

Wickford Town Council



HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

	Page No.
Contents	1
Part I General Policy	2
Part II Organisation	3
Part III Arrangements	4
Health and Safety Training	4
First Aid	4
Employee Information	4
Hazard Reporting Procedure	4
Fire Safety	4
Bomb Threats	5
Suspect Package	5
Equipment Safety	5
Electrical Safety	6
Alcohol and Substance Abuse	8
Smoking	8
Risk and COSHH Assessment	8
Asbestos	9
Manual Handling/Lifting Safety	9
General Housekeeping	10
Display Screen Equipment	11
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	11
Violence to Persons at Work	12
Contractors	13
Fire and Emergency Safety	13
 Appendix 1	
Extract from Health and Safety at Work Act 1974	16

Wickford Town Council
Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
Health and Safety Policy Statement

Part I General Policy

Wickford Town Council (the Council) recognises and accepts its responsibilities as an employer for providing a safe and healthy workplace and working environment for all of its employees, visitors and contractors, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The Council will take all reasonable and practical steps to meet this responsibility, paying particular attention to the provision and maintenance of:

- a) Plant, equipment and systems of work that are safe;
- b) Safe arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transport of persons, articles and substances;
- c) A safe place of work and safe access to and egress from;
- d) Sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to enable all employees to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own safety and health at work;
- e) A healthy working environment;
- f) Facilities for welfare at work.

The Council will issue guidance and instruction relating to detailed arrangements associated with particular activities. It will ensure that risks are assessed, the significant findings recorded and protective and preventative measures implemented.

The Town Clerk will ensure that employees are adequately informed, instructed, trained and supervised (including the induction training of new staff).

Organisational responsibility and arrangements for ensuring their implementation of this policy are set out in Part II of this document.

No safety policy is likely to be successful unless it actively involves employees themselves. All employees will ensure that work activities under their control are carried out, so far as is reasonably practicable, safely and without risk to health.

The Town Clerk will make annual checks to ensure that staff are working safely in compliance with this policy and regular inspections of the workplace will also be carried out. Check results are recorded in employee's annual appraisal.

Councillor Andrew Neil
Chair, Wickford Town Council

Date: 29 September 2026

Part II Organisation

The Council, as a corporate body and an employer, is responsible for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the following:-

- a) Health, Safety and Welfare of its employees at work;
- b) Health and Safety of non-employees who may be affected by the Council's activities or those of its employees;
- c) The details of the Health and Safety Policy are adhered to;
- d) That the activities of contractors and other persons utilised by the Council do not pose a risk to the health and safety of employees or any other person;
- e) The Health, Safety and Welfare of the Council employees working outside the Council premises.

The Council recognises that it has a duty of care to:

- a) devise and manage safe systems of work;
- b) provide safe premises and/or place of work; and
- c) provide safe plant and equipment.

Councillors, as members of the Council, will note the legal responsibilities of the corporate body in relation to their own presence, on Council premises. They will ensure that decisions they make take due regard of the health and safety of staff and others affected by the Council's activities.

Every employee of whatever grade of seniority, has a duty to observe all of the Council's statutory safety regulations. Section 7 & 8 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, place a duty upon them to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and other persons and to cooperate with the employer so as to enable it to carry out its own responsibility and to do everything to prevent injury to themselves and to others. See Appendix 1.

A copy of this statement will be issued to employees. This safety policy document will be reviewed, added to, or modified from time to time and issued accordingly.

Part III Arrangements

The Council will issue detailed guidance and instruction and give training and supervision as necessary in line with current legislation. It will assess the risk arising from its activities and take appropriate action.

It is the responsibility of the Council, through Committees, to ensure that all employees are fully trained to understand and carry out the duties allotted to them with particular emphasis on health and safety.

Their responsibilities include:

- a) identification of training needs;
- b) implementation of identified training;
- c) ensuring that the correct training is provided.

In the first week of joining the Council, new employees will receive Induction Training that will make them aware of their statutory duties and responsibilities with regard to health and safety at work. They will be instructed on emergency procedures and how they affect them in the workplace.

The Town Clerk will also receive training to increase knowledge of their legal, other duties and the means of complying with them.

First Aid Kits

A first aid kit is provided in the Town Council office and at the Wickford Market site.

Employee Information

A Health and Safety Law leaflet is provided for all Council staff.

Hazard Reporting Procedure

If any member of staff considers that a hazard exists, then they have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to report the hazard to the Town Clerk.

If the Town Clerk has been informed of a hazard, then they are obliged to ensure that any necessary remedial action is taken as soon as possible.

Equipment Safety in General

Our instruction to all employees using equipment is "do not use it unless you know how to use it safely". Equipment includes equipment driven by mechanical, hydraulic, electrical compressor, gas or waterpower.

You are only to use "equipment" if you:

- Have been informed of all hazards and safety precautions;
- Are instructed and trained to use it safely;
- Use safe systems of work;
- Wear sufficient, adequate personal protective equipment as appropriate;
- Are properly supervised until completely qualified;
- Know it to be correctly guarded to prevent injury.

Each item will require a different level of awareness, information or training. If in doubt leave it and ask the Town Clerk. Before use of any machinery, the Town Clerk must correctly assess the machinery and process for:

- Electrical safety;
- Excessive noise;
- The presence of substances hazardous to health.

Employees will be kept informed of any special precautions, control measures, monitoring requirements and hazards. Employees must inform the Town Clerk of any problems immediately – turning off equipment to prevent others being put at risk.

Remember – keep fingers, hands and loose clothing away from all moving parts, keep the proper guards in place and follow safety procedures and notices.

Equipment Unattended

If you come across equipment unattended in a public area contact a member of staff who could capably turn it off.

