

# Frome Town Council Constitution

## Chapter 11 Health, Safety and Welfare Policy

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# General statement of policy for occupational health, safety and welfare

FTC has overall and final responsibility for health and safety within FTC and for compliance with health and safety legislation. It will provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all Cllrs, employees, workers, contractors and volunteers. The Town Clerk and in his absence, the Deputy Town Clerk, is responsible for ensuring this is carried out.

FTC will pay particular attention to:

1. The provision and maintenance of safe and healthy working conditions.
2. Ensuring that suitable risk assessments are undertaken from which are developed safe and efficient work methods.
3. Providing information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the competence of individuals.
4. Making available and maintaining all necessary safety devices and protective equipment.
5. Providing and maintaining equipment and materials that are safe and without risk to the health of our Cllrs, employees, workers, contractors and volunteers or others who may be affected by our business activities.
6. Maintaining a constant interest in health and safety matters applicable to FTC's activities, especially through consultation, and for its management to set an example in safe behaviour.

Cllrs, employees, workers and volunteers of all positions have a role in ensuring the safety of themselves and others. Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee or worker, regardless of status, who wilfully or deliberately disregards, or who is consistently negligent in conforming to FTC's health and safety policy.

# Responsibilities of the Council

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Cllrs, staff, workers and volunteers have an important role to play in the management of safety. By their actions they can have an influential effect on the development of a 'safety culture' within FTC.

All those with supervisory responsibilities have additional duties to ensure that work activities are undertaken with due regard for safety. A manager who fails to intervene to address unsafe acts is, in effect, accepting the practice.

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FTC will:

- Ensure that the FTC's statement for health and safety is kept up to date, signed by the Town Clerk and is displayed in a prominent place.
- Ensure that each Cllr, employee, worker, and volunteer is aware of their responsibilities as regards health and safety and support other colleagues. In this respect all Cllrs, employees, workers, and volunteers read and understand the health and safety policy, associated procedures and risk assessments made in support of it.
- Ensure that the aims of the policy are met through the appointment of a competent and adequately resourced person to enforce the policy and its arrangements and are also met through the development and implementation of safe methods of work.
- Encourage appropriate training and re-training for all Cllrs, employees, workers and volunteers.
- Ensure that all service and contract providers approved or appointed by FTC are assessed with regard to statutory provisions and good working practices.
- Encourage the uptake of safe actions through making personal interventions in circumstances where the principles of the policy and general good practice are not being followed.
- Ensure that a system exists, and is carried out, for the recording and reporting and investigation of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences (RIDDOR).
- Ensure, where appropriate, that those who contravene relevant statutory provisions, or the requirements of the health and safety policy are informed in writing of FTC's position on such matters.
- Ensure Cllrs, employees, workers and volunteers wear safety equipment if this has been specified by those responsible for safety.
- Ensure Cllrs, employees, workers and volunteers take responsibility for the correct use and storage of work equipment and perform a visual inspection before using the equipment. In addition, where checklists are provided, they must be completed.

- Ensure that Cllrs, employees, workers and volunteers never use work equipment in a way which could endanger themselves or the others around them and never use any equipment for purposes for which they are not designed to be used.
- Ensure all Cllrs, employees, workers and volunteers are aware that games or practical jokes which may cause danger to others will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action where this is warranted.
- Encourage Cllrs, employees, workers and volunteers to be comfortable in making suggestions regarding any alternative methods of work which will reduce hazards, make the workplace a safer environment and benefit the welfare of its employees.

It is extremely important to note that all Cllrs, employees, workers and volunteers are individually responsible for their own actions and assessments of health and safety issues. Whilst policies and procedures can be documented, guidance, training and direction can be provided, and line managers tasked with monitoring policies and procedures, this does not detract from the fact that everyone at all times should adopt a safe and appropriate working ethic. It is essential that Cllrs, employees, workers and volunteers co-operate together to achieve this goal.

# Accidents – First Aid

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In the event of an Cllr, employee, worker or volunteer being hurt, the first responsibility is to ensure that any necessary first aid is promptly administered to the injury.

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First aiders are only expected to administer help and assistance to a level which they feel comfortable and confident with. In respect of more serious injuries, the casualty should be protected from further harm and specialist support obtained.

A full list of the trained first aiders with their relevant certificate expiry dates is held in personnel files. There are signs around the Town Hall with first aiders listed.

## First aid kits and accident books

FTC will ensure that fully equipped and date checked first aid kits plus an appropriate accident log link are provided at places of work.

All incidents must be recorded in the accident log. The accident log will be recorded via a QR code that links to an online form, which will be reviewed by the manager that the accident is most relevant to. This will also be reviewed by our Business Manager and where appropriate, our Insurance Company will be informed.

# Accidents - recording and reporting

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All injuries, no matter how small, must be recorded, including injuries to Cllrs, employees, workers, volunteers, sub-contractors, visitors and members of the public. Some may need to be reported to the HSE.

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An accident is defined as “an unplanned event with the potential to cause damage to property or injury to people.” There is no such thing as a minor accident. A brick falling from a scaffold that falls and misses someone is just as much of a reportable incident as the brick falling and hitting someone.

## Recording

It is essential that FTC records all accidents especially those involving injuries so that we learn from them as well as meet our statutory obligations. Those accidents involving injuries will be recorded in an accident log. The Town Clerk will ensure that suitable investigations are undertaken, and reports made, where relevant.

