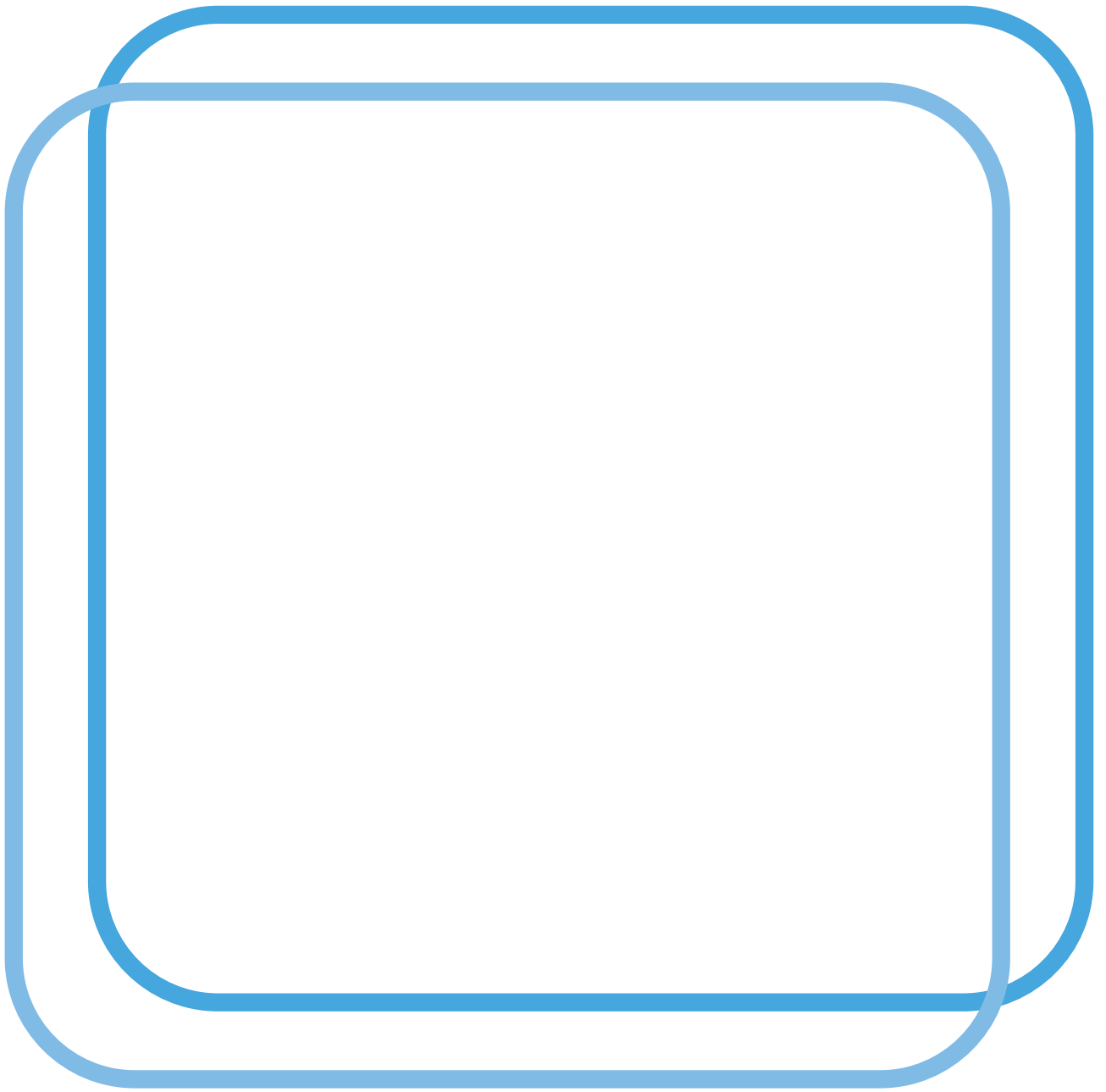


Health & Safety in Voluntary Organisations



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Safer Business - Better Health

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Introduction

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There is a strong misconception that voluntary organisations and their volunteers have no legal duties under Health & Safety Law, this is not the case. Where any organisation has at least one paid employee, it is considered to be an 'employer' for the purposes of the Health & Safety at Work Act and the Regulations made under it. The employee can be as simple as a volunteer who cleans for only an hour a week but receives a payment for it.

This section has been written to help organisations in complying with health & safety law. The section has been broken down into key areas that require consideration. It is also strongly recommended that you refer to the business continuity section, this could help if problems occur during planning of any events.

