

VOLUNTEER EDINBURGH HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

In the context of this Policy “staff” should be taken to include paid staff, volunteers or trainees of the organisation.

This policy applies to all VE staff regardless of which building they are located. Many practices however, such as electrical testing, apply to our main office and parallel local procedures will be in place in other offices where we rent space.

Where VE leases office space, the lease will clearly set out the health and safety responsibilities of VE and the tenant.

Introduction

This Policy has been drawn up in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

The aim of this Policy is to:

- Prevent injuries and accidents.
- Involve and motivate staff in health and safety matters.
- Promote a high standard of health and hygiene.
- Control situation which may threaten life, health or property.

For health and safety to be effective, it is essential for staff to co-operate with safe working practices. Volunteers and trainees have the same responsibilities and obligations as paid staff, and have a duty of care to clients, which includes helping to maintain a healthy and safe environment, and treating others in a way which cannot harm them.

During their induction, staff, volunteers and trainees will be made aware of Volunteer Edinburgh’s Health and Safety Policy and Procedures and how that relates to their work.

Accidents

The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for reporting all accidents, injuries and dangerous occurrences, so it is important to inform them of any accident, however minor it may seem at the time. This includes accidents involving staff or clients in the care of staff at the time of the incident. If an employee, trainee, volunteer or member of the public has an accident it must be recorded in writing by the organisation, and if the person dies, is in hospital for more than 24 hours, or off work for more than 3 days, the local Enforcement Officer of the Health and Safety Executive must be notified in writing. There is a standard form on which this is done which conforms to the 1985 regulations regarding reporting of injuries, disease and dangerous occurrences. In the event of the Health and Safety Officer being unavailable you should inform the Director of Operations

If you see something dangerous happen, even if it does not cause any injury, this must be reported to the Health and Safety Officer immediately, so that action can be taken to prevent it happening again.

Equipment

All equipment (including electrical items and computers) operated in Volunteer Edinburgh should be installed, maintained and tested annually for safety, and no repairs (including plug changes) are to be undertaken by unauthorised people. If a piece of equipment belonging to Volunteer Edinburgh does not work properly it must not be used and the Director or Health and Safety Officer must be notified that it is faulty.

First Aid

Volunteer Edinburgh designated First Aid staff are displayed on Health and Safety Posters in the office. Designated First Aid staff will undertake by-annual refresher training. A First Aid box is available and should be adequately maintained for use in Volunteer Edinburgh. In the absence of the designated First Aid staff immediate appropriate medical assistance should be sought. In offices other than the main office local First Aid facilities will be provided for VE staff.

Fire Regulations

These are detailed in all working areas, and are included in the Employee and Volunteer Handbooks. During their induction all staff and volunteers will have fire and evacuation procedures explained to them and be shown location of fire alarms and location of fire extinguishers.

Routine fire drills will be carried out within Volunteer Edinburgh. When the Fire Alarm sounds employees and volunteers must:

- leave the building immediately leaving personal belongings
- keep fire doors and exit routes free and clear
- keep fire doors shut
- not use any lifts
- be aware of the different fire fighting equipment available and how to use it.

The Health and Safety Officer and the Director of Operations will ensure proper procedures are in place.

The Health and Safety Officer will test the Fire Alarm on a regular basis and will arrange for any defects to be rectified as soon as possible.

Kitchen and Office Environment

Staff and volunteers are responsible for maintaining good standards of hygiene in the kitchen and office area. There will be adequate lighting and ventilation in the office with a minimum temperature of 16 degrees. There will be adequate toilet and washing facilities with access to drinking water at all times.

Handling Loads Safely

“Handling” means lifting, lowering, carrying, pushing, pulling, holding or moving by hand or bodily force. A load can be anything from a bag or trolley to a person. Staff and volunteers are encouraged to be aware of their own physical limitations in these matters, and should not handle loads unless they are confident that they are physically able. Safe handling instructions for staff and volunteers will be made available from the Health and Safety Officer.

Smoking

In line with Legislation smoking is not permitted in any enclosed public space including all Volunteer Edinburgh offices. All staff and volunteers are responsible for ensuring that the policy is observed.

Environment

If you see a potential hazard – water leak, obstructed access etc you should inform the Health and Safety Officer, the Director of Operations or any manager as soon as possible.

Insurance

Volunteer Edinburgh has current Employer Liability Insurance in order to cover employees, volunteers, clients and the general public. The insurance certificate should be kept in public view in the office.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to yourself, other members of the public and/or the organisation, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent them.

Responsibility for this lies with the staff member who is working in the environment, supported and reviewed by their line manager. In the case of volunteers the risk assessment will be conducted by the volunteer manager. ..

The law does not expect you to eliminate risk but you are required to protect people as far as 'reasonably practicable'.

There are five easy steps to assessing risk in the workplace. (see appendix one)

Step 1 - Identify the hazards.

First you need to work out what harm there could be to yourself, the public and/or the organisation

Step 2 - Decide who might be harmed and how.

For each hazard you need to be clear about who might be harmed; it will help you identify the best way of managing the risk. That doesn't mean listing everyone by name, but rather identifying groups of people (e.g. people working late in the evening, or staff members meeting clients away from their normal place of work)

Step 3 - Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions.

Having spotted the hazards, you then have to decide what to do about them. The law requires you to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm. You can work this out for yourself but the easiest way is to compare what you are doing with good practice.

For example; preparing for an appointment by checking travel routes; ensuring mobile phones are charged and working; and ensuring a member of staff is aware of the appointment details.

There are many sources of good practice – HSE's website (www.hse.gov.uk), HSE Infoline (Tel: 0845 345 055) and Workplace Health Connect (Tel: 0845 609 6006) will all help.

Step 4 - Record your findings and implement them

Putting the results of your risk assessment into practice will make a difference when looking after people and your organisation. Writing down the results of your risk assessment, and sharing them with your staff, encourages you to do this.

When writing down your results, keep it simple, for example 'tripping over rubbish: bins provided, staff instructed, weekly housekeeping checks' or 'Smoke from toaster: new toaster purchased and checked regularly'.

Step 5 - Review your assessment and update if necessary

Few workplaces stay the same. Sooner or later, you will bring in new equipment, substances and procedures that could lead to new hazards. It makes sense, therefore, to review what you are doing on an ongoing basis. Every year or so formally review where you are to make sure you are still improving, or at least not sliding back.

Five steps to risk assessment

Risk Assessed:

Date of Risk Assessment:

Step 1 What are the hazards?	Step 2 Who might be harmed and how?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary	Step 4 How will you put the assessment into action?		
				Action by whom	Action by when	Done
Step 5 Review date:						

Any questions on health and safety should be directed to the Health and Safety Officer or the Director of Operations.