All Cllrs, employees, workers and volunteers are reminded that alteration of an accident scene without clear authorisation is a serious disciplinary offence.

The reason for investigating accidents is that by identifying the causes of all incidents we reduce the likelihood of having a similar but more serious one, perhaps even a fatality. If an injury has occurred, use the QR code reporting log found on Teams, that is shared with the relevant people, this will then be investigated as to the causes of the accident.

## Reporting

Some incidents and injuries must be reported to the HSE under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

These are generally the more major incidents, and a full list follows. Failure to report is in itself an offence. An event that has been reported under RIDDOR will be kept for a minimum of 3 years. RIDDOR Report Forms can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/report.htm>

It is essential that RIDDOR reports are accurate and factual because they are both legal documents and because the words used will determine which incidents warrant a regulator’s visit. Accordingly, reports made under RIDDOR will need to be signed off by the Town Clerk before submission.

HSE Website have a section on RIDDOR reportable incidents and periods of incapacitation <https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/reportable-incidents.htm>

# Accidents - investigation

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There is no such thing as a minor accident. The difference between the injuries associated with one incident and another is luck. Accordingly, all accidents must be investigated in order to try to reduce their likelihood of recurrence.

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## General guidance

The Town Clerk or the Deputy Town Clerk (or a delegated person) will normally investigate the accident to find out what exactly happened; why it happened, including any secondary causes, and what can be done to prevent recurrence - not to find a scapegoat to blame.

However, this does not preclude management invoking the disciplinary procedure, as a separate issue, on completion of the accident investigation for blatant or wilful disregard of health and safety legislation, policy or procedures. This may, in some cases, also include the injured party.

## Information gathering

The Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk will start the investigation as soon as possible.

## Control

Do not allow any equipment involved to be repaired prior to the final completion of the investigation.

Always be prepared to adjourn the investigation and ask for help if you think you need it.

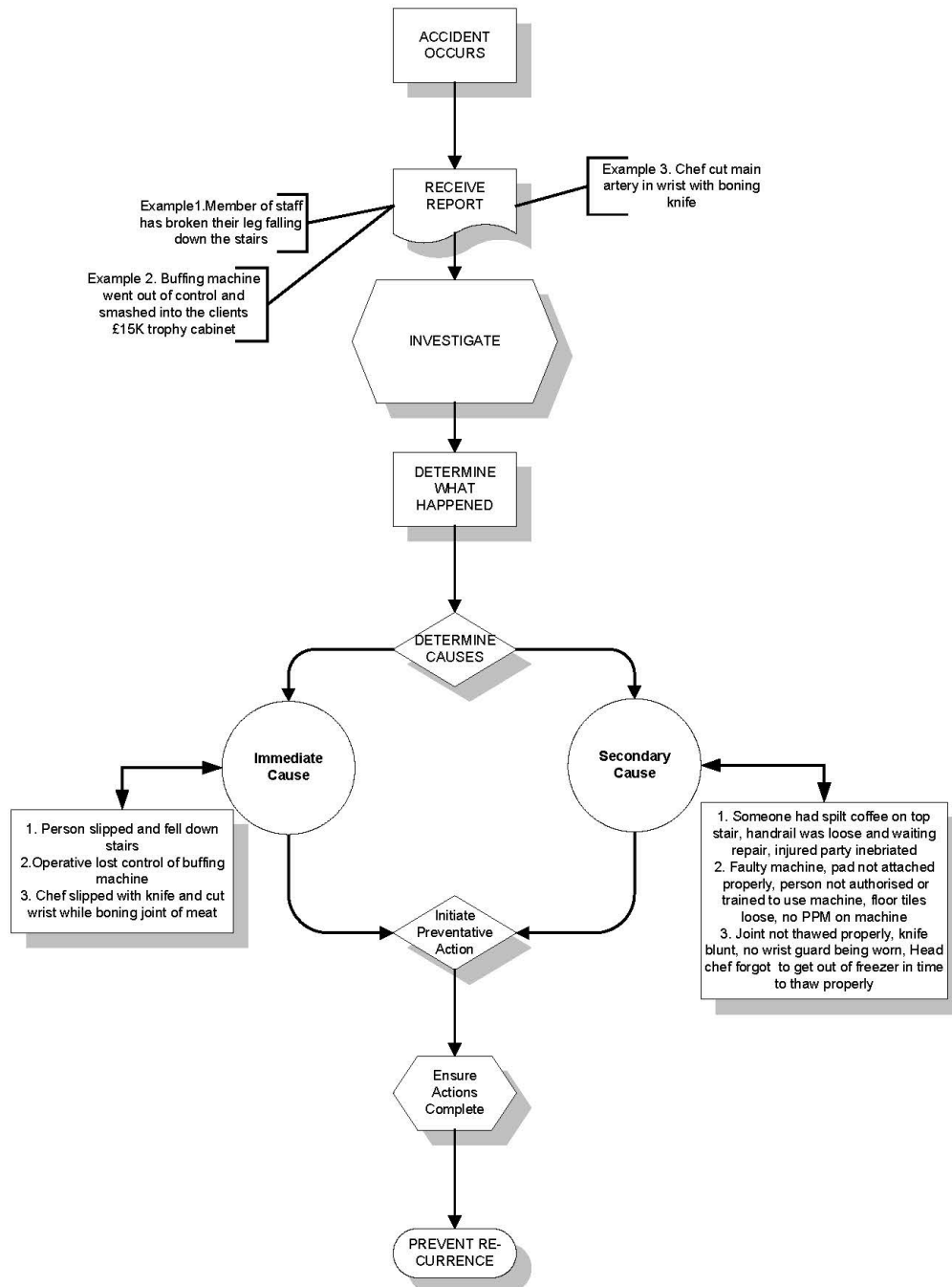
## Record

Ensure, if appropriate, an entry has been made via the accident log and assess whether the incident is reportable under RIDDOR as mentioned previously. The completed investigation documents should be saved in the HR Confidential folder on the server.

