



Cleaners H&S Handbook

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1. Introduction

Every year thousands of people are injured or suffer ill-health at work. Each year approximately 200 employees or self-employed people are killed and nearly 30,000 suffer serious injuries, many of which result in them being unable to work permanently. In addition, many millions of working days are lost through accidents resulting in injuries.

An accident may be described as an unplanned or unforeseeable event, which may result in injury, damage or some other loss. **Most accidents at work are preventable.**

Whilst the Health and Safety at Work act 1974 places a legal duty on the Trust to comply with health and safety law, it should be noted that there are also some duties placed on employees.

This handbook is provided to give you an awareness of your responsibilities in relation to H&S. Please read it thoroughly and sign the declaration provided at Annex A. If you are not sure about a safety matter and require any additional information, contact your line manager for clarification.

2. Your responsibilities as an employee

All employees have a responsibility for H&S under Section 7 of the H&S at work act 1974. To meet these responsibilities, you **must**

- a) Take reasonable care for the health and safety of yourselves and others who may be affected by your acts or omissions at work.
- b) Cooperate with your employer, so far as is necessary to enable your employer to comply with their duties under health and safety law.
- c) Not intentionally or recklessly interfere with, or misuse anything, provided for the purposes of health, safety and welfare.
- d) Work in a safe manner and use any machinery, equipment, dangerous substances, and personal protective equipment in accordance with any relevant information, instructions and training provided.
- e) Inform your line manager of any health and safety hazards or defects you become aware of as soon as possible.
- f) Familiarise yourself with the company health and safety policy and comply with its requirements at all times. The WNAT H&S policy is available on the WNAT website. For access google WNAT Policies

3. Fire Safety

Everyone is required to play their part in preventing fires from starting in the first place.

In order for a fire to start and to continue burning, it must have all three of the following components:

1. **Heat** (For example, a spark, naked flame, overheating equipment etc.)
2. **Fuel** (For example, Wood, paper, fabric etc.)
3. **Oxygen**

If one of the items listed above is removed then the fire will go out.



Fire Triangle

Fire Prevention Tips

The following will help in preventing fires from starting in the first place

- You should not allow combustible materials such as paper, cardboard, timber etc. to build up. They should be stored safely away from sources of ignition and if it is waste material, then it should be disposed of properly;
- Flammable substances should be stored properly in suitable containers or metal cabinets;
- Practise good housekeeping at all times;
- Smoking is not permitted on the premises;
- Care should be taken when using electric heaters to ensure they are suitably guarded and positioned safely away from combustible materials – Switch them off if no one is using them.
- Any defective electrical appliances should be reported to your line manager.

It is important that you know what to do in the event of a fire. West Norfolk Academies Trust H&S policy states that staff should evacuate and never attempt to fight a fire.

Therefore, In the event of fire, the following procedures apply:

If you discover a fire, see smoke or think there is a fire you MUST:

- **Raise the alarm.**

Shout FIRE to warn others and operate the fire alarm by pressing the fire call point as shown below



- **Evacuate the building and go to the fire assembly area**

Leave the building by the nearest exit and leave personal belongings behind.

- **Call the fire service**

Call 999, Never assume someone else is doing it.

- **DO NOT re-enter the building until instructed to do so**

If you hear the fire alarm you MUST:

- **Leave the building/site by the nearest available exit route.**
- **Do not stop to collect personal belongings.**
- **Assemble at the fire assembly area**
- **Do not re-enter until instructed to do so.**

4. First Aid and Incident Reporting

Minor incidents

If you are injured at work and need treatment you should seek assistance from a first-aider who will assist you with minor first aid requirements.

Serious Incidents

If a serious injury occurs that is beyond basic first aid then the emergency services are to be contacted.

Dial 999 and seek medical assistance

Reporting

It is a legal requirement to report all accidents to your line manager. Your line manager must then submit the incident report using the WNAT Incident reporting system. Should any investigation be required this will be done by the Trust Estates Manager and you will be able to receive copies of all investigations.

5. Electrical safety

Electricity is extremely useful for all types of everyday tasks and if used safely, does not represent a significant hazard to health. However, if suitable safety precautions are not taken, it has the potential to kill or seriously injure people.

Only qualified and competent personnel are permitted to undertake electrical work. If you become aware of any damage to the fixed electrical system (Plug sockets, light switches etc) or electrical appliances (Vacuum cleaners etc.), report it to your line manager immediately.

Important: Under no circumstances should you interfere with the fixed electrical system. If in doubt do not use the equipment until informed it is safe to do so.

