



## **HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL** **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

THIS DOCUMENT OUTLINES THE POLICY ADOPTED BY  
HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL

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## **Introduction**

Harwich Town Council believes that the management of health and safety is critical to the success of the organisation. We believe that risk can be managed, and accidents avoided through an effective health and safety programme. It is our aim to create a culture throughout Harwich Town Council in which **EVERYONE** – staff, volunteers, guests, visitors, and contractors participate in this programme.

Harwich Town Council will comply with all current legislation, including:

- The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1992
- Fire Precautions Action 1971
- Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- The Work at Height Regulations 2005
- The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005

In addition, Harwich Town Council will comply with the relevant regulations, guidance and codes of conduct arising from the primary legislation.

Harwich Town Council recognises and accepts its responsibility to put in place policies and procedures that will enable Harwich Town Council to be managed in a way that protects the health and safety of employees and others who may be affected by our activities.

We require all staff to discharge their general duty under S7 of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 to take care of their own and other people's health and safety. Every employee has a legal responsibility to work safely, report defects and generally assist and co-operate with the management team to maintain a safe and healthy working environment for themselves and others who may be affected by our work activities.

**Harwich Town Council wants all staff to understand that their contribution to health and safety is vital.**

Members are accountable for the overall health and safety of Harwich Town Council employees, and the Clerk to the Council will effect this policy on a day-to-day basis. All staff are required to comply with the procedures and to report to the Clerk any deviation from them. The Clerk will consult with staff/volunteers in all matters relating to the implementation of procedures to ensure their ownership and effectiveness.

Where necessary, training and information will be provided to ensure full participation in Harwich Town Council's health and safety procedures.

The Clerk will ensure that risk assessment and regular workplace inspections are carried out.

The Clerk will ensure that the correct procedure is followed for the reporting of all accidents and incidents and records will be kept accordingly, including an analysis of accident and incident reports to reduce the likelihood of reoccurrence to the lowest reasonable practicable.

Where the accident or incident is considered to be severe, the Clerk will report, in the first instance, to the Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee and thereafter to the Council for investigation and action.

The Clerk will be responsible for initiating disciplinary procedures in cases of deliberate non-compliance.

The Clerk will monitor the success of the Health & Safety policy and make amendments where or when necessary.

Harwich Town Council will use its best endeavors to ensure that the appropriate resources back the Health & Safety policy.

### **Asbestos**

Asbestos was present in the Guildhall and buildings on the site known as the former Hill School. Asbestos surveys have been carried out (17<sup>th</sup> October 2014) for both properties and reports compiled and retained for reference. Asbestos on the Hill School site was removed by registered contractors in 2020.

Harwich Town Council staff, along with some members, carried out Asbestos Awareness training (5<sup>th</sup> July 2016), to enable inspections to be carried out in-house.

Harwich Town Council will comply with all requirements and duties under 'The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012'.<sup>1</sup>

Inspections to be carried out annually. Any minor damage can be remedied using encapsulation paint. Any matters of concern to be referred to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE).

Any disturbed asbestos to be reported under RIDDOR as a workplace accident, and an exclusion zone to be setup.

Minor works requiring less than 1 person-hour of time may be carried out without a license or notifying the HSE. A refurbishment survey to be carried out prior to any refurbishment works commencing.

There is no requirement to remove existing asbestos.

### **Emergency Procedures**

The Council will ensure that suitable arrangements have been put in place for emergency procedures in case of fire, serious and imminent danger and for the provision of first aid. Fire awareness testing will take place and plans will be put in place for any staff or Councillors who have difficulty responding to a fire alarm or escaping from a building unaided.

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.hse.gov.uk/ASBESTOS/duty.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/ASBESTOS/duty.htm)

## **Moving & Handling**

Manual handling is the transporting or supporting of a load (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving thereof) by hand or bodily force.

Good manual handling is based on Avoidance, Assessment and Reduction of risk.