Never admit liability to any person nor hand over a copy of your investigation to client, Cllr, employee, worker, volunteer, injured party, insurance company or otherwise.



## Accident Investigation Procedure



# Risk assessment and control

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The identification, assessment, and control of risk are the cornerstones of effective Health and Safety Management and modern legislation. All activities in life involve a degree of risk; in the work context the aim is to reduce the level of risk as far as reasonably practicable. The purpose of risk assessment is to identify both the existing measures needed to reduce risk and assess whether there are any additional measures that could be introduced.

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## Responsibilities

The Town Clerk is responsible for overseeing that suitable risk assessments are undertaken although these tasks may be delegated to other members of staff. In line with the obligations to consult Cllr, employees, workers and volunteers on matters of Health and Safety, the process of risk assessment will involve those who undertake the activity either individually or through representation.

## Process

The risk assessment will involve the identification of:

- Tasks/Activities
- Persons Exposed
- Hazards
- Risk Level
- Control Measures
- Risk Level after Control Measures
- Action
- Review Period

## Definitions

A hazard is something with the potential to cause harm, while a risk is the likelihood of the harm occurring together with the severity of the harm.

## Consultation

Risk assessors are encouraged to involve those who undertake the specific tasks both to ensure that the risk assessments relate to the work as it is undertaken and in the spirit of consultation. Such involvement is also likely to enhance acceptance of the identified risk control measures. All risk assessments are fully documented and retained electronically on the server.

## Control measures.

The following list of control measures is included as an aide memoir of the types of techniques that are available.

ELIMINATE      hazardous substances/methods/materials/processes

SUBSTITUTE	less hazardous forms
CLEAN	to remove solid/liquid contaminants
DISPOSE	of hazardous materials/substances safely
ENCLOSE	hazardous substances/noise/materials/equipment
EXCLUDE	non-essential personnel from the work area
MINIMISE	generation of hazardous substances/materials/noise
PROVIDE	risk assessments, safe working practices, adequate facilities for eating, drinking and resting etc. appropriate signage, training
PROHIBIT	eating, drinking, smoking etc. in certain work areas
REDUCE	the number of people exposed and the period of exposure
STORE	hazardous materials/substances safely
DISCIPLINE	self-discipline by management when necessary to correct wrong doings

## Review

FTC will review risk assessments annually, in the event of an incident or should there be a significant change to current working practices. Each risk assessment will have the issue date and a review date.

## Adequate control

All activities in life involve risk, work is no exception. The aim of these risk assessments is to ensure that the level of risk is reduced as far as reasonably practicable. As a result, it is recognised that accidents will occur, but the aim is to reduce their frequency, minimise the severity of injuries and most importantly learn from experience.

# Electrical safety

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Not only can electricity kill but it is also a common cause of fires. However, as over 95% of defects of portable electrical equipment (such as damaged cables and cracked casings) can be detected by the user and so Cllrs, employees, workers and volunteers are encouraged to identify faults before they affect the operation of the equipment.

A programme of inspection of portable electrical equipment will be initiated by FTC in a two-stage system as described below.

## Stage 1

All Cllrs, employees, workers and volunteers are able to visually inspect equipment noting any hazards as described below:

- damage to the plug such as bent pins or a cracked casing
- outer sheath of the cable is not properly secured where the cable enters the plug or equipment e.g. internal wires are visible
- outer casing of the equipment is damaged
- equipment has loose parts or screws
- damage to the cable sheath
- evidence that the equipment has overheated

If the equipment fails on any of the above criteria it must not be used and should be removed from the workplace for repair with written details of the cause of the failure.

## Stage 2

Formal visual inspection and testing by a competent person, often referred to as Portable Appliance Testing (PAT). Factors such as earth continuity which ensures a safe connection within the equipment or plug will be recorded. The results will be presented in a log or table format and the equipment will be marked at the plug top denoting the date for re-testing. Any equipment failing this test will be removed from service. This testing will be regularly carried out as advised by the competent person, but this is generally either every one or two years, subject to their recommendations.

## Fixed installation

In addition to inspections of portable equipment, FTC will also undertake checks on the fixed electrical systems to ensure suitability and as a part of the fire management arrangements.

## Personal electrical items

FTC does not encourage Cllrs, employees, workers or volunteers to bring personal electrical items into the workplace. However, should any personal item be required, permission should be sought prior to plugging the item in.

# Lifting and Handling

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Lifting items incorrectly can potentially inflict long lasting damage to person's posture and wellbeing. Therefore, it is vital that attention is paid to this simple guidance for lifting.

