



Health and Safety Policy and Guidance

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1. NOMINATED OFFICERS

Health and Safety Officer

Operations Manager

(In their absence – Town Clerk)

Fire Officer

Operations Manager

(In their absence – Town Clerk)

First Aid

A risk assessment of the number of First Aiders has been done and the employees holding the relevant qualification are listed on the office/staff room notice boards.

COSHH Assessments Responsible Person

Operations Manager

Risk Assessments Responsible Person

Operations Manager

2. GENERAL STATEMENT

This is the Health and Safety Policy Statement of:

Crewkerne Town Council

Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

Our statement of general policy is to:

- Prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health by managing the health and safety risks in the workplace
- Engage and consult with our employees on matters affecting their health and safety and strive to implement continuous improvements
- Maintain safe and healthy working conditions, provide and maintain plant, equipment and machinery, and ensure safe storage/use of substances
- Provide clear instructions and information, and adequate training, to ensure employees are competent to do their work
- Review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals
- Implement emergency procedures – evacuation in case of fire or other significant incident.

Signed: (Mayor)

Date:

Adopted Town Council meeting on 23 November 2009
Reviewed 20 August 2014.
Reviewed Policy & Resources Committee meeting 9 October 2017.
Reviewed Policy & Resources Committee meeting 8 August 2022.
Reviewed Policy & Resources Committee meeting 12 February 2024.
Reviewed Policy & Resources Committee meeting 10th February 2025.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR HEALTH & SAFETY MANAGEMENT

3.1 Crewkerne Town Council

- 3.1.1 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a statutory duty on all employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of all its employees at work and other people who may be affected by their activities, e.g. users, volunteers, Councillors and members of the public.
- 3.1.2 Crewkerne Town Council as the employer, has overall and final responsibility for health and safety matters at all Council-operated premises and for ensuring that health & safety legislation is complied with.
- 3.1.3 Crewkerne Town Council will also ensure that the tenants of Council-owned buildings commit to maintaining compliance with health and safety standards.
- 3.1.4 Crewkerne Town Council will regularly review the operation of its health & safety policy and will ensure that:
- Employees, volunteers and Councillors as appropriate receive sufficient information, training and supervision on health and safety matters
 - risk assessments are undertaken and the results recorded and made available to all employees
 - accidents are investigated to identify the root cause. These are reported to the Council detailing the preventative action implemented.
 - arrangements are in place to monitor the maintenance of the premises and equipment
 - there are adequate arrangements to liaise and co-operate on health and safety matters with other employers at the Town Hall.
- 3.1.5 Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to the nominated Health & Safety Officer.

3.2 All Employees

- 3.2.1 **All employees must:**
- co-operate with supervisors and managers on health and safety matters
 - be aware of relevant risk assessments and method statements
 - not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety
 - take reasonable care of their own health and safety and not do anything to endanger others.
 - report all health and safety concerns to the Health and Safety Officer.

3.3 Fire Officer

- 3.3.1 Crewkerne Town Council will appoint the nominated Fire Officer who shall receive appropriate training.
- 3.3.2 The responsibilities of the Fire Officer are to:
- be aware of potential fire hazards and familiar with the location and use of fire-fighting equipment ensuring it is maintained as necessary
 - arrange fire drills and testing of fire alarms and keep records
 - assist with the evacuation of staff and visitors
 - liaise with Emergency Services at the assembly point

- ensure Town Hall staff and volunteers are aware of the fire alarm and drill

FOR DETAILED FIRE SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS SEE SECTION 11.

3.4 First Aid

- 3.4.1 Nominated first aiders will complete Emergency First Aid at Work training provided by a recognised provider. Qualified members of staff are listed on the office and staff room noticeboards.
- 3.4.2 The Health & Safety Officer will ensure that the BS 8599-1 compliant first aid boxes are kept in the designated locations (see Section 13.1) and are regularly checked and correctly stocked.
- 3.4.3 The Health & Safety Officer will ensure that all accidents are recorded using the Council's Accident Report Form, copies of which are kept in the Town Hall offices.

FOR DETAILED FIRST AID AND ACCIDENT ARRANGEMENTS SEE SECTION 13.

3.5 Risk Assessment

- 3.5.1 Crewkerne Town Council will ensure that risk assessments are carried out by competent persons in accordance with the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Assessments will be documented and made available to all staff.
- 3.5.2 Risk assessments will be reviewed annually to ensure they are suitable and sufficient, ensuring hazards are identified and risk reduced to as low a level as reasonably practicable. Assessments will also be reviewed following significant change in working environment or to practices. Assessments will cover employees and, as appropriate, Councillors and volunteers and all aspects of their Council work wherever this takes place.