6. Use of work equipment

Work equipment includes any equipment used at work such as office equipment and machinery. Such equipment should only be used for the purpose for which it is designed and must not be adapted for unauthorised use.

You should only use equipment for which you are suitably trained. Where safety guards are provided, these must be used at all times.

Any damage or defects should be reported immediately to your line manager.

If Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required it must be provided by your employer and used by yourself as instructed.

Important: Under no circumstances should you attempt to repair electrical appliances. If in doubt do not use the equipment until informed it is safe to do so.

7. Manual Handling

Manual handling related injuries represent a large proportion of all reported injuries. However, by following a number of simple techniques the risk of injury can be reduced to an acceptable level.

Wherever possible, manual handling should be reduced by making use of lifting devices such as trolleys for transporting goods. If manual handling is unavoidable, the following six steps should be followed:

Step 1 - Stop and think

- Plan the Lift
 1. Where is it going?
 2. What's the best route to take?
 3. How heavy is it likely to be?
 4. Is it stable?

5. How to grip it?
6. How to put it down?

Step 2 – Place the feet

- Get close to the load to be lifted
- Keep feet shoulder width apart to provide a stable base
- Place leading leg as far forward as comfortable
- DO NOT attempt to lift a load you cannot get close to

Step 3 - Adopt a good posture

- Bend the knees so that the hands when gripping the load are as close to level with the waist as possible
- Do not kneel or over flex the knees
- Keep the back straight (tucking in the chin helps)
- Lean forward a little over the load if necessary to get a good grip
- Keep shoulders level and facing the same direction as the hips

Step 4 - Raise the load

- Get a firm grip
- Keeping the arms within the boundary formed by the legs
- Test the weight of the load
- Keep the heaviest side of the load against the body
- Lift smoothly using leg muscles
- Do not twist during the lift

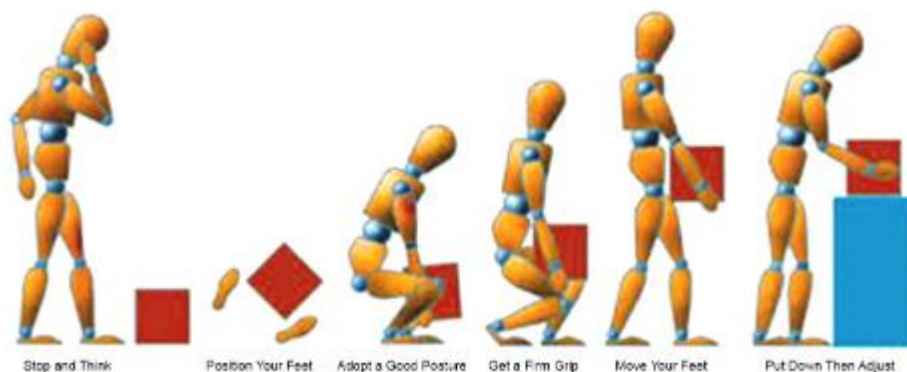
Step 5 - Carrying the load

- Hold the object close to the body
- Do not twist the body when changing direction

Step 6 - Putting the load down

- Lower slowly and smoothly using leg muscles
- Keep the back straight
- Do not twist or stretch
- If precise positioning of the load is required put down first and then slide it into position
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Note: If a load is too heavy or awkward for one person, then consider if it can be safely handled by two or more persons in a coordinated manoeuvre. If you are unsure, ask for help from your line manager.



8. Slips and Trips

Slips and trips are one of the most common causes of injury within the workplace. As such all care should be taken to minimise the potential risk and the following should always be considered.

- When mopping the area should be dried as much as possible. Consider dry mopping to reduce drying times.
- Mopping should be limited to quiet periods when there is less foot traffic
- Caution – wet floor signs must be displayed when there is potential risk of slipping on wet floors
- When using equipment make sure it is left in a safe place and not directly in line with doors etc.
- Equipment cables should be moved to ensure trip hazards are reduced as much as possible
- Extension leads should be placed to restrict trip hazards and should never be laid above floor level.



9. Hazardous Substances and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Hazardous substances will display one or more of the following symbols

What do the COSHH symbols mean?		
 Dangerous to the environment	 Toxic	 Gas under pressure
 Corrosive	 Explosive	 Flammable
 Caution – used for less serious health hazards like skin irritation	 Oxidising	 Longer term health hazards such as carcinogenicity

Before using any hazardous substances such as cleaning chemicals and solvents, read the safety information on the container to find out what precautions need to be taken.

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) provide details of the substance, health effects of exposure to it, guidance on safe use, handling, storage and disposal and copies will be held by the Site Manager along with a suitable Risk Assessment.