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Manual Handling activities are associated with a high proportion of the UK's occupational ill health. Few people do not know of someone with a 'bad back'. Surprisingly, many of the injuries are not associated with lifting heavy weights but rather from light weights lifted badly.

1. NEVER try to handle anything heavy yourself unless it can be done safely.
2. ALWAYS use the correct equipment when moving heavy articles.
3. ALWAYS lift and carry goods and equipment in the correct manner.

As a general rule the Council does not expect Cllrs, employees, workers or volunteers to lift and carry heavy weights and when required both external contractors and the appropriate equipment are available for this purpose.

## Rules for lifting preparation

1. Use your common sense to know if the lift is within your capacity (25kgs for men, 16kgs for women – if capable to lift more if physically able to) and can be done without undue effort and danger.
2. Check that your clothes and shoes will not hamper you.
3. Check that area is free from obstruction, the floor or ground is clear, and the surface is not slippery.

FTC use iHASCO for our online training, the Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor, Business Administrator or Assistant Finance Officer can allocate the manual handling course to Cllrs, employees, workers or volunteers if requested or required.

# Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

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The human body is designed for movement. Arguably most of the issues associated with the use of Display Screen Equipment (DSE) are that it constrains muscle movement, whether these are muscles attached to the skeleton or controlling the eyes. Hence the guidance that employers should seek to encourage employees to vary working activities regularly to enable the body to 'recover' from the fatigue of holding a static position.

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## Self-assessment questionnaire

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) regulations must be adhered to, and it is important that any DSE risks are adequately controlled. As these are largely related to posture and vary with the individual, the starting point for the management of this area is a self-assessment system.

The workstation questionnaire via iHASCO endeavours to adopt a holistic approach by considering not only any existing evidence of ill health but also endeavouring to identify non-work activities that may be relevant.

FTC use iHASCO for our online training, the Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor, Business Administrator or Assistant Finance Officer can allocate the DSE course to Cllrs, employees, workers or volunteers if requested or required. This course also includes the self-assessment with a final copy being sent to the Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor.

## Work practices

The general guidance is that the body will cope better and suffer less fatigue if it has more, shorter breaks rather than less frequent, longer breaks. The generally accepted interval between breaks is in the region of 40 - 50 minutes.

## Posture

Poor adjustment of a workstation will lead to poor posture. Poor posture results in the muscles working to maintain a static position rather than the skeleton carrying the weight of parts of the body.

As will be illustrated in the following paragraphs many problems associated with DSE can be avoided if suitable attention is given to the set-up of the personal workstation. It is therefore essential that Cllrs, employees, workers and volunteers understand the adjustments available on their chairs and instruction manuals should be available. Chairs should have a five-point wheelbase and should be fully adjustable.

## Head

The head accounts for a large proportion of the body's weight. If the screen position (a particular issue with the use of laptops) is too low this will lead to the head being held forward causing the muscles in the neck and shoulders 'working' merely to hold the static position.

The skeleton (through the backbone) will support a greater proportion of the weight of the head if the head is held erect. The ideal relaxed position for the head and eyes is looking slightly down and the visual display units should be adjusted to this position, this will help to avoid some causes of pain in the neck and shoulders.

### Arms / Hands

The seat should be adjusted so that the forearms are level with the keyboard. If the seat is too high, then the shoulder muscles will bear the static load of the arms as they reach to the keyboard. If the position is too low, then there is the tendency for the wrists to arch leading to restriction of movement.

Some users are likely to find that the armrests will need to be removed in order to get close enough to the keyboard to avoid reaching from the shoulders.

Hands should not be bent excessively upwards at the wrist when typing or using the mouse, the best approach is to maintain a soft touch and not overstretch the fingers.

### Back

The chair must be able to give support to the back, particularly the lumbar region, to help the body maintain the desired curvature of the spine.

### Legs/Feet

Having adjusted the seat so that the position of the arms and head are correct it is important not to ignore the position of the legs and feet. Ideally, the thighs should be horizontal (so that there are no pressure points under the thighs) and the lower leg vertical (to help maintain the posture). Everyone can benefit from footrests as a means of providing additional support to maintain posture.

### Screen

The screen should be adjusted and positioned so that in use it is free from reflections and glare. The focus should be on establishing the layout of the workstation rather than employing additional items such as filter screens.

Glare will include relatively bright areas behind the screen. For example, a screen in front of window blinds would be free of reflection but the brightness of sunlight on the blinds could lead to them creating glare for the user. In effect the eye would be trying to focus on the relatively dim screen while simultaneously compensating for the brightness of the light behind the screen.

Glare screens should be regarded as a measure of 'last resort' as they can add distortion to the image and create an additional surface that requires cleaning. Most laptops have LCD screens which are fitted with an anti-glare filter as standard. The screen should be regularly cleaned of dust and finger-marks.

### Lighting

There are two aspects of lighting associated with DSE use – glare (due to bright lights within the line of sight) and reflections on the screens. This is further complicated by the need to consider both artificial and natural light.

## Workspace

The physical size of the workstation is important in order to ensure that the users are able to control their working environment and find arrangements that suit them as individuals. This will include for example the ability to create a space in front of the keyboard to provide a rest for the wrists. The user should only have the items required to carry out their role on their desks and general good housekeeping will avoid many potential problems. There should be enough space underneath the desk to move legs freely, obstacles should be removed, and cables kept tidy.