Civil Law

Civil law is an important part of health & safety law and applies when a person seeks compensation for an injury from their employer or anyone who they believe caused their injury. Civil Law is based on the duty of care; the claim for compensation is based on that duty being breached which resulted in the injury.

Personal injury compensation payments are covered by Employers' Liability insurance, which businesses must have by law. However, if the insurance covers the claim, it will usually result in higher premiums, or worst case refusal of insurance cover.

Criminal Law

Health & Safety law is part of the criminal law system. Breaches of law may result in prosecution resulting in fines and in some cases prison sentences.

Criminal law is enforced by either the HSE or Local Authority, dependent on the work activity e.g. for charity shops and village/church halls enforcement is by the Local Authority.

Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

The Health & Safety at Work etc. places general duties on employers to look after the health & safety of their employees and anyone else who may be affected by the work activities taking place. Employers must so far as reasonably practicable provide:

- safe equipment;
- safe substances;
- necessary information, instruction, supervision and training;
- a safe and healthy workplace;
- a safe and healthy working environment.

‘So far as is reasonably practicable’ means you balance the level of risk of harm against the cost (in money, time and other resources) of removing or controlling that risk.

The Health & Safety at Work etc. Act places duties on employees to:

- ensure their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their work;
- co-operate with their employer in health and safety matters;
- not misuse or interfere with items provided for health and safety reasons, e.g. using fire extinguishers to hold open fire doors.

Health & Safety Law Poster

Employers are required to display the poster ‘Health and Safety Law: What you should know’ in the workplace and bring it to employees’ attention. It should be in a position where employees can see and read it.

If you don’t display the poster, you may give each of your employees an individual leaflet that contains the same information.

The poster is available from HSE Books Tel: 01787 881165 or from some book shops.

Managing Health and Safety & Risk Assessment

If you have more than 5 employees you are required to have a health and safety policy. This is basically writing down what you want to achieve, and how you intend to achieve it. The policy should include how you will communicate health and safety to your workers, and detail everyone’s responsibilities.

It is essential the contents of the policy is monitored, reviewed and revised, to ensure it stays relevant by covering any changes in the workplace, e.g. buying new equipment.

For further information on Health & Safety Policies please refer to the policy section. of the Safer Business Better Health pack.

You are required by the Management of Health and Safety Regulations to carry out risk assessments and if you employ more than 5 people you are required to record the significant findings of these. Risk assessments provide a way of measuring your health and safety performance. The HSE recommend a 5 step risk assessment system.

- 1 Identify the risks
- 2 Identify who will or could be harmed
- 3 Prioritise the associated risks
- 4 Identify what actions you need to take to remove or control those risks
- 5 Review

For further information on risk assessments please refer to the risk assessment section of the Safer Business Better Health pack.

Information, Instruction, Supervision and Training

There is a basic requirement in the majority of health & safety law to provide employees with the right information, instruction, supervision and training to do their work safely and without risks to their health.

- Information is what you tell your workers, either verbally or in writing, to make them aware of the dangers associated with their work and the control measures that they need to follow in order to protect themselves from those dangers.
- Instructions tell a worker what they can or can't do. For example, instruction manuals explain how a machine or piece of equipment should be used, cleaned or maintained. This can be either verbal or written.
- Supervision is basically keeping an eye on someone while they work, and is particularly useful in ensuring the health and safety of young or inexperienced workers. This is often carried out by more experienced workers.
- Training is about giving your workers the skills and knowledge that they need to do their work safely and without risks to their health. Training is specific to the job and each worker, and must have 'learning outcome goals'

Deciding the level and what training is required depends on a number of factors and will change

as new work equipment is bought, new employees are taken on or if there are any changes to the way work is organised. Therefore you will have to regularly review the information that you give your workers and when necessary, revise it accordingly. It will also depend on individuals' experience. The information that new workers need on their first day will be different to what they need after they have been doing their job for a period of time.

As with everything else, you need to have a plan for providing information etc. It is strongly recommended that you take the following into account.

- what you want the information, instruction, supervision and/or training to achieve, i.e. what its purpose is;
- how you will know you have achieved what you wanted to? You need to ensure its effectiveness can be measured;
- how you will review it and identify training needs? Worker appraisals, new equipment purchases, accident reports and risk assessments may give you some indications;
- keeping detailed and dated records of all information, instruction, supervision or training provided to the workers.

First Aid

Employers must provide first-aid kits, any other relevant equipment and trained first aiders or appointed people. Workplaces with very few workers and low risk activities may have an appointed

people instead of trained first aiders. An appointed person has responsibility for getting medical assistance in the event of any accident at work.

For further information on first aid requirements please refer to the first aid section of the Safer Business Better Health pack.

