sustain also recognises and accepts its responsibility for all those who may be affected by our activities.

In exercising this responsibility, Sustain will as far as is reasonably practicable provide and maintain:

- a safe place of work and safe access;
- a healthy working environment;
- adequate training, supervision, instruction and information to enable all employees to avoid hazards, prevent accidents and contribute positively to a safe and healthy working environment;
- safe equipment, with safe and effective operating systems and procedures;
- appropriate conditions, clothing and procedures for the handling, storage and transport of articles and substances and;
- adequate first-aid facilities in the office and on site.

However, safety is not the sole responsibility of the co-ordinator or officer manager. It is the responsibility of everyone to take reasonable care of themselves and of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

It is the duty of the management of Sustain to take every opportunity to reinforce the safety message, enforce safety rules and procedures, and encourage safe working practices and to ensure that duties and responsibilities are properly defined and adopted.

Such duties and responsibilities, at all levels, are defined in this document and adequate training and instruction will be given to allow them to be discharged effectively. There can be no doubt that with correct and responsible attitudes towards safety, the incidence and probability of injury and damage occurring can be substantially reduced as well as overall efficiency increased.

Sustain takes its responsibility for the welfare of its employees very seriously and, depending on the seriousness of the incident, may take disciplinary action against members of staff who fail to meet their responsibilities to Sustain, to themselves and others in respect of health and safety.

Whatever safety precautions or rules an office adopts, they cannot be effective without the co-operation of the individual employee. It is recommended that you read this statement carefully and be aware of your own safety and that of others at all times whilst working at the office or out on site.

Jeanette Longfield
Co-ordinator

PART TWO: ORGANISATION OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

2.1 THE CO-ORDINATOR has overall responsibility for Health and Safety in Sustain. He or she must ensure that:

- Sustain fulfils its statutory duties in terms of Health and Safety.
- The Health and Safety Policy is known to all employees and is regularly reviewed and updated to comply with new and existing regulations.
- Full details of all accidents are recorded in the accident book.
- Serious accidents are reported to the Health and Safety Executive.
- Disciplinary action is taken against any staff member or volunteer who contravenes the Health and Safety policy guidelines set out in this document.

2.2 THE OFFICE MANAGER is the nominated Health and Safety Officer and has responsibility for co-ordinating and promoting health and safety awareness and good practice. He or she must ensure that:

- Recommendations on matters concerning health and safety are made to the The Co-ordinator responsible for reviewing the health and safety policy in order to comply with the new and existing regulations.
- The Health and Safety Policy is updated accordingly, and that staff are informed of changes to the policy as and when they occur.
- The premises are inspected regularly to ensure that the programme is being complied with.
- All fire equipment is regularly inspected and serviced, and that all staff are familiar with the fire drill and organise regular drills.
- All accidents are recorded in the Accident Book and investigated with the objective of introducing measures to prevent a recurrence.
- All staff understand the safe working practice of all office machinery and equipment.
- There is an emergency plan should a potential hazard or disaster occur.

2.3 THE PROJECT OFFICER must ensure that volunteer workers in his/her charge follow Sustain's safety instructions and procedures.

The project officer must also ensure that adequate First Aid kits are readily accessible on sites being used by Sustain staff, volunteers, children or residents. The project officer must replenish First Aid equipment used by injured parties on site.

2.4 ALL STAFF are encouraged to set a high standard of safety. The terms staff or employee are held to include personnel seconded to work with Sustain by third parties, placements and volunteers working with Sustain.

All staff are responsible for the overall implementation of the policy, and the proper consideration of health and safety issues in the planning of projects and during the course of their employment. This responsibility requires staff to be aware of, comply and co-operate with any instructions or guidelines given by the employer or their line manager relating to health and safety matters. This includes the direction, instruction and supervision of other staff and volunteers under their supervision or instruction to ensure this compliance is achieved.

Each member of staff has the duty to make a positive contribution to the health and safety of themselves and other people affected by their actions. To achieve this each member of staff must:

- Be constantly vigilant to ensure the maintenance of a healthy and safe working environment, whenever applicable to them or to matters within their control.
- Adhere to procedures agreed on their behalf for securing safe working, for example by using protective clothing and equipment provided where necessary.
- Take such urgent action as may be necessary to avoid an accident or the creation of unsafe conditions, which may lead to an accident or threat to health.
- Report as appropriate, accidents and incidents that have led to, or may lead to injury, and co-operate in the investigation of accidents with the object of introducing measures to prevent a recurrence.
- Report any unsafe or unhealthy practices, procedures or conditions.
- Avoid, or refuse to undertake, any action that would cause an accident or create a hazardous condition.