## Working environment

There are a range of environmental issues that need to be considered as part of the DSE management system other than the aforementioned.

For example, in many offices it is common to find that portable fans are used in the summer to provide a refreshing breeze. However, if the fans are fixed, rather than oscillating, then those in the stream are likely to suffer muscle stiffness.

Temperature control, noise levels, ventilation, cable management and space planning are all factors taken into account when assessing workstations, although some of these factors can be very difficult to control in certain types of office building.

## Eyesight

As indicated earlier in this section the muscles of the eyes need to be given the opportunity to change their focal length. Furthermore, a small proportion of the population may require corrective lenses just to work with Visual Display Units. Consequently, Cllrs, employees, workers and volunteers should be encouraged to have at least an initial eye and eyesight check.

For those who use DSE for more than 3 hours daily for FTC purposes, eye and eyesight tests will be reimbursed by FTC and if an optician prescribes and puts in writing spectacles are solely to be used for Visual Display Unit work, the cost of basic frames and lenses up to £80 may be claimed. If the optician prescribes spectacles or lenses which are used for Visual Display Unit work and other purposes e.g. reading, driving then the employee will be liable for the cost of spectacles/lenses. This applies every two years. Further details on this can be obtained from the Business Manager or Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor.

## Training

As with any other item of work equipment individuals using DSE need to be competent to use the equipment and facilities, both for their own health and safety and their productivity. FTC use iHASCO for our online training, the Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor, Business Administrator or Assistant Finance Officer can allocate the DSE course to Cllrs, employees, workers or volunteers if requested or required. This course also includes the self-



assessment with a final copy being sent to the Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor.

## Records

It is important for FTC to ensure that comprehensive records are maintained. If there are no records then there is no evidence that an activity occurred (e.g. training, assessment, awareness etc.). iHASCO stores the date training has been completed and automatically sends reminders when the course expires.

FTC provides regular DSE training; the assessments and responses are held on iHASCO and reviewed by Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk and Mayor. FTC has a duty to address any risks highlighted as a result of the self-assessment questionnaires.

# Driving at work

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Driving can be a hazardous occupation. In the event of a road traffic accident involving people at work, the HSE may consider whether there have been any breaches of health and safety legislation by the employer. These could include issues such as driver hours, visit/delivery schedules, vehicle maintenance, instruction and supervision.

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FTC will take all reasonable steps to manage the health and safety of those Cllrs, employees, workers or volunteers who need to drive as part of their role. To comply with our legal duties as an employer, set out below are the Council's procedures on work-related driving and what is expected from Cllrs, employees, workers or volunteers. These procedures cover a variety of areas including documentation required from drivers as well as basic guidelines on driver health.

## Definition

Driving at work is defined as: any journey where FTC picks up the cost, for example by way of mileage expenses, in a Council owned vehicle or through a car allowance, is deemed as driving for work purposes. This does not include travelling to and from work but does include external meetings, site visits etc.

## Procedures

These should be followed by all drivers at all times:

- Where a Council owned vehicle is being used, staff must report any suspected mechanical defects and not drive the vehicle until this has been investigated.
- If an employee uses their own vehicle for business use, they are required to maintain it in a roadworthy condition and ensure their car insurance allows them to use the vehicle for business use.
- Before embarking on journeys, basic checks on the vehicle should always be carried out e.g. oil levels, water levels, tyre pressure, wipers etc.
- On long journeys, staff should ensure sufficient breaks are built in to prevent fatigue.
- It is an offence to use handheld mobiles and personal digital assistants whilst driving.
- Cllrs, employees, workers or volunteers should always drive within speed limits and according to the prevailing weather conditions.
- Cllrs, employees, workers or volunteers should also drive in a courteous manner with due care and attention respecting the needs of other road users.
- Cllrs, employees, workers or volunteers must never drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Before driving Cllrs, employees, workers or volunteers should familiarise themselves with the procedure to follow in the event of a breakdown or accident.
- Any accidents whilst on travelling on business must be reported to FTC's Business Team.
- Due care and attention must be taken to the security and safekeeping of any Council documents or equipment whilst in the vehicle.
- Cllrs, employees, workers or volunteers must ensure the correct class of insurance is held for the business use of any private vehicles.

- In the case of the Council's vehicles, FTC will provide arrangements for the routine maintenance of these vehicles, and ensure they are appropriately taxed, MOT tested and insured.

## Documentation

In order for us to comply with our legal duties, FTC will also require sight of the following documentation annually of those staff driving on Council business:

- Driving Licence - A DVLA share code may be requested so your licence can be checked
- Insurance certificate indicating the vehicle is appropriately insured for business use
- A current MOT certificate (if the car is more than 3 years old)
- Copy of insurance stating you are insured for business use

## Health

Cllrs, employees, workers or volunteers must ensure they are physically fit to drive and should be mindful that some prescription drugs can cause drowsiness. If drugs are prescribed, checks should be made with a GP or pharmacist before driving.

FTC encourages Cllrs, employees, workers or volunteers driving on business to have regular eye tests and ensure that any necessary corrective glasses or contact lenses for driving are always worn.

