



GENERAL STATEMENT OF INTENT

Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar recognises that employees are a vital asset to the organisation and it has a duty to ensure that the proper provisions are made for their health, safety and welfare.

The Comhairle supports and endorses the current Health and Safety Executive Strategy “Be part of the solution” and other partnerships. To ensure renewed momentum and improve health and safety performance, the Comhairle;

- 1) Recognise that safety is of paramount importance and an integral part of all business activities.
- 2) Provide a service delivery/working environment that protects the health, safety and welfare of its employees, visitors and contractors and safeguards our neighbours.
- 3) Be committed to the systematic identification of hazards, control of risk and the pursuit of progressive improvements in health, safety, welfare and the environment.
- 4) Carry out risk assessments of all work activities at the planning stage, including those that are delivered by other service providers.
- 5) Be committed to minimising the consequences, frequency and likelihood of accidents occurring.
- 6) Set up management arrangements for producing safety plans, monitoring performance, giving specialist advice and reviewing systems on health, safety and environmental matters.
- 7) Communicate and consult with employees on matters relating to the health and safety policy and performance.
- 8) Establish and maintain an effective health and safety management structure throughout the organisation with individual posts having clearly defined safety responsibilities and competencies.
- 9) Make it clear to management that there should be no conflict between safety and the demands of the job.
- 10) Provide adequate financial, human and physical resources, which will include the provision of appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision, so that employees are competent in their job.
- 11) Report our Health and Safety performance in the Comhairle Annual report.
- 12) Provide the required level of access to Occupational Health Services.



Primarily the policy is a management responsibility. However its successful implementation will rely heavily on the co-operation of employees who actually carry out the work, to act responsibly and to do everything they can to prevent injury to themselves, fellow workers and any others who may be affected by their activities.

Individual Directors and senior managers have defined responsibilities for the management of health and safety. Details of the management structure for health and safety, and the arrangements for implementing the policy, are contained in the Comhairle Health and Safety Policy and Departmental health and safety policies.

The overall responsibility for this policy rests with the Chief Executive. Directors and the Comhairle Risk Manager will assist the Chief Executive to ensure that the policy is implemented, developed, monitored and reviewed.

The policy and any documentation produced under it will be added to or modified as required and will be reviewed every three years. The next review date is August 2012.

Signed Chief Executive

Date



ORGANISATION OF FUNCTION

This Health and Safety Policy is supported by Departmental Health and Safety policies, which detail the organisation and arrangements in force to ensure that the aims of this policy are met. (An outline of the responsibilities of the Chief Executive and Directors is set out here).

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Executive, so far as is reasonably practicable, is responsible for ensuring the Health Safety and Welfare at Work of all the Comhairle`s employees. This will be achieved by: -

- a) Detailing the organisation in the Comhairle through which the policy will be implemented and delegating the responsibility for implementation of the Policy within Services to the Head of each Department.
- b) Ensuring that adequate resources are made available to enable the Comhairle`s policy to be implemented.
- c) Ensuring that Health and Safety is an integral part of the overall management culture and developing a positive attitude to Health and Safety among employees by visibly demonstrating management`s commitment to achieving a high standard of Health and Safety performance.
- d) Appointing a competent person to assist the Comhairle to apply the provisions of Health and Safety legislation.
- e) Ensuring the establishment and maintenance of Health and Safety Management systems within each Department, which will ensure the assessment of risks and the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventative and protective measures necessary to control risks.



DIRECTORS OF DEPARTMENTS

Directors are, so far as is reasonably practicable, responsible for ensuring the Health, Safety and Welfare at work of all employees in their respective services. In particular they should: -

1. Prepare and revise, as often as necessary, a Departmental Health and Safety Policy.
2. Set out the organisation within their Service through which the policy will be implemented.
3. Set out the arrangements, which detail the means by which the aims listed in their Department Safety Policy Statement will be met.
4. Ensure that adequate resources are made available to enable the Departmental Policy to be implemented.
5. Visibly demonstrate commitment to achieving a high standard of health and safety performance within their Services and develop a positive attitude to health and safety.
6. Implement Health and Safety Management Systems for their Services which will ensure the assessment of risk and the effective planning and organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventative and protective measures necessary to eliminate or control the risks.
7. Prepare an annual report evaluating the Health and Safety performance of their Service. This report will be included in Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar annual report.