FOR DETAILED RISK ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS SEE SECTION 17.

3.6 Training

- 3.6.1 Crewkerne Town Council will ensure that new employees and volunteers receive information and guidance on health and safety as part of their induction.
- 3.6.2 Crewkerne Town Council will ensure the provision of adequate health and safety training for employees and, as appropriate, Councillors and volunteers, including: general health and safety, first aid, manual handling, fire safety, risk assessment. The nominated Health & Safety Officer will also organise training for appropriate use of equipment, and any special training needed to ensure safe systems of work.
- 3.6.3 Any employee, volunteer or Councillor who believes that they have a need for further health and safety training should inform the Health & Safety Officer.

3.7 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- 3.7.1 PPE identified as necessary in any Town Council Risk Assessment will be provided free of charge to relevant employees. PPE should be worn in accordance with training and instructions, kept in good condition and defects reported immediately to the nominated Health & Safety Officer.

- 3.7,2 If a risk assessment indicates that a limb (b) worker requires PPE to carry out their work activities, the Health & Safety Officer must carry out a PPE suitability assessment and the Town Council will provide the PPE free of charge as it does for employees.

4. BUILDINGS

- 4.1** Crewkerne Town Council has a duty to provide a safe and healthy environment for all persons using Town Council operated premises and facilities.

- 4.2** All Town Council staff and Councillors are responsible for identifying actual and potential hazards. Once identified a hazard should be removed. If this is not possible it should be quarantined and immediately reported to the Health & Safety Officer for further action.

4.3 Examples of Hazards

4.3.1 Items Out of Reach:

Chairs or other furniture must not be used to stand on for the purpose of reaching items at height, only approved access equipment (e.g. stepladders) should be used.

4.3.2 Damaged Equipment:

Regular checks should be carried out on equipment, including furniture, for faults, damage, sharp edges etc. Defective items should be removed from use pending repair or replacement.

4.3.3 Damage to the Fabric of Buildings:

Damage to windows, doors, flooring, mains electrical installations etc. may have safety implications and must be reported immediately to the Health & Safety Officer.

5. PASSENGER LIFTS

In accordance with the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998, the Council is required to nominate a duty holder, to ensure that its legal responsibilities are met by ensuring that lifts are thoroughly examined and that they are safe to use. The nominated duty holder is the Health and Safety Officer.

The Health and Safety Officer will ensure that the lifts are inspected, tested and maintained in accordance with the above regulatory requirements and through an approved contractor. These requirements also encompass the emergency call-out facility.

Copies of all lift examination reports are available for inspection in the Council office.

The lift maintenance support contract includes the linking of the lift emergency call-out phone to a 24-hour call centre, which ensures that a duty engineer is despatched promptly to resolve the issue with the lift.

6. GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

6.1 Aisles & Walkways

Aisles & walkways must remain clear of obstructions and all materials and equipment stored securely in safe areas. Items should never be placed immediately in front of, or left obstructing, fire doors, fire exits, fire alarms or fire equipment.

6.2 Smoking

Smoking is not allowed in any Council property or vehicle. This restriction applies not only to cigarettes, cigars and pipes but also to e-cigarettes.

6.3 Overcrowding

The Council will ensure that the working environment is not overcrowded and consultation with staff will take place prior to any changes being made.

6.4 Ventilation

The Town Council will ensure staff are provided with a well-ventilated workplace in which workers have control over the local level of ventilation.

6.5 Temperature

In office workplaces a minimum temperature of 16°C shall be maintained and where possible the maximum temperature not allowed to reach an uncomfortable level.

6.6 Lighting

A suitable and sufficient level of light will be provided in all work areas. If lighting is found to be defective this must be reported to the Health & Safety Officer.

6.7 Noise

The Council will ensure that staff are not exposed to excessive workplace noise levels.

6.8 Equipment Storage and Usage

6.8.1 Equipment must not to be left lying around but should be safely stored.

6.8.2 No wires may be left trailing across floors.

6.8.3 Paraffin, electric bar or propane gas heaters may not be used in Council premises without the written permission of the Health & Safety Officer.

6.9 Maintenance and Electrical Equipment

6.9.1 All building maintenance work shall be carried out by competent persons.

6.9.2 Electrical equipment must always be used in accordance with instructions and defective items isolated, removed from use and the Health & Safety Officer advised.