# Road traffic accidents

1	Stop!	If you are involved in an accident, you <u>must</u> stop if it involves any other person, dog, horse, sheep, cattle, pig, mule or goat not in your vehicle being hurt or if any vehicle or roadside property apart from your own has been damaged.
2	Keep calm	Do not admit liability and try to avoid getting into arguments over the cause of the accident.
3	Provide information	You should be prepared to provide the name and address of your vehicle's owner, your own name and address, and the vehicle registration number to the police or any other party having reasonable grounds for requiring them. If you choose not to do this, the accident must be reported to the police within 24 hours. You must also produce your insurance certificate either immediately or within 24 hours at the nearest police station.
4	Record information	Gather names and addresses of independent witnesses where possible. Sketch the details of the accident including your own and other vehicles. Gather the names of drivers and others involved in the accident. There is a Vehicle Accident Form online for this purpose a QR code is inside of each FTC vehicle. You can also find the form on TEAMS.
5	Telephone	Contact your line manager or the Business Team as soon as practical.

# Fire risk assessments

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Historically the focus of UK fire legislation has been on ensuring that people can escape in the event of fire. In recent years this focus has changed in that the prevention of fire has been placed on a par with the response to fire.

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## Fire

For a fire to develop three components are required - oxygen, fuel and an ignition source. So, the key to preventing fire is to control flammable materials and minimise ignition sources.

There are two key phases to reducing the risk of fire – controlling ignition and controlling its development.

Fuels:	solid – paper (including waste) liquid – petrol gas - aerosols
Ignition sources:	naked flames smoking materials electrical faults static electricity over-heating equipment – faulty or obstructed ventilation

## Fire prevention

Eliminate fuel or ignition and the fire is eliminated. Some common control measures are:

- Ensure container lids of flammable liquids are kept tightly closed.
- Put waste paper in the bin.
- Observe no smoking signs and notices.
- Keep fire doors closed.
- Switch off and unplug electrical appliances after use.
- Do not overload circuits with multiple plugs and extension leads.

## Fire risk assessment

The fire risk assessment form endeavours to identify:

- Sources of ignition
- Sources of fuel
- The means of fighting fire
- The means of escape
- Fire prevention and protection methods
- Whether the arrangements are satisfactory and the actions that need to be undertaken.

Fire risk assessments are the responsibility of the Town Clerk and will be regularly reviewed. The assessments are recorded and held electronically on the server.

#### Action to be taken on discovering a fire

- Do not put yourself at risk.
- Do not stop to collect your personal belongings.
- Contain the fire by closing the door as you leave the room.
- Raise the alarm.
- Leave the building by the quickest route.
- Go to the assembly point (as detailed in your fire evacuation notice).
- Inform the fire marshal of the details of the fire.

If you have a visitor on site, it is your responsibility to ensure they are aware of the fire procedures, where to congregate and inform the fire marshal when you know they are safe or if you cannot account for them. When possible, it is advisable to escort the visitor with you from the building.

#### Important:

If smoke is building up in the room get down and crawl, use the back of your hand to feel around the room for an exit– it is important to get lower as smoke rises and the toxic smoke will kill you far more quickly than fire.

#### Remember:

If any person cannot be accounted for fire officers will have to search the building until they are accounted for - putting themselves at great risk - always know where your visitors are, and which areas are clear.

#### Fighting fires

Fire extinguishers are provided to aid escape in the event of fire. No Cllr, employee, worker or volunteer is expected to put themselves at risk to fight a fire.

Fire extinguishers have a small capacity suitable for tackling a small fire that is easily extinguishable or for helping you reach your exit route. If one extinguisher doesn't work, then a second is not likely to either. Those individuals who have been trained in the use of extinguishers may use them to tackle a small fire but again only if they do not put their own safety at risk.

Never allow the fire to come between you and the nearest point of exit or if the fire continues to grow despite your efforts leave immediately.

If in doubt just get out and call for help from someone with training.

Remember - your life is more important than the building – don't put your life at risk.

# Use of fire extinguishers

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*There are a number of types of fire extinguisher available each suitable for specific forms of fire. Using the wrong extinguisher can make matters worse.*

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The council has mostly carbon dioxide and water extinguishers in situ. The following is included for information purposes; however, it's too late to find out how to use an extinguisher when there's a fire in front of you.

Type	Indicator colour	Use for
Water	Red	Paper Wood Textiles
Carbon dioxide	Black	Electrical Liquid spills
Foam	Cream	Liquid spills
Powder	Blue	Flammable and Flowing liquids Electrical
Blanket	Red	Small contained fires

## Water extinguishers

Not to be used on electrical or flammable liquid fires

Activate the extinguisher and aim the water jet at the base of the fire whilst keeping it moving across the whole area of the fire. Should the fire be spreading vertically then it should be attacked from its lowest point to prevent lower flames re-igniting extinguished areas. Follow the flames upwards until the whole fire is extinguished. A crouching position will help you to avoid the heat and smoke building up at ceiling height, it is vital that you do not breath the smoke generated by the fire. After the fire appears to be extinguished approach it and douse any hot spots with more water as appropriate.

**Remember -** do not place these extinguishers outside as they may freeze and be damaged, also be aware that once used (even partially) the extinguisher must be replaced.

## Foam extinguishers

Not to be used on electrical fires

If the flammable liquid is contained direct the jet at the rear of the container just above the surface of the liquid allowing the foam to build up from the back smothering the fire. If the fire is

not contained try to float the foam on top of the liquid using a gentle angle of attack and working backwards from the front edge until the whole fire is covered in a blanket of foam.