It is a statutory requirement that no person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

PART THREE: ARRANGEMENTS AND PROCEDURES

All staff are responsible within their areas of control for ensuring that all necessary steps are taken to minimise the risks arising from unavoidable hazards.

Particular attention must be paid to:

- Safe systems of work out of the office
- Staff or volunteers must not visit isolated or dangerous sites alone. Always take another member of staff with you and take a mobile phone in case of emergency.

OFFICE SAFETY PROCEDURE

General Guidance

All staff must ensure that the Sustain offices are kept tidy and that no hazards are created by staff working procedures. This will include:

- Main walkways, fire exits and corridors must be kept free from obstructions and tripping hazards
- Fire doors must be kept closed
- Desks, floors and window sills tidy/cleared
- Filing cabinets closed
- Kitchen kept clean and tidy
- Store room shelves properly stacked
- All wires and cables safely secured and out of harms way

Work Areas

Keep clean, tidy and well laid out with adequate space for movement around desks and office equipment.

Staff and volunteers should take extra care when undertaking the following tasks:

Lifting

Volunteers and staff should take care to avoid lifting loads so heavy as to cause them injury. Always keep the back straight when lifting and putting down a load. Make sure it is safe to lift a load before lifting it and that there is somewhere safe to put it down. Never attempt to carry too much at one time – it is much better to make two trips.

Consideration should also be given to placing heavy items on the lower shelves and lighter items on upper shelves.

Office Equipment

Any member of staff operating any tool or equipment or machinery must have a thorough understanding of the operating instructions and have received appropriate instruction from an experienced operator.

Ensure that defects are promptly reported, correctly logged and dealt with. An office “defect book” is kept by the Office Manager to record details of defects found and action taken. This record will be examined periodically for trends and recurring defects with a view to improving maintenance and preventing the unnecessary downtime of equipment.

Electricity

All electrical equipment used on Sustain premises or for its business, must have been tested and certified to comply with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1990. Such equipment will be clearly labelled.

A qualified electrician must deal with any problems with mains electricity. Under no circumstances is any member of staff to attempt a repair of any electrical fitting.

Care must be taken at all times to ensure the safe condition and use of electrical equipment, plugs, sockets and leads, and particular care must be taken when using electrical equipment outdoors. Only equipment specifically designed for such use may be used outdoors, and must be safely positioned and protected from contact with water, including rain. Never overload socket outlet with adapters and extension leads must be fully unwound before use.

All electrical equipment should be switched off when not required, at the end of the working day, and where possible plugs removed from sockets.

Always ensure that defects are promptly reported and that where necessary defective equipment is withdrawn from use until it is properly repaired.

Kitchen Equipment

Staff should take care in the preparation of food and drinks in the office. Surfaces and floors should be cleared from obstructions and hazards and kept clean and tidy. Any spillages on surfaces or floors must be immediately cleaned or brought to the attention of the Office Manager. Electrical items should be operated according to the instructions, and should be turned off at the plug after use.

USE OF DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 govern the safe use of computers used for work. DSE 'users' are defined as employees who habitually use display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal work.

If using display screen equipment for prolonged periods, regular short breaks or changes of activity should be taken in order to avoid fatigue and disorders such as upper limb disorder (formerly known as repetitive strain injury). These can be taken at the keyboard, or preferably by performing other tasks away from the keyboard or by stopping work. Breaks can be easily achieved by briefly changing work activity, e.g. filing or making a telephone call.

Short frequent breaks are better than longer, occasional ones. Continuous keyboarding should not take place for more than two hours and preferably no more than one hour, with a break of five to ten minutes or more.

The Health and Safety Officer should carry out regular risk assessments of the workstations of users, in order to identify risks and reduce them "to the lowest extent reasonably practicable". In the recommended set up, workers should have good support for their feet and backs, look at the screen horizontally, and address their keyboard with their forearms horizontal with minimum flexion on the wrists. The height and back of the work chair must be adjustable and cables must not provide a tripping hazard.

The screen must be free from glare and dust and have an easily adjusted brightness/contrast control. Disturbing glare and reflection on the display screen from light fittings, windows and walls must be avoided.

Staff who are required to use display screen equipment extensively as a part of their normal work, are entitled to reclaim the cost of eye tests from Sustain. If glasses are prescribed for display screen equipment work, then Sustain will contribute £50 to the cost of prescribed lenses with prior approval from the Co-Ordinator.

CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH (COSHH)

Particular attention should be paid to the following:

- Staff and volunteers should not handle potentially hazardous substances without prior training in safe systems of work. Such substances include fertilisers, pesticide, paint, varnish, cement in powdered form and photocopying toner.
- Volunteers must wear protective clothing at all times when handling dangerous substances. These may include gloves, goggles, overalls, and/or special footwear.
- When working with dust or fumes in confined spaces, there must be adequate ventilation.
- All suppliers of substances covered by the COSHH regulations are required to provide guidance notes on the nature, proper use and storage of the substances. Sustain will ensure that the staff required to use the substances are aware of the contents of the guidance note and are trained in the correct use of the substance(s).

ASBESTOS

The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 1987 require employers to prevent the exposure of employees to asbestos. Although it is now illegal to use asbestos in the construction of buildings, asbestos was used for exterior cement cladding, for insulation boarding, in the composition of ceiling and floor tiles and lagging for pipes and boilers. Buildings erected or refurbished in the 1960s and 1970s are most likely to contain asbestos, but its use began around 1940 and continued until it was banned in the 1990s. Until recently it was thought that those dying from asbestos-related diseases were exposed to large amounts of asbestos either regularly or during a single spell of work lasting from a few weeks to a few years. It is now thought possible that repeated low level exposures or even one exposure to certain forms of asbestos may also lead to asbestos-induced cancers although scientific evidence on exactly what levels of exposure cause disease is unclear.

Asbestos will only pose a risk to health if asbestos fibres are released into the air. They form a very fine dust, which is often invisible to the eye. There may be a risk of asbestos fibres being released into the air if:

- The material is being disturbed (for example if it is in a prominent position and prone to accidental damage);
- The surface of the material is damaged, frayed or scratched;
- Surface sealants are peeling or breaking off;
- The material is becoming detached from its base (this is a particular problem with pipe and boiler lagging and sprayed coatings);
- Protective coverings designed to protect the asbestos are missing or damaged;
- There is asbestos dust or debris in the immediate surrounding area.

If any of these apply to asbestos materials found in the office or a building you are visiting on a project site, do not disturb it and inform the owner of the property immediately. The owner must then take action to either have it sealed, enclosed or removed. Asbestos waste is subject to waste management controls set out in the 1996 Special Waste Regulations.

Before any work with asbestos is carried out, the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations require employers to make an assessment of the likely exposure of employees to asbestos dust. The assessment should include a description of the precautions, which are to be taken to control dust release and to protect workers and others who may be affected by that work. Most council property and public buildings should have all the asbestos present identified indicated by a red sticker with a hazard sign on it. If you see a hazard sticker, do not disturb the sealed material and do not work on the site unless you are satisfied the risk of exposure has been removed.

If you are employing a contractor to work in a project building make sure that either the work will not lead to asbestos exposures or that they have carried out this assessment and identified work practices to reduce exposures. Make sure that employees involved in building maintenance work and any contractors working on the premises know that the building contains or may contain asbestos, its type and location, and make sure they know the risks to health if they disturb it.

FIRE PROCEDURE

‘Fire Action’ notices are displayed throughout the office. Current fire marshalls are Ian Tokelove and Kath Dalmeny. All staff must be made aware of the evacuation procedure, which is to assemble in the care park in front of the building.

FIRST AID PROCEDURES

The office first aid kit is located in the office and an additional first aid kit is available to use on site. The Office Manager will replenish any First Aid supplies used.

In the event of First Aid being required, staff members, volunteers and visitors should refer to the First Aid notices giving the location of First Aid equipment and the names of qualified First Aiders.

In the event of a serious accident the victim should be accompanied to hospital with a senior member of staff. All head injuries, no matter how small and trivial should be seen by a doctor.

REPORTING OF ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

An Accident and Incident book is kept by the fax machine in the entrance. It is a legal requirement that all accidents and incidents to Sustain staff, volunteers or others working with Sustain, are entered into the book within three working days, whether resulting in injury or not. When an entry has been made the Office Manager should be notified immediately.

An incident is any occurrence with the potential to cause injury, even if no injury actually results – this is also referred to as a ‘near miss’.

Certain injuries, incidents and occupational diseases must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985). Information about this can be obtained from the Co-Ordinator.

The Co-Ordinator and Office Manager will investigate all accidents in order to determine why unsafe conditions were created or why unsafe acts were performed.

No prior authorisation is required if any member of staff considers that an accident warrants hospital attention.

POLICY MONITORING

The Office Manager will monitor staff and their actions to ensure that the safety programme is being implemented correctly and to measure its effectiveness.

Regular checks of the work area will help attain and maintain a good standard of housekeeping. These checks will be carried out randomly in order to obtain an accurate picture of the hazard potential of the work place. Action in respect of identified hazards should be immediate and effective.

ENDS