



Cleaners H&S Handbook

Reviewed: December 2023

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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.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with information to enable you to work safely and without risk to your health.

Whilst the Health and Safety at Work act 1974 places a legal duty on West Norfolk Academies Trust (WNAT) 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.

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 themselves and of other who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.
- b) Co-operate with the employer, so far as is necessary to enable the employer to comply with their duties under health and safety law.
- c) Not to 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 their line manager of any health and safety hazards or defects they become aware of.
- f) Familiarise themselves with the company health and safety policy and comply with its requirements at all times.

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, namely:

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

The above is known as the Fire Triangle. If one item is removed the triangle will fall (the fire will go out)



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 accumulate. 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;
- Practice 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 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 all point as shown below



- **Evacuate the building**

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.**
- **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 accident to your line manager. Your line manager must then submit the 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 or attempt to repair electrical appliances. If in doubt do not use the equipment until informed it is safe to do so.

6. Use of equipment

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

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 in safe manual handling, 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 grasping 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

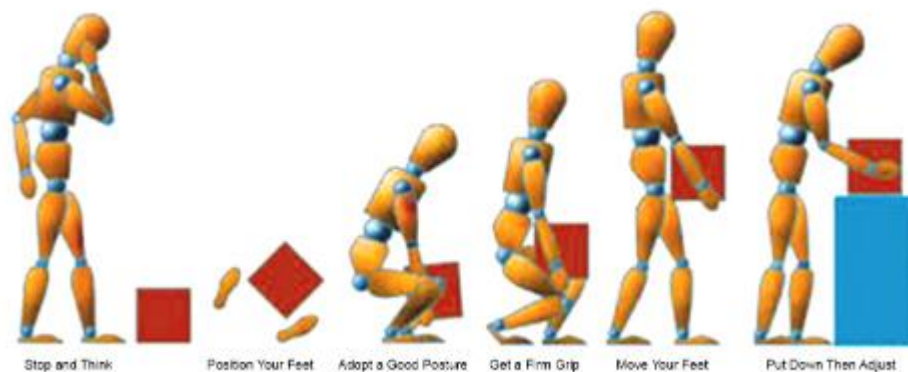
Step 5 - Carrying the load

- 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

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 co-ordinated manoeuvre. If you are unsure, ask for help from your line manager.



IF you require further guidance on Manual Handling please speak to your line manager or the Trust Estates Manager

8. Slips and Trips

Slips and trips are one of the most common causes of injury within the workplace. A 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)

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.

Safety data sheets 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.

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

As part of 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.

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 not 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 in alone is 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.

12. Conduct

The nature of the WNAT work environment requires employees 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