**Remember** - if the jet is directed straight at the liquid the foam may pass underneath the surface of the fire rendering it ineffective. If the fire has attained a high enough temperature the water content of the foam may boil instantaneously causes spectacular but very dangerous results.

### **Powder extinguishers**

Useable on all types of fire

#### **Flammable liquids:**

Attack the fire by aiming the jet at the front edge and slowly working back using a side to side motion. Be prepared for the possibility of the fire re-igniting in certain areas and re-douse them. Where possible you should be upwind of the fire and should keep extinguishing the fire until you are sure it is truly out.

#### **Flowing liquids:**

Attack the fire from its lowest point starting at the leading edge and working back following the fire back to the source of the leakage.

**Remember** - if the extinguisher has been part used it must never be returned to service, it should be fully recharged by a competent person and the part used powder discarded.

### **Carbon dioxide extinguishers**

These are particularly suitable for fires involving electrical equipment

Direct the jet directly into any aperture in the electrical equipment such as air vents or inspection holes. Be aware that the extinguisher will make a loud howling noise which may be disturbing if you are unacquainted with it. If tackling a flammable liquid fire use a similar technique to that described for dry powder above, attack at the leading edge and work backwards slowly fanning from side to side. Try to avoid the possibility of spreading the burning liquid by maintaining a reasonable distance between the nozzle and the fire.

**Remember** - carbon dioxide is a gas, if it is used in confined spaces, it may replace the available oxygen with non-toxic (but unbreathable) CO<sub>2</sub>. Ventilate the workroom quickly following a discharge to prevent this hazard occurring. Once the extinguisher has been partly discharged it must be recharged before being put back into service. Also, be aware that the nozzle will become very cold during use and may freeze to your hand so always hold the extinguisher by the handle and body when in use.

### **Fire blankets**

These are often present in kitchen areas and are predominantly of a glass fibre construction packaged in either cylindrical holders or satchels. They are usually wall hung with tabs protruding from the base intended to be pulled sharply to release the blanket.



They should be calmly placed over chip pan fires and similar by holding the blanket by the tabs. The effect of the device is to form a barrier between the fire and the outside air so extinguishing the fire.

# Fire responsibilities

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There are a range of responsibilities in respect of the prevention of and protection against fire. Whilst the likelihood of fire occurring is low in an environment such as an office, Cllrs, employees, workers and volunteers should always be aware of their responsibilities and the relevant procedures.

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The Town Clerk is ultimately responsible and will oversee that fire requirements are adhered to across FTC. This will be done in conjunction with nominated fire marshals. Fire marshals will be given appropriate training to understand their roles from a recognised body.

General fire responsibilities for the Council include:

- Carrying out fire drills (at least annually but 6 monthly for good practice)
- Testing the fire alarms and smoke detectors
- The annual servicing of extinguishers
- Annually reviewing the fire risk assessments
- Ensuring all Cllrs, employees, workers, or volunteers are aware of the action to take in the event of a fire
- The appointment and training of fire marshals
- Fire instruction for new starters (included in induction training)
- Maintaining all relevant records as required under the fire regulations
- Developing a plan in respect of the protection of vulnerable people in the event of fire
- Displaying the appropriate fire signage

All Cllrs, employees, workers, or volunteers are expected to:

- Assess risks on a day to day basis and carry out housekeeping checks to identify the development of any fire hazards
- Understand what action to take in the event of a fire
- Ensure that new starters are aware of the fire procedures as soon as possible
- Give assistance to disabled, injured and/or distressed persons in an emergency
- Understand the basic usage of fire extinguishers

The nominated fire marshal will:

- Ensure that all Cllrs, employees, workers, volunteers, and visitors leave the building directly and immediately in an evacuation
- Ensure that Cllrs, employees, workers, volunteers, and visitors congregate at the designated assembly point
- Account for all personnel
- Liaise with the fire service in the event of a fire and a genuine evacuation

# Work equipment

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By ensuring that we use the 'right tool for the job', checking its specification and maintaining it in good condition, we significantly reduce the risks of work-related injuries.

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All relevant standards will be taken into account when hiring or purchasing new equipment. As a result, all work equipment will be suitable for the purpose for which it is used or provided and will be maintained in a proper state, in efficient working order and in good repair.

All work equipment will be maintained to prevent danger. Work equipment should only ever be used for the purpose that it is designed for.

Where any machinery has a maintenance log, the log must be kept up to date. Inspection sheets and logs are available for checking public premises, council equipment and property. These checks are to be completed within their designated timescales, this may be daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, six monthly or annually. The completed check sheets are stored electronically on the server.

Any damage to property or equipment must be recorded on the relevant TEAMS form.

All those who use work equipment will have available to them adequate health and safety information and, where appropriate, written instructions and / or specific training pertaining to the safe use of the equipment and risk assessments should be in place and adhered to.

Where required, the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) will be made available to all users of work equipment. The PPE supplied should be worn at all times.

FTC does not encourage Cllrs, employees, workers or volunteers to bring personal electrical items, equipment or tools into the workplace. However, should any personal item be required, permission should be sought prior to plugging the item in and the Council reserves the right to ask for the item to be tested and checked before being used.

All hired machinery must satisfy the requirements of relevant health, safety and welfare legislation and the hirer should provide a written statement to assure the company that this is the case.