Safe systems of work should be followed which may include the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves and over-clothing.

As part of your role you will be requested to complete an annual skin self-assessment questionnaire. If you are in doubt about such substances or require a skin self-assessment questionnaire, ask your line manager for further guidance.

IF you develop skin problems during your employment that you feel are associated with the use of substances required as part of your role you **MUST** inform your line manager immediately.

It is a legal requirement for your employer to provide suitable PPE for your role and staff should never purchase any item of PPE from their personal funds. If there is a shortfall in the quantity of PPE available you must inform your line manager immediately to allow restocking to be carried out.

10. Working at Height

There will be times where working at height is unavoidable. Working at height is any work where a fall could cause injury if controls are not put in place.

Therefore, all working at height requirements are to be completed using the correct equipment only. For example, step ladders, kick stools etc. If there is insufficient equipment, speak to your line manager.

NOTE: Furniture such as desks and chairs is NEVER to be used for any working at height requirement at any time.

11. Lone working

Lone working not only includes individual staff working alone on site but also includes staff working alone in separate areas of the site.

Please ensure the area in which you are working is secure and that you have the means to request assistance should it be required. Your line manager should incorporate welfare checks where lone working is a requirement. Should you have any concerns over lone working including potential medical issues that may impact your ability to work alone please inform your line manager at the earliest opportunity.

A Lone Working Risk Assessment is available and can be obtained from the site manager

12. Legionella

Legionnaires' disease is a lung infection you can get from inhaling droplets of water from things like air conditioning or hot tubs. It's uncommon but it can be very serious.

Legionella bacteria is commonly found in water. The bacteria multiply where temperatures are between 20-45°C and nutrients are available. The bacteria are dormant below 20°C and do not survive above 60°C

WNAT Schools have water management contracts in place that includes regular temperature checks to confirm that the water is outside of the active temperatures to ensure the risk of legionella is minimal.

However, it is important that you report the following

- If you identify that a cold outlet is producing warm water after running for a few minutes, inform your line manager
- If a hot outlet is only producing warm water after running for a few minutes, inform your line manager.

All buckets and containers should be emptied at the end of the day and water should not be stored in containers where the temperature could encourage bacteria growth.

13. Asbestos

Asbestos is a material that was used in the construction of buildings until it was banned in 1999. It was identified that asbestos fibres when breathed into the lungs can cause significant health issues.

As the majority of WNAT schools were constructed prior to 1999 it is very likely that asbestos is contained in some form in areas of the buildings. However, as long as the asbestos is managed and not disturbed it is safe.

Asbestos only becomes a hazard to health if it is disturbed and breathed in as a dust. It is therefore important that any damage caused to the buildings is reported to your line manager as soon as possible to allow a thorough investigation.

If you identify damage do not touch or disturb any dust in the area.



14. Anaphylaxis (allergies reaction)

Anaphylaxis is a life-threatening allergic reaction that happens very quickly. It can be caused by food, medicine or insect stings.

Symptoms include

- Swelling of the tongue and throat
- Difficulty breathing or breathing very fast
- Difficulty swallowing, tight throat or a horse voice
- Wheezing, coughing or noisy breathing
- Feeling tired or confused
- Feeling faint or dizzy
- Skin cold to the touch
- Blue, grey or pale skin, lips or tongue.

Follow these steps if you think you or someone you're with is having an anaphylactic reaction:

1. Use an adrenaline auto-injector (Such as an EpiPen) if you have one (persons diagnosed as being at high risk are issued with personal auto-injectors and should be encouraged to use them. Where not diagnose spare EPIpens are available on school site and you should familiarise yourself with their location)
2. Instructions for use are clearly printed on the side of the device
3. Call 999 and state you or someone else is believed to be suffering from an anaphylactic reaction - Follow the guidance provided by 999

Do not stand or walk at any time, even if you feel better

15. Conduct

The nature of the WNAT work environment requires employees to behave in a suitable manner and to be fully in control of their faculties. If you are taking prescription drugs you should inform your line manager and take note of medical advice, for example, where drugs may cause drowsiness, you should not operate machinery or work alone.

Any employee discovered to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs (except known prescribed drugs) whilst at work will not be permitted to continue working. This will be treated extremely seriously and the employee may be subject to the disciplinary procedure.

Annex A – WNAT Cleaners H&S Handbook

School Name:

Declaration

I,....., agree that I have received a copy of the WNAT Cleaners H&S Handbook and having read it thoroughly agree to abide by the information provided.

Should I require further information, I agree to discuss this with my line manager as and when required.

Signature

Date