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## Health and Safety Audits and Inspections Policy and Guidance

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### INTRODUCTION

Council departments and premises will be the subject of periodic Health and Safety audits and inspections. This is to ensure that the Council complies with current legislation, the Council's Health and Safety Policy and to continuously improve the Council's Health and Safety performance.

Audits are different from inspections in that they involve in-depth examination of the Council's Policies, procedures and management systems for Health and Safety. Health and Safety auditing will be carried out primarily by the Safety Team to an identified standard. Health and Safety inspections are normally undertaken by local managers, and deal with the normal daily requirements of keeping the workforce, visiting members of the public, service users and people working on Council premises safe.

For the purpose of this guidance, inspections have been divided into two broad categories:

- a. Inspections carried out by representatives of the Enforcement Authorities, and
- b. Those inspections carried out by the Council's own people.

### Health and Safety Inspections by an Enforcement Authority

In general, terms Enforcement Authorities are considered to be members of:-

- a. The Health and Safety Executive
- b. The Employment Medical Advisory Service
- c. The Local Environmental Health Authority
- d. The Fire Authority.

### Powers of an Inspector

The Inspectors of the Enforcement Authorities have certain defined powers, these include:-

### Powers of entry

An Inspector has the right of entry at any reasonable time and in certain cases, at any time. A reasonable time is generally considered to be any time that the site is operating or when employees are on the premises. Reasonable time must not be confused with a time, which is convenient to managers. Inspectors may make appointments to visit or may arrive unannounced. Any undue delay in attending to an inspector could be misunderstood,

therefore, managers are advised, if busy, to consider initially delegating the function of dealing with inspector's requirements to an appropriate level.

### **Pre-arranged Visit by Inspectors**

When it is known in advance that enforcement authorities intend to visit a premises or department, the Health and Safety Department should be informed and will make every endeavour to be available for such visits. Should this not be possible management should send a written report, to the Health and Safety Department and copy to the appropriate Director/Manager, together with copies of all correspondence.

### **Unannounced Visits**

When an inspector visits a unit without having made a prior appointment, the following guidelines should be adopted:

The inspector's identity should be established and the precise nature of the visit determined.

The inspector should be accompanied throughout the visit; special care should be taken to ensure that the inspector is provided with protective clothing suitable to the area. Note must be taken of any comments made by the inspector as these may form part of his 'requirements'.

Before an inspector leaves the premises, it should be ascertained whether written confirmation of any of the comments will be made in writing. If there is no indication that comments or requirements will be made in writing, it is absolutely essential to fully understand whether the Council requires any follow-up action. The visit should be reported to the Health and Safety Team.

### **Powers to Inspect**

Inspectors, having gained access to relevant premises are empowered to inspect plant, premises and any relevant documents or records. Inspectors may take photographs, make recordings, take statements and examine or remove any article or substance, which gives him cause for concern.

It should be remembered that should an Inspector wish to interview an employee and record a statement, management has no right to be present during this interview. The contents of any statement will become known if a decision is made to prosecute.

It is an offence for any person to knowingly give false information to an Inspector.

### **Power to issue notices**

Enforcement Authorities have the power, if in their opinion, an unsatisfactory situation exists to serve Notices. These notices may be served on the Council, its property or individuals, and may take the following form.

#### **a. Improvement Notice**

This requires specified remedial action to be taken on whatever or whoever the notice is served, within a specified period of time.

Where genuine difficulties occur, e.g. suppliers cannot fulfil order, the Service Officer should be informed as soon as possible and an extension of the time limit requested.

Where there is a failure to improve in the specified time or the improvement notice is ignored the serving officer may prosecute or serve a prohibition notice.

**b. Prohibition Notice**

This has the effect of immediately stopping the use of whatever or whomever the notice is served upon until specified remedial action has been taken.

**c. Deferred Prohibition Notice**

This has the effect of stopping the use of whatever, or whomever the notice is served upon, unless specified remedial action is taken, by some future date. It may be used to ensure the safe cessation of a process where rapid shutdown would be dangerous.

**d. Issue of Notices**

Should a notice be served, the manager must immediately notify the Health and Safety Team and the appropriate Director by telephone and forward copies of the documentation to them.

**Prosecutions**

Should a warning that information may or will be laid, or a summons is received, the manager must immediately inform the Health and Safety Team and the appropriate Director by telephone and forward copies of the documentation to them.