HEALTH AND SAFETY ASSISTANCE

The Health & Safety Team will provide Health & Safety assistance as required by The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (Regulation 7). The function of the Team is to assist the Chief Executive in his responsibility to monitor implementation of the Comhairle's Health & Safety Policy, and to ensure the Health, Safety and Welfare of Comhairle employees and all those persons who could be affected by Comhairle activities.

The Health & Safety Team will offer the following services:

- 1) The delivery of a Health & Safety audit programme, to monitor implementation of the Comhairle's Health & Safety policy and compliance with Health & Safety legislation.
- 2) Reporting back to Directors on audit and inspection findings.
- 3) Advising Departments to enable them to meet their statutory duties and fulfil Comhairle policies relating to Health & Safety.
- 4) Recommending suitable Personal Protective Equipment.
- 5) Assisting in the drawing up of Health & Safety Standards and operating procedures.
- 6) Providing management with regular updates on Health & Safety legislation, codes of practice and guidance relevant to their service.
- 7) Alerting management to newly recognised health and safety issues.
- 8) Contributing to Safety Committees as necessary.
- 9) Development and delivery of Health & Safety training courses, educational and promotional literature.
- 10) Reporting incidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences as required by of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995.
- 11) Compiling accident statistics.
- 12) Investigation of major accidents and incidents to establish cause and recommend suitable action to prevent recurrences.
- 13) Liaison with outside bodies such as the Health & Safety Executive, Fire Authority, Safety organisations, Institute of Occupational Safety & Health, Insurance Company, etc.



HEALTH AND SAFETY TEAM

All levels of management are required to co-operate with the Risk Manager and their team to assist in carrying out his/her duties.

This will include, where required:

- 1) Leaving the scene of an accident undisturbed where possible to allow a meaningful investigation.
- 2) Facilitating access to Comhairle work sites and activities to carry out investigations, inspections and audits.
- 3) Making available appropriate personnel to assist the Team during visits to premises.

EMPLOYEES

All employees are required to co-operate with the implementation of the Comhairle's Safety Policy by:

- a) acting in the course of their employment with due care for their own safety and that of others, who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.
- b) co-operating, so far as is necessary, to enable the Comhairle to perform any duty or to comply with any requirements as a result of any Health and Safety legislation which may be in force.
- c) using correctly all work items provided by the Comhairle in accordance with the training and the instructions they receive to enable them to use the items safely.
- d) reporting to their supervisor all defects, dangerous situations or failures in existing safety systems.
- e) ceasing any work activity where they believe there is a serious risk to themselves or others and bringing the matter to the immediate attention of management.
- f) reporting all accidents to management as soon as possible.
- g) seeking First Aid attention for any injury sustained at work.



ARRANGEMENTS

The under noted arrangements must be incorporated into Departmental Health and Safety Policies. Where necessary, they may be expanded or altered to meet the specific requirements of the Services concerned. This must be done in consultation with the Safety Team and a copy of the amended version lodged with the Safety Office.

1. SAFETY CULTURE

The Comhairle will ensure that Health and Safety is an integral part of the overall management culture and seek to develop a positive attitude to Health and Safety among employees by:

- (a) Visibly demonstrating a clear commitment to improving health and safety performance.
- (b) Promoting co-operation by recognising that all employees have an important contribution to make to effective health and safety management and providing opportunities for participation and involvement in health and safety activities, e.g. safety committees, quality improvement teams and risk assessment.
- (c) Ensuring the communication of necessary information throughout the Comhairle.
- (d) Securing the competence of employees by:-
 - i. Including health and safety considerations in induction procedures; and
 - ii. Implementing systems, which will identify health and safety training needs arising from recruitment or employee changes, procedures, or systems of work.