6.9.3 The Council will ensure that the testing of electrical wiring in properties and Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) are undertaken at the appropriate time intervals.

7. WELFARE ARRANGEMENTS

7.1 Toilet and Washing Facilities

The Town Council will provide suitable and sufficient toilets and washing facilities for staff in accordance with the minimum requirements of Health & Safety legislation.

7.2 Drinking Water

An adequate supply of clean safe drinking water will be provided for all staff.

7.3 Rest Areas

So far as is reasonably practicable, staff will be provided with a rest area away from their usual workstations.

7.4 New and Expectant Mothers

When an employee provides written notification to the Council stating that she is pregnant, or that she has given birth within the past six months or that she is breastfeeding, the Council will undertake a review of the relevant workplace risk assessment(s), to identify any risks to the health and safety of a new or expectant mother, or that of her baby, and to take any necessary preventive and protective measures to reduce or control any risks identified. In the case of a pregnant or new mother, the Council will undertake an individual risk assessment which will be reviewed on a monthly basis.

Suitable rest facilities will be provided for pregnant and breastfeeding employees.

7.5 Hours of Work

Employees should not work excessively long hours and must take adequate breaks for meals and rest.

8. PERSONAL SAFETY

8.1 In the Office Environment

It is in the nature of the organisation's work that staff or volunteers may on occasion deal with public and find themselves exposed to a potentially confrontational or threatening situation. Should staff feel uneasy, uncomfortable, threatened, abused or assaulted whilst dealing with a member of the public they have the right to refuse to continue further such dealings. In these situations the Town Council will support the decision of the staff member.

8.2 Working Away from the Office

8.2.1 Staff working away from the office should advise colleagues where they will be and for approximately how long. If plans change significantly, this information should be communicated back to colleagues.

8.2.2 Staff should make clear who they wish informed (outside of work) in the event of an emergency and how they can normally be contacted.

8.3 Lone Working of Grounds Maintenance Staff

8.3.1 Grounds staff should only work alone outdoors during daylight hours and be familiar with the findings and actions of the Lone Working Risk Assessment.

8.3.2 Staff have access to first aid kits kept in the Grounds & Amenities workshop and vehicles. Emergency first aid training is provided to at least one member of the team and a mobile phone is provided to enable contact in an emergency.

8.4. Holding or Carrying Money or Valuables for the Council

8.4.1 Staff should not carry significant amounts of cash to the bank and visits to the bank should not be at a regular time.

8.4.2 Cash amounts, over and above that required for petty cash, should not be kept in the Town Hall.

8.4.3 Under no circumstances should staff put their safety at risk on account of Crewkerne Town Council.

8.5 Personal Awareness

- 8.5.1 **Be prepared.** Do you know who to contact and what to do if a difficult situation arises? The Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk should be contacted.
- 8.5.2 **Be observant.** Notice everything around you - exit doors, telephones, windows, sources of help. This will make you more aware of your surroundings and help you escape if you need to.
- 8.5.3 **Assess potential risks.** Avoid dangerous short cuts, walk facing the traffic on the street side of pavements, at night think about where you park your car for your safety.

8.6 In Dealing with Aggression

- 8.6.1 **Try to stay calm** if someone is starting to get angry. Your body language, voice and response can help to defuse a situation. Take a deep breath, keep your voice on an even keel, and try to help.
- 8.6.2 **Offer an angry person a range of options** from which they can choose the one they prefer. They will find it difficult to stay angry.
- 8.6.3 **Are you the best person to deal with this situation?** Obtain help from the Town Clerk, or others.

8.7 Reporting and Recording

- 8.7.1 All incidents of aggression should be reported to the Town Clerk and recorded in the accident book.
- 8.7.2 Employers have a legal responsibility to provide a safe working environment. Staff should report any situation in the workplace which is a threat to personal wellbeing. Talking about fear and other problems related to bullying, aggression or harassment are not marks of failure but good practice. A serious incident, even if it results in no physical harm, may cause feelings of anxiety, panic or distress which can carry on long afterwards. Crewkerne Town Council recognises this and will provide a suitable and appropriate level of support.
- 8.7.3 Records of accidents and near misses will be kept for five years.

9. HOMEWORKING

Should employees carry out work for the Council at home then all health and safety rules and guidance in this policy will apply as they do in the workplace.

10. DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE)

10.1 General

- 10.1.1 It is the policy of the Council to comply with the law as set out in the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992.
- 10.1.2 DSE assessments will be carried out for all staff using display screen equipment for more than 1 hour a day to ensure compliance with the regulations.

10.2 Nature and Organisation of the Work

- 10.2.1 Suitable adjustable seating will be provided to all DSE users.

- 10.2.2 Staff will take regular breaks (at least 10 minutes away for every hour at the screen). Short frequent breaks are more satisfactory than occasional longer breaks.

10.3 Equipment

Crewkerne Town Council will ensure provision of:

- VDUs with adjustable screen supports.
- suitable DSE equipment cleaning materials to maintain hygiene.
- adjustable keyboards to enable correct operator working posture
- anti-glare screens to minimise operator eye strain.
- adequate workstation space.

10.4 Maintenance

Copies of equipment manufacturers' operation and maintenance instructions will be held and the Council will ensure that maintenance is carried out where appropriate.

10.5 Eye and Eyesight Tests

Staff using DSE are entitled to request and receive eyesight tests paid for by the Council together with basic frames and lenses if required specifically for DSE work.

10.6 Work Related Upper Limb Disorders

Work Related Upper Limb Disorders are often associated with work using Display Screen Equipment. Staff will be provided with compliant DSE equipment and seating to enable the setting up of comfortable operator workstations. This will help prevent the development of Upper Limb Disorders, however staff should also contribute to their own safety and welfare by:

- avoiding sitting in the same position for long periods
- adjusting equipment and furniture to appropriate and comfortable positions
- taking regular rest breaks from display screen work (at least 10 minutes away from the screen in every hour) by doing other work tasks.

11. FIRE SAFETY

11.1 General

- 11.1.1 It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and Councillors working in Council premises to be aware of potential fire hazards and be familiar with the location of fire exits and assembly points.
- 11.1.2 Access to escape doors, extinguishers and other fire-fighting equipment must not be obstructed. The Fire Officer has the authority to remove such obstructions. He/she will arrange staff training, as necessary, for use of such equipment.

11.2 Fire Drills

- 11.2.1 The Fire Officer is responsible for arranging fire drills to take place at intervals, reviewing the success of the evacuation and making recommendations for improved practices to ensure the effectiveness of the evacuation procedures.
- 11.2.2 Fire drill instructions will be part of the induction process for all new staff and volunteers.

- 11.2.3 Alarms: the Fire Officer will ensure fire alarms are tested regularly and records kept and that the fire alarm system is properly maintained.
- 11.2.4 Emergency Lights: the Fire Officer will ensure that emergency lights are tested regularly and records kept, and that the emergency lights are properly maintained.

12. HYGIENE

- 12.1 Staff must keep all areas (particularly food and drink preparation) clean and tidy.
- 12.2 W.C.s must be cleaned regularly and kept in a hygienic condition.
- 12.3 All wash basins should have a supply of hot water, hand wash and towels or dryers.
- 12.4 Sanitary towel bins should be provided, emptied and sanitised regularly by contractors.

13. ACCIDENT, INCIDENT AND NEAR MISS REPORTING

13.1 First Aid

- 13.1.1 Emergency First Aid supplies are contained in clearly marked First Aid Kits which are located in the Town Council offices, the Council's workshop premises and the grounds and amenities vehicles.
- 13.1.2 At least one employee in the Town Council Offices and also in the Grounds and Amenities team will be trained as a First Aider.
- 13.1.3 All staff should know the location of first aid kits and who their first aider is.
- 13.1.4 Details of all first aid treatment must be recorded using the Council's Accident Report Form, copies of which are held in the Town Hall and Lodge offices.

13.2 Accidents and Emergencies

- 13.2.1 All accidents, incidents and near misses must be reported to the Town Clerk and recorded using the Council's Accident Report Form located in the Town Hall offices. Incidents and occurrences (Near Misses) which have the potential to result in harm should also be recorded.
- 13.2.2 It is the Health & Safety Officer's responsibility to investigate the cause of accidents, incidents and near misses, to identify the root cause, ensuring that any necessary corrective or preventative action is taken. The results of the root cause for an accident, incident or near miss should be reported to the Town Clerk.
- 13.2.3 The Health & Safety Officer is responsible for the reporting of work-related accidents, occupational diseases and specified dangerous occurrences (near misses) defined within the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

14. CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH (COSHH)

14.1 General Statement

- 14.1.1 Under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 (as amended), employers have a duty to assess the risks related to hazardous

substances. In accordance with the Approved Code of Practice this assessment will be carried out and documented by a nominated competent person.