The Legal Department and Health and Safety Team will assist in the preparation of any necessary defences.

**Council Inspections**

An active programme of Health and Safety inspections is a positive step towards maintaining a safe working environment. These formal inspections will normally be carried out by a representative of the Council, recognised official bodies, or by outside specialist groups, such as our Insurers.

**Why inspect?**

The purpose of carrying out health and safety inspections will usually fall under one of the following headings:-

- a. To confirm that a premises or department meets Council Policies and Statutory Obligations.
- b. To confirm that safety procedures and equipment provided remain effective.
- c. To identify situations which require additional considerations to improve safety.
- d. To assess new or amended operating procedures and equipment and verify that they comply with safety standards.
- e. To inspect areas existing standards and practices.
- f. To inspect the safety plan as part of statutory obligations.
- g. To inspect premises prior to closure or disposal.

## **Who inspects?**

### **Management**

It is the responsibility of every department manager to maintain a safe working environment as required by statute, as such, frequent visits will form an integral part of their management function. It is the responsibility of all line managers and supervisory staff, as part of their normal duties to ensure that staff under their supervision comply with declared safety rules and that equipment is operated safely at all times and any matters outside their terms of reference are referred to the appropriate management level.

### **Safety Representatives**

Accredited Safety Representatives have the authority to carry out certain safety inspections and have access to specified information.

### **Health and Safety Team**

The Health and Safety Team will, from time to time, visit sites and carry out inspections. The outcome of these inspections will be related to Department managers. The subject of visits will range from general visits, specific inspections of equipment or processes and to carry out monitoring surveys.

The Health and Safety Team will also conduct periodic safety audits, which will be a detailed audit on all health and safety related matters.

### **Specialist Groups**

Council specialists, i.e. Engineers or identified inspectors retained by the Council will carry out safety checks, maintenance and tests as specified.

### **Employees**

It is the duty of every employee to bring to the notice of their supervisors or representatives, through established lines of communication (as detailed in the Council's Health and Safety consultation procedures) any safety matters concerning defective safety devices, defective equipment or any unsafe practices.

The following checklist and guidance are produced for managers to carry out periodic inspections of their premises or departments; they are designed as a memory aid and do not necessarily cover every aspect which has to be inspected. The checklists may be amended as necessary to include other items for inspection. In some areas/departments specialised inspections may be necessary, if you are in doubt or assistance is required to identify items to be included for inspection contact the Health and Safety Team. Inspections should be carried out at least monthly and held for a minimum period of three years. If an accident occurs the inspection records should be kept for a minimum three years from the date of the accident report. If a claim is received as a result of an accident the record should be held until all proceedings are completed.



### WORKPLACE INSPECTION CHECKLIST

<b>Address</b> _____ <hr/> <hr/>	Department/Room _____  Date _____		
Item	Satisfactory		Remarks
	Yes	No	
1. Fire doors			
2. Fire alarms – record date last checked			
3. Fire extinguishers - record date last checked			
4. Emergency exits			
5. Cleanliness			
6. Work space			
7. Sufficient storage			
8. Temperature / humidity			
9. Thermometer – record temperature			
10. Ventilation			
11. Lighting			
12. Windows/Skylights/transparent doors			
13. Window restraints			
14. Sanitary conveniences			
15. Washing facilities			
16. Water temperature – record temperature			
17. Drinking water			
18. Protective clothing/equipment			
19. Accommodation for clothing			
20. Changing facilities			
21. Seating and workstation arrangements			
22. Eating facilities			
23. Rest rooms			
24. Floor, passages, stairs			
25. Fixed ladders			
26. Arrangements to stop falls or falling objects			
27. Ramps and loading bays			
28. Pedestrian access			

Item	Satisfactory		Remarks
	Yes	No	
29. Lifts			
30. Doors and gates			
31. Machinery guards/fences			
32. Controls and emergency stops			
33. Energy source isolation			
34. Stability of machinery			
35. First aid box			
36. First aiders			
37. Compulsory notices			
38. Health and safety warning signs			
39. Health and safety records			
40. Security			
41. Visitors			
42. Contractors			
43. Safe systems of work			

Recommended action	By whom	Completion date

Signature ..... Title .....