2. PLANNING

The Chief Executive will prepare a health and safety plan, which will outline specific health and safety objectives with realistic timescales for their accomplishment. These objectives will be developed in consultation with Chief Officers, the Risk Manager and Trade Union Representatives.

These objectives will be set out following an initial review which will:-

- (a) Compare existing arrangements against requirements of relevant legislation dealing with health and safety management issues.
- (b) Establish performance standards after a thorough analysis of the needs of the service and of existing and potential risks (see Section 4 Risk Management).



(c) Assess the effectiveness of existing resources devoted to health and safety.

A review of the Safety Plan will be updated every 3 years.

3. MONITORING

The effectiveness of the Comhairle Health and Safety Policy will be monitored in the following ways:-

(a) Accident Analysis

Accidents within the following categories will be analysed by the Comhairle`s Risk Manager with a view to determining and eliminating their causes:-

- I. Major injury/Dangerous occurrence/Industrial disease.
- II. Lost time accidents (3 days or more)
- III. Other injury

(b) Legal Compliance

Regular and systematic inspections will be carried out by management to ensure that the requirements of the Health and Safety Policy are being met.

The Comhairle Risk Manager, will in accordance with the Comhairle Health and Safety Audit Programme carry out formal audits.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

The Comhairle will pursue progressive improvements by the development and implementation of a risk management strategy in relation to health and safety, to contribute to the reduction of occupational injuries and ill health.

Each Director will draw up a risk assessment programme for their Department and appoint a Risk Assessment team to implement this programme for the work activities within its remit.

The Health and Safety team will also provide advice where necessary and provide training in risk assessment techniques.

While the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require all work activities to be assessed, other more specific regulations require that certain activities receive particular attention - Use of hazardous substances (COSHH), Display Screen Equipment (DSE), Manual Handling Operations (MHO), Exposure to Noise and Personal Protective Equipment.

Where risks are identified steps must be taken to control them by elimination, substitution, engineering process, local exhaust ventilation (LEV), systems of work and



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) being a last resort or temporary measure only. Further guidance can be found in the Comhairle Health, Safety and Welfare standard No 6, Risk Assessment.

5. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Procedures to be followed by any person at work if situations presenting serious and imminent danger arise will be established in accordance with the requirements of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. These procedures will set out the role and responsibilities of competent persons nominated to implement detailed actions. Where appropriate, they will also contain actions required for the evacuation of persons with disabilities. Further guidance can be found in the Comhairle Health, Safety and Welfare standard No 7, Emergency Procedures and the Comhairle Fire Register held in all premises.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS

The Safety Team will develop Corporate procedures where required in the form of Health, Safety and Welfare Standards. Where a Service-specific procedure is required to deal with a major hazard in any work activity, the Director will, with the assistance of the Safety Team, produce a Health, Safety and Welfare Standard adequate for the purpose.

All Health and Safety Standards and other documentation will be regularly reviewed and updated as necessary.

7. ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION AND REPORTING

I. Investigation

Every accident will be investigated by the injured person's line manager and a report submitted on Comhairle incident form (IR1), containing, where reasonably practicable, recommendations to prevent a recurrence.

The Safety Team will investigate major accidents & incidents.

II. Notification and Recording

Every employee who suffers personal injury at work must give notice of any accident as soon thereafter as is practicable to management.

To ensure compliance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR), the following will apply:-



Appointment of Responsible Persons

Directors will designate, responsible persons who will notify the Safety Team of accidents, dangerous occurrences and diseases, using the Incident Report Form (IR1) and the guidance described in the Health, Safety & Welfare Standard - No 1. Accident Reporting & Investigation.

a) **Action Required in the Event of a Death, Specified Major Injury or Condition, or a Dangerous Occurrence**

If any person, as the result of an accident arising out of or in connection with the work of the Comhairle, including acts of physical violence, dies or suffers a specified major injury or condition, or where there is a dangerous occurrence, the responsible person will notify the Safety Team by telephone (ext 221) without delay. Union Safety representatives are also to be notified.