Harwich Town Council and its employees will comply with all requirements under the 'Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992', 'Health & Safety at Work Act 1974' and the Safety, Health and Welfare Act 2005.

The Council will:

- Identify whether a formal manual handling assessment is required.
- Ensure that manual handling risk assessments have been undertaken where required.
- Implement manual handling control measures where appropriate.
- Ensure that affected employees, members and volunteers are suitably trained and informed.

Employee, Members and Volunteer Responsibilities:

- Follow all systems of work laid down for their safety.
- Make full and proper use of equipment provided for their safety.
- Report any defects in systems, practices or equipment.
- Attend training when required to do so.
- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others.
- Inform the Council when they believe that there is a risk of injury.

Harwich Town Council will comply with the Principles of Safe Moving & Handling in relation to good posture and will conduct an Ergonomic Assessment in every case.<sup>2</sup>

Moving & Handling training is offered to all staff, members and volunteers and will be arranged within the first year of the new council.

## **Other Health and Safety Requirements**

There are on occasions where employees will be required to work at heights (on ladders), in confined spaces (the loft at the Guildhall) and may also be lone workers.

## **Working At Heights**

The purpose of The Work at Height Regulations 2005 is to prevent death and injury caused by a fall from height. Harwich Town Council is aware that the Regulations apply to the Council, when there is a requirement for an employee to work at height.

Any work at height activity is properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people. This includes using the right type of equipment for working at height. Low-risk, relatively straightforward tasks will require less effort when it comes to planning.

The Clerk will first assess the risks with the Estate Supervisor before any work at height is undertaken. Employees have general legal duties to take reasonable care of themselves and

others who may be affected by their actions, and to co-operate with their employer to enable their health and safety when working at heights.

### **Working in Confined Spaces**

The Council will minimise the need for work in confined spaces, however on occasions it will be a requirement for employees to enter the loft space.

Harwich Town Council has undertaken a health and safety risk assessment to assess this space and will ensure that any employee who enters the loft is competent to do so.

### **Lone Working**

There are occasions when employees of Harwich Town Council will be lone working. The Council has a separate Lone Worker policy, which should be adhered to.

The Council will keep in touch with lone workers at pre-agreed intervals of contact using mobile phones and email.

Systems used by Harwich Town Council to keep in contact with lone workers will be regularly tested as part of emergency procedures, to ensure that lone workers can be contacted.

### **Use of Harwich Town Council Equipment**

#### **Strimmer**

- The use of the strimmer is restricted to Harwich Town Council staff only.
- The necessary safety equipment (goggles etc.) and clothing will be worn at all times when the strimmer is in use, in accordance with the equipment manual.
- A risk assessment will be carried out for the use of the strimmer and all risks mitigated as far as possible.
- The strimmer will be used, stored, and maintained only in accordance with the instructions for use.
- The strimmer will be used for Council business only, in consultation with an officer of the Council.
- Whilst no formal training is required to operate the strimmer, no one should operate it without having first familiarised themselves with the operation and safety manual.
- In relation to use on allotments, strimming will be carried out on vacant plots only.

- An exclusion zone will be maintained where practical. All reasonable precautions will be taken to ensure that no person or animal in the vicinity of the operation is unreasonably placed in danger.

If any new plant or equipment is required to be used, it will be installed and used in compliance with the manufacturer's instructions and will be maintained in a safe and efficient working order. PPE will be provided as required. The Clerk can monitor and undertake any routine inspections of plant and/or equipment.

### **Young Workers/Apprentices**

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations state that young workers have extra rights to protect them because of their age.

The rules for young workers apply from school leaving age until age 18 due to their lack of experience and being unaware of any potential risk.

Risk assessments should be carried out for each young worker/apprentice.

### **References /Further Information**

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/employing-people/health-safety>

<https://www.acas.org.uk/health-and-wellbeing-at-work>