14.1.2 The COSHH nominated person will be responsible for carrying out this assessment.

14.1.3 Following this assessment, in accordance with the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) Crewkerne Town Council will ensure:

- action is taken to remove, so far as is reasonably practicable, any known hazardous substance from the process and/or the work environment and find a safe substitute
- that no substance will be used without reference to the assessment and manufacturers safety data sheets (SDS)
- known hazardous substances shall be handled, contained and enclosed according to the SDS and the COSHH assessment
- that appropriate, as detailed in the SDS, personal protective equipment (PPE) is issued to staff

14.2 Monitoring

Should a member of staff or volunteer be exposed to a hazardous substance, they will be advised to visit their doctor for professional advice. As a further precaution they will be monitored whilst within the workplace by the Health and Safety Officer to ensure no ongoing health issues are present.

14.3 Removal, Substitution, Enclosure and Protection

Wherever possible the use of hazardous substances in the workplace will be avoided and non-hazardous materials will be sought and used. When a hazardous substance cannot be substituted it must be used according to the manufacturer's instructions (the MSDS) and the COSHH assessment. Where possible, hazardous substances should be handled in a contained or enclosed manner away from other workers. Protection including PPE will be made available and used.

15. LIFTING AND HANDLING

- 15.1 Staff and volunteers will receive instruction in Manual Handling best practice, this will include lifting and moving techniques and assessment of loads. Wherever possible assistance from others should be sought and lifting aids used. A correct approach to manual handling lessens the effort required and reduces risk of injury.
- 15.2 Any injury, suffered as a result of manual handling must be reported and details recorded in the Accident Book.

16. STRESS MANAGEMENT

- 16.1 Stress is a serious issue and may result in staff suffering complex medical issues. It may be work related or have its origins outside the workplace but the effects can be the same. There can be a serious impact on quality of life for individuals and disruption to their work. Colleagues may be adversely affected and the effectiveness of an organisation compromised.
- 16.2 Stress in the workplace is a hazard that must be dealt with like any other and the responsibility for reducing it lies both with employer and employee.
- 16.3 Crewkerne Town Council will endeavour to remove the potential causes of stress in the workplace and promote a low stress working environment. It aims to:
- create opportunities for staff to contribute in the planning and organisation of their own jobs

- ensure staff have work targets that are stretching but reasonable
 - implement effective policies and procedures for dealing with bullying and any form of harassment
 - encourage good communications between staff and management
 - promote the maintenance of a supportive culture in the workplace
 - where appropriate take into consideration employees' personal situation/problems at home
 - facilitate employee involvement during any period of change.
- 16.4 The Town Council will ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that its policies, working practices and conditions of employment support this commitment.
- 16.5 Staff and volunteers should plan and organise their work in a way which will minimise the potential for development of stress in themselves or others.
- 16.6 Employees should respect co-workers and ensure that interpersonal conflict is avoided or dealt with sensibly.
- 16.7 Should any member of staff feel that they are suffering from work related stress they should discuss this with their line manager at the earliest opportunity. Where reasonable and practicable the Town Council will seek to provide assistance to the employee.

17. RISK ASSESSMENTS

- **What is a Risk Assessment?**

Risk assessment is a process by which hazards are identified, who might suffer harm and the level of harm/risk calculated. Where possible, hazards will be removed to eliminate or reduce risk but where this is not possible the residual risk must be managed in so far as is reasonably practicable. The risk assessment will detail how the remaining risk is to be mitigated and what must be done to facilitate this. The assessment is in short 'a process of careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people' the aim is to make sure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill.

- **Carrying out a Risk Assessment:**

Carrying out a risk assessment is a relatively straightforward process, simply a careful examination of what could cause harm to people, and what precautions need to be taken.

The HSE proscribes a 'Five Step' process:

- **Step One – Identify the hazards**
- **Step Two – identify who is at risk**
- **Step Three – Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions**
- **Step Four – Record your findings**
- **Step Five - Review your assessment**

Other considerations:

- * If you share premises with other groups, it is a **legal requirement** that you all co-operate with each other in carrying out assessments.
- * If your workers have a trade union health and safety representative, you should consult with them before and after the risk assessment process.

Crewkerne Town Council has undertaken risk assessments, copies of which are held in the Town Hall offices.

18. CONTACTS

Health and Safety Executive:

For further information, advice and guidance concerning Health & Safety visit the Health & Safety Executive website www.hse.gov.uk.