Members of the Public

The above applies if the injured person is not an employee and is taken from the accident site to hospital for treatment of their injury (regardless of severity of injury)

Local instructions must specify that the responsible person is to be informed immediately when an incident has occurred.

c) **Action Required, if as a Result of an Accident at Work, an Employee is off Work or incapacitated for more than Three Consecutive Days.**

If, as a result of an accident at work, including an act of physical violence, an employee is off work or unable to do their normal work for more than 3 consecutive days (excluding the day of the accident but including days which would not have been working days), the responsible person will send a report of the accident to the Safety Office who will in turn inform the HSE, the F2508 form will be retained for 3 years, by the Safety Office.

d) **Action Required in the Event of a Minor Accident or an Unspecified Dangerous Occurrence**

The responsible person will ensure that an internal incident form (IR1), is completed for each incident and one copy sent to the Safety Office, who will retain it for 3 years.

e) **Action required when an Employee is known to be suffering from a Reportable Disease.**

On receipt of a written diagnosis from a doctor, (e.g. medical certificate) which specifies that an employee is suffering from a disease listed in column 1 of Schedule 3 of RIDDOR 1995, the responsible person must find out if the



employee's current job involved the corresponding work activity specified in column 2 of this schedule. If it does, the responsible person must notify the Safety Office who will in turn inform the HSE on the statutory form F2508A, the Safety Office will retain a copy of the F2508A for a period of three years.

8. FIRST AID PROVISION

Sufficient numbers of trained First Aid Personnel will be appointed by each Director to deal with workplace accidents and injuries as indicated by the results of a Risk Assessment. (See Comhairle H,S & Welfare Standard No 8, First Aid)

Numbers of First Aiders appointed will depend on the nature of the work activities and number of employees, or where relevant members of the public, may need to have First Aid cover. There will be no less than 1 First Aider per 50 employees.

Training will be through an HSE-approved body, selected by the Health & Safety Office, and each Department must nominate a responsible person(s) to co-ordinate the training needs of their service and liase with the Health and Safety Office.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING

Each Director is responsible for ensuring that all employees within their service are trained in all health and safety aspects relative to their work activities. Such training is necessary for all employees:-

On joining the Comhairle; and when the risks faced alter or increase due to

- a significant change in activities or responsibilities
- a significant change in equipment or technology
- a significant change in the system of work.

Training must be repeated or updated as necessary. Training must extend to supervisory and managerial employees and must cover legal and organisational responsibilities as well as practical training. Relevant records must be kept.

10. PROVISION OF EYE TESTS AND CORRECTIVE APPLIANCES FOR DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT USERS.

Employees falling within the category of "user" as defined in The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended are entitled to free eye and eyesight tests. Where appliances are prescribed as necessary for Display Screen Equipment work, the Comhairle will provide necessary lenses and a basic frame. Any additional enhancements preferred by the employee but not essential for their work (reactolite lenses, contact lenses, fashion frames) will be at the employee's expense.



11. CONTRACTORS

The Comhairle will define the standards required from and monitor the activities of contractors carrying out work for the Comhairle in order to minimise risks to employees, other persons on site and members of the public.

All contractors will be vetted and selected from the Comhairle "Approved list of Contractors". They will be required to sign in on arrival and complete the Work on Site Authorisation Form.

Contractors will be required to provide a detailed Health & Safety Method Statement and any health & safety documentation relevant to the contract. The Safety Office will monitor the quality of such documentation.

12. PROVISION FOR NEW AND EXPECTANT MOTHERS

The Comhairle recognises its responsibilities under Regulation 16 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Managers should contact the Comhairle Occupational Health Nurse and make arrangements to complete the Risk Assessment pro forma.

If the risks cannot be avoided by other means, the Comhairle shall if reasonably practicable to do so alter working conditions or hours and ultimately offer alternative work, or, if that is not reasonable give the worker paid leave for as long as necessary to protect the health and safety of herself and her child.