The following paragraph may be used in correspondence for the supply or purchasing of an article or substance.

"In accordance with section 6 of the health and safety at work etc... Act 1974, we would be pleased to receive your confirmation that the article or substance which you will be supplying to us is safe and without risk to health during its use and maintenance, so far as is reasonably practicable."

# COSHH

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The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended) (COSHH) requires employers to control substances that can harm workers' health. Using chemicals or other hazardous substances at work can put people's health and risk, causing diseases including asthma, dermatitis, or cancer.

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COSHH is the law that requires employers to control substances that are hazardous to health. COSHH covers chemicals, products containing chemicals, fumes, dusts, vapors, mists, gases, and biological agents (germs). If the packaging has any of the hazard symbols, then it is classed as a hazardous substance. COSHH also covers asphyxiating gases and covers germs that cause diseases such as leptospirosis or legionnaires disease. However COSHH doesn't cover lead, asbestos or radioactive substances as these have their own specific regulations.

FTC will prevent or reduce Cllrs, employees, workers, and volunteers' exposure to hazardous substances by:

- finding out what the health hazards are
- deciding how to prevent harm to health via risk assessments
- providing control measures to reduce harm to health
- keeping all control measures in good working order
- providing information, instruction, and training
- making sure these measures are used by monitoring and health surveillance
- planning for emergencies

FTC will try to prevent exposure at source, for example looking at whether a safer alternative product can be substituted to avoid using a hazardous substance, or whether an alternative process could be used. In addition, the Council will provide the necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as respirators, protective gloves, clothing and footwear and eye protection. It is mandatory for employees to wear the appropriate PPE.

COSHH check sheets are to be completed and retained for all products used and Cllrs, employees, workers, and volunteers should familiarise themselves with any hazards. In the main this affects the Outside Services and Cleaning team staff more directly; however certain stationery products may also come with safety data sheets highlighting hazards which Cllrs, employees, workers, and volunteers be made aware of. The COSHH assessment forms are kept on the server.

All cleaning items are kept in a lockable cupboard, and we have two COSHH cabinets at Victoria Park yard for Ranger's use.

# Stress management

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All of us may suffer from differing levels of stress at any time, the key is to be able to identify the symptoms at an early stage, manage the consequences and put preventative controls in place. Quality of life and responsibility of one's own wellbeing also plays an important part.

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## Definition of stress

The HSE define stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress, which can be detrimental to health.

Stress takes on many forms and there are clear benefits to preventing work-related stress:

- Improved quality of life
- Good staff relations
- Reduced sick leave and better attendance levels
- Enhanced work performance
- Decreased staff turnover

## Stress policy

FTC are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of Cllrs, employees, workers and volunteers, recognises that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors. This policy will apply to everyone.

The Council will:

- Provide training for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices.
- Provide confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors.
- Monitor factors highlighted as stressful, manage change appropriately and seek to understand employee's concerns.

If you feel that you are currently suffering from stress or if you feel another Cllr, employee, worker or volunteer is suffering from stress, then you should take the following steps:

- Raise issues of concern with your Line Manager, HR team or the Town Clerk. The information will be treated in the strictest confidence, and you should discuss with them any actions that might be taken to reduce the stress levels.
- See your Doctor.
- Accept opportunities for counselling when recommended.
- If possible, identify the cause(s) of stress.

The Council will work closely with you to try and reduce the stress that you are feeling and try to find solutions, this could also include a referral to occupational health.

## Stress management

### Why do we need to tackle stress?

- About 1 in 5 people say that they find their work either very or extremely stressful.
- Over half a million people report experiencing work-related stress at a level they believe has actually made them ill.

There are six key areas of work design that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and well-being, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. In other words, the six Management Standards cover the primary sources of stress at work. These are:

1. **Demands** – such as workload, work patterns and the work environment.
2. **Control** - such as how much say the person has in the way they do their work.
3. **Support** – such as the encouragement, signposting and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.
4. **Relationships** – such as promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
5. **Role** – such as whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures they do not have conflicting roles.
6. **Change** – such as how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated.

Employers have a duty to ensure that risks arising from work activity are properly controlled. The six points above helps FTC work with their Cllrs, employees, workers and volunteers to undertake risk assessments for stress.

iHASCO (our online training portal) has a stress awareness course that can be added to your profile, please ask the Business Team if you would like to complete the course. We have two trained mental health first aiders, Planning and Development Manager and Business Manager.

# Smoke Free Policy

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Exposure to second hand smoke, also known as passive smoking, increases the risk of lung cancer, heart disease and other illnesses. Ventilation or separating smokers from non-smokers within the same airspace does not stop potentially dangerous exposure. The aim of the Government's ban on smoking is to protect non-smokers from inhaling secondary smoke.

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## Legislation

All FTC workplaces (including FTC vehicles) must be smoke free and Cllrs, employees, workers, visitors, volunteers and contractors are not permitted to smoke in any enclosed or substantially enclosed areas.

## Enforcement

Failure to comply with the law is a criminal offence. FTC's standard internal disciplinary procedures may be invoked for any breach of FTC's policy or code of conduct.

'No Smoking' signs will be clearly displayed near entrances to all FTC's premises. The Council owned vehicles will also display 'No Smoking' stickers.