Competence & Competent People

Health & Safety Law often refers to using a competent person for certain tasks; this can cause confusion on what is a competent person as there are so many definitions. It is recognised in health and safety terms as:
a person who has the mixture and balance of knowledge, experience, skills and, if relevant a

qualification, to do their work safely and without risks to health.
Most professions have an associated professional body that sets standards of work and codes of conduct etc - they should be able to confirm if a contractor or your competent person is a registered member and meets their professional criteria.

Accidents

An accident is defined as an unplanned or uncontrolled event at work that has (or could have) resulted in some sort of harm. While managing health & safety is all about preventing accidents, you must have systems in place for when then occur. It is extremely important that you manage how and when workers return to work after an accident.
Some accidents/dangerous occurrences/work-related illnesses are reportable to your enforcing authority this is under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases

and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR). Such injuries may occur to the employer, employees or other persons affected by the premises or work activities carried out at your premises.
For further information on Accident Reporting requirements please refer to the accident section. If you have any questions regarding what is reportable and what is not it is recommended you talk to your enforcing authority.

Fundraising

Fundraising is important for some voluntary organisations, for some it is their main activity or only source of income and therefore vital to their survival.
Health & Safety must be included in all the pre-planning stages of every fundraising event. Regardless of the nature of the event you need to take into account:

- the venue - location, access points, size and inherent hazards, e.g. muddy ground, water features etc.
- the type of fundraising event or activity and the associated hazards;
- means of communication between key event personnel and the people attending –

- especially in emergencies;
- crowd numbers and control;
- stewards and marshals needed and their training;
- emergency plans, e.g. first aid, fire, evacuation of areas and accident reporting;
- traffic control, particularly if people and vehicles are in the same area;
- disabled access and services;
- intended attractions, e.g. bouncy castles, gas balloons, animals;
- equipment needed, e.g. tables, cylinders;
- services needed
- food safety and hygiene

All of the points above should be covered (if relevant) in the events risk assessment

On the following pages is a organisation health check form, using this form will help establish what documents and systems you have in place and those that need to be implemented.

This health check has been designed as an aid to help you in assessing your systems and controls for health & safety some points will be relevant to your organization some will not.

Name of Organisation:	
Nature of Organisation:	
Address:	
Name of person completing:	Date:

1-6 (of 18)		Yes	No
1	Have the committee appointed someone who is responsible for advising on health & safety matters?		
2	Is the person who is responsible for safety a competent person for the task?		
3	Is health & safety an agenda item at committee meetings?		
4	Does the group have a health & safety policy?		
5	Has the committee carried out risk assessments for all the tasks you ask your volunteers to do?		
6	<p>Do the risk assessments cover the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) workplace transport - deliveries, mini buses etc. b) noise c) slips & trips d) fire safety e) hazardous substances f) lone working g) manual handling h) work-related stress i) violence at work j) work equipment k) the workplace - lighting, temperature l) first aid arrangements m) young persons n) new and expectant mothers 		

Charity and Voluntary Organisations Health Check cont'd

7-18 (of 18)		Yes	No
7	When required does the committee have an 'appointed person' for first aid who is aware of their responsibilities?		
8	Is there access to a first aid box?		
9	If the group work in a building which was built before 1999 are you aware if any asbestos is present?		
10	Is there an asbestos register for the building? (If answer yes to Q9)		
11	If you have portable appliances do you get them regularly tested?		
12	Does the committee have an accident book?		
13	Is the group aware of your legal obligations under RIDDOR and have appointed a person who is responsible for reporting accidents?		
14	Are volunteers aware of how to report accidents and to whom?		
15	Has the committee assessed the training needs of your volunteers for their required jobs?		
16	Has the committee provided relevant instruction / information / training?		
17	Does the committee produce a safety plan for fundraising events?		
18	Does the safety plan take into account the following:- a) the venue b) the type of fundraising event or activity and the associated hazards c) means of communication between key event personnel d) crowd numbers and control e) stewards and marshals needed and their training f) emergency plans, e.g. first aid, fire evacuation, accident reporting g) traffic control, particularly if people and vehicles are in the same area h) disabled access and services i) intended attractions e.g. bouncy castles, gas balloons, animals j) equipment needed, e.g. tables, cylinders k) services needed l) food safety and hygiene		

NOTE: This checklist is purely produced to start you thinking of what hazards / controls you have at the premise. The lists are NOT exhaustive and there maybe hazards / controls that have not been covered.

THIS CHECKLIST IS NOT A RISK ASSESSMENT

If you require further guidance please contact South Holland District Council, Safety & Environment Team to arrange an advisory visit with an officer.