The worker is required to inform their employer in writing of their pregnancy and a medical certificate or letter from their GP on request must confirm this.

13. EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PERSONS

Every Employer must ensure that young persons employed by them are protected at work from any risks to their health and safety which are a consequence of their lack of experience, or absence of awareness of existing or potential risks or the fact that young persons have not yet fully matured. A young person is defined as having reached minimum school leaving age but not attained 18 years of age. Regulation 19 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations prohibits and restricts certain activities. Prior to employing a young person Departments will carry out a risk assessment using the Comhairle "Young Persons" Risk Assessment pro forma.

14. VIOLENCE AT WORK

It is an unfortunate fact of life that injuries due to violence in the course of a work activity are becoming more frequent. This has been recognised by the Health & Safety Executive in the most recent amendment to the Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995. Notifiable injuries and 3-day injuries resulting from violence at work are reportable.



The Comhairle realises that violence, whether physical or in the form of verbal threats must be considered in the course of risk assessment and Departments are expected to take suitable preventive and protective measures, including the drawing up of written standards and the provision of training where necessary. The Comhairle Violence and Aggression Risk Assessment pro forma should be completed by management and the results discussed with employees concerned. Consideration should also be given to the Comhairle H, S & Welfare Standard No 10, Lone Working.

All incidents must be reported and recorded on the Comhairle Violence and Aggression report form, one copy to be forwarded to the Health and Safety Office. If injury results from an incident, form IR1 must also be completed. Further guidance is available in the Comhairle policy document, Violence and Aggression at Work.

15. STRESS

Work related stress is defined by the Health and Safety Executive as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them”. The Comhairle recognises that everyone can, in principle experience work related stress; it exists where people perceive they cannot cope with what is being asked of them at work. The Comhairle are committed to developing specific policy and risk assessment procedures as part of their Stress Management package. The Comhairle Occupational Health Adviser can be contacted for further information.

16. RECOGNISED TRADE UNION SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES

The Comhairle will consult the recognised trade union safety representatives with regard to:

- i. proposals for introduction of measures, which may substantially affect the health, and safety of employees.
- ii. provision of health and safety information required under the relevant statutory provisions.
- iii. provision of health and safety training required under the relevant statutory provisions.
- iv. the health and safety consequences of new technologies introduced into the workplace.



17. COMMITMENT TO ESTABLISHMENT OF SAFETY COMMITTEES

1. The Comhairle will establish Safety Committees in each Department with Representatives from management and employees in accordance with the constitution.
2. The Comhairle will provide such facilities and assistance as Trade Union Safety Representatives may reasonably require to carry out their functions.
3. The Comhairle Safety Team will attend such committees in an advisory capacity on request.

Raising Health and Safety Issues

The following procedure must be followed as a means of resolving matters of a health and safety nature: -

- Stage 1** Employee raises a matter with their supervisor. If it is not resolved,
- Stage 2** Employee raises matter with Safety Representative. The Safety Representative may be able to resolve the matter. **If not,**
- Stage 3** Safety Representative raises issue with their Supervisor or Management.

If the matter is still not settled the action that follows may depend on the nature of the problem and the urgency with which a solution is sought. The problem may be referred to the appropriate Safety Committee or the Safety Office may be consulted with a view to reaching a suitable solution.

Safety Representative Inspections

Safety Representatives appointed by recognised Trade Unions are entitled to inspect workplaces every three months. Management will encourage Safety Representatives to carry out these inspections at agreed intervals and a representative of management will accompany them.

Access to Information

In terms of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees 1977 as amended, Safety Representatives will be allowed to inspect any statutory document relating to health and safety which the Department is required to maintain and will also be given on request any information necessary to carry out their functions.



18. PRESENTATION AND REVIEW

The Comhairle Health and Safety Policy and any revision of it will be drawn to the attention of every employee of the Comhairle. The contents of the documents produced under the policy will be brought to the attention of all employees to which the contents are relevant.

The policy and any documentation produced under it will be added to or modified as required and will be reviewed every three years. The next review date is August 2012.

Signed Chief Executive

Date