Action taken	By	Date

## **Guidance for the completion of the Health and Safety Inspection Checklist.**

The checklist should be completed on a monthly basis by premises or department managers (in larger Council premises) accompanied by a safety representative. The objective of completing the checklist is to identify any defects or hazards, which exist, and either eliminates the defect/hazard or takes immediate action to protect people from the effects. If the hazard presents a risk, or an accident has occurred, a risk assessment must be carried out to identify the controls required. See the Council's Policy on Risk Assessment.

1. **Fire Doors** – Do fire doors open easily and lead to places of safety?
2. **Fire alarms** – Ensure all fire alarms are tested on a weekly basis.
3. **Fire extinguishers** – Ensure all fire extinguishers are easily accessible, and inspected on an annual basis.
4. **Emergency exits** – Ensure all emergency exits are kept clear and that they open in the direction of travel.
5. **Cleanliness** – Is the area clean and free from items of rubbish?
6. **Workspace** – Is there sufficient work space for the number of persons working there (113m per person).
7. **Sufficient storage** – Is there sufficient suitable storage for files and other items?
8. **Temperature/Humidity** – Is the temperature and humidity suitable for people in the area?
9. **Thermometer** – Is there a thermometer in the area? Record the temperature.
10. **Ventilation** – Are there suitable amounts of fresh or conditioned air in the workplace?
11. **Lighting** – Is the lighting suitable for the work being undertaken?
12. **Windows/skylights/transparent doors** – are windows etc clearly marked and capable of being cleaned or opened without putting anyone in danger?
13. **Window restraints** – Do windows have restraints on them that prevent them from being opened more than 4 – 6 inches/100 – 150mm?
14. **Sanitary conveniences** – are there sufficient numbers and type of convenience – are they cleaned regularly?
15. **Washing facilities** – Are there sufficient numbers and types of washing facilities?

16. **Water temperature** – Is the water temperature suitable where full body immersion can take place (430 - 450C)?
17. **Drinking water** – Is there a suitable source of drinking water?
18. **Protective clothing/equipment** – Are there suitable amounts and types of protective clothing and equipment? Is it worn or used properly?
19. **Accommodation for clothing** – Can protective clothing and outdoor clothing be kept separate and secure?
20. **Changing facilities** – Are there suitable separate changing facilities for staff?
21. **Seating and workstation arrangements** – Are workstations and furniture suitable, cleaned and maintained?
22. **Eating facilities** – Are there suitable separate eating facilities for people?
23. **Rest rooms** – Is there a rest room – are non-smokers protected from the effects of passive smoking?
24. **Floors, passages, and stairs** – Are floors, passages and stairs in good order and free of obstructions?
25. **Fixed ladders** – Are there any fixed ladders? If over 2m are they fitted with protective hoops?
26. **Arrangements to stop falls or falling objects** – Are there suitable arrangements to prevent people from falling or falling objects striking people from a height of 2m or more?
27. **Ramps and loading bays** – Are ramps and loading bays suitably marked and protected?
28. **Pedestrian access** – Is there separate protected access for pedestrians?
29. **Lifts** – Are lifts maintained on a regular basis, can the alarm bell be heard and is there a suitable procedure in case of emergencies?
30. **Doors and Gates** – Are doors and gates suitable, are they marked when necessary, i.e. Fire doors, keep closed etc.
31. **Machinery guards/fences** – Does all machinery that requires guards or fences have them fitted and are they checked to see that they work effectively on a regular basis?
32. **Controls and emergency stops** – Do all of the controls and emergency stop buttons work?

33. **Energy source isolation** – Can all sources of energy be isolated quickly and effectively?
34. **Stability of machinery** – Is machinery stable when in use?
35. **First aid boxes** – Are first aid facilities clearly indicated and sufficient for the number of people in the area?
36. **First aiders** – are there suitable numbers of qualified first aiders or appointed persons?
37. **Compulsory notices** – Is there a Health and Safety at Work poster? Are all the details required filled in and up to date?
38. **Health and safety warning signs** – are there suitable numbers and types of health and safety warning signs on display and are they clearly visible?
39. **Health and safety records** – are there suitable health and safety records kept and are they up to date – Accidents, Risk assessments, Safe systems of work, Machinery inspections, Safety inspections, Training records, Fire inspections, Fire and emergency evacuation drills etc.
40. **Security** – Is the building secure where inspections are carried out?
41. **Visitors** – Are visitors properly controlled - is there a visitors book?
42. **Contractors** – Are contractors controlled - are they logged on and off the site?
43. **Safe systems of work** – Identify two safe systems of work and ensure they are being used correctly.