Electrical Safety

Electrical safety concerns us all. Take care at all times because of the serious risks of fire and accident. If in doubt about the safety of a piece of equipment turn off the supply and inform the Town Clerk.

Hazards include electrocution, electrical burns and fire.

Electricity is potentially dangerous and all employees are instructed:

- Not to interfere with any electrical apparatus, equipment or fitting unless they are sufficiently competent and trained to do so;
- To report any defect in any electrical apparatus, equipment or fitting to the Town Clerk immediately. Where it is safe to do so the electrical apparatus should be switched off. If in doubt leave it;
- To leave any maintenance, adjustment or adaptations of any electrical equipment to a competent person.

Electrical Accidents

In the event of an electrical accident, there is always the risk of a hidden danger to any person going to the assistance of the injured person. **Do not become a second casualty.**

Should you suspect that any person is unconscious or injured due to electricity, do not touch them, as they may still be in contact with an electrical current. Do not turn off the electrical switch or power point unless you are sure it is safe to do so.

If possible, get the help of a qualified first aider. If this is not possible call and await the emergency services. Never attempt a rescue which puts your own life at risk.

General Electrical Safety Advice

- Never bring second-hand equipment to work;
- Never use electrical equipment with frayed cables, loose wires or exposed 'live components';
- Never overload a cable, socket or extension;
- Avoid use of extension leads, wherever possible;
- Never use an extension cable unless it has been uncoiled first;
- Never place electrical equipment in contact with damp materials or surfaces (e.g., wet coats, gloves or papers), or near inflammable materials;

- Never cover ventilation grills on electrical equipment, e.g., convector heaters, VDU screen/printers. The ventilation grilles are there to prevent excess heat building up;
- Never use a water or foam fire extinguisher on fires emanating from an electrical source;
- Obey all electrical safety advice that may be displayed near or on equipment, fittings or machinery, following manufacturer's installation and use instructions;
- Never tug on or stretch a cable or use it to carry a load or weight as the earth to the equipment may become disconnected by this action.

Electrical Equipment Use

The Town Clerk will ensure that manufacturers, installers or supplier's advice is made available and used. Report to the Town Clerk any information that is missing. You should ensure that you follow such advice and report any omission or faults.

Portable Electrical Equipment

Before using any equipment check that:

- The plug is not damaged, (e.g. there is no evidence of the casing cracked or pins bent). Do not take the plug apart;
- The cable lead is properly secured where it enters the plug or equipment – you should not be able to see the coloured wires;
- The equipment is not visibly damaged and there are no loose parts or screws;
- The cable is not visibly damaged – apart from light scuffing – and there are no taped joints;
- There is no evidence of overheating, e.g., scorch marks;
- The equipment had not been exposed to an adverse environment, such as wet or excessively dirty.

If in doubt do not use the equipment – report it to the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk will ensure that portable electrical appliances are inspected and tested regularly, as required by current legislation.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Employees who suspect or know that they have an alcohol or drug problem will be encouraged to seek voluntary help or discuss their problem in strict confidence with their immediate superior.

An employee who is suspected or recognised as having an alcohol or drug dependency problem will be given the opportunity to seek diagnosis and treatment. Provided there is evidence of a genuine desire to overcome the problem, the employee may take time off work to receive appropriate treatment. Certified absence from work in the course of such treatment shall count as sick leave.

Alcohol and/or drug consumption or dependency may lead to disciplinary action where:

- It exposes any employee/visitor to potential danger;
- There is a risk of damage to plant, equipment, machinery or property;
- Employee's work performance is or could be impaired as a result of such dependency;
- An employee refuses to seek advice or accept treatment;
- There are persistent problems or a one-off serious incident at work as a result of consumption/dependency

Risk and COSHH Assessment

An essential element in achieving health and safety site conditions in an early examination of the hazards and risks involved in fulfilling a contract. As a Contractor, further responsibilities apply. In all cases, the Town Clerk is responsible for initial site visits to carry out assessments of the hazards and risks of the substances and operations involved. Formal written COSHH assessments will be made together with risk assessments and their attendant safety method statements.

The procedure to be adopted for Risk Assessments is broadly as follows:

1. The process or activity is considered;
2. Hazards are identified and avoided if possible;
3. Risks of the remaining hazards are assessed;
4. Risks are graded and Risk Factors established according to severity;
5. Appropriate precautions are taken;
6. Safe systems of work are developed and recorded;
7. The situation is monitored and changes made as required.

The procedures to be adopted for COSHH Assessments is broadly as follows:

1. Substances are identified and their possible harmful effects are considered;
2. The way they are handled and times of exposure are noted;
3. Possible elimination or substitution is considered;
4. Controls and protection are decided upon;
5. Results are discussed with all personnel considered and measures are agreed upon are put into place;
6. Health and Safety is monitored.

All employees are instructed that no hazardous substances are to be used without an assessment having been completed prior to use.

Asbestos

An employee who uncovers hidden material or dust which they suspects may contain asbestos, must stop work immediately and contact the Town Clerk who shall arrange for the material/relevant area to be inspected and if necessary, asbestos removed in controlled conditions by a company authorised to do so.

All persons should be removed from the immediate area which must be cordoned off to prevent further unauthorised entry and the suspect material tested by an accredited consultancy. If the material is found to be asbestos based, then it should be removed in accordance with current legislation and reassurance air tests carried out after the work is completed to ensure the area is safe to be reoccupied.

Manual Handling/Lifting Safety

Be careful when lifting and carrying objects and loads. Forethought and care are required in order to prevent back injury, pulled muscles, stomach strains, falls or other problems of a long-term nature.

The Town Clerk is responsible for assessing the general handling process required to be undertaken by employees they are responsible for. They will ensure that adequate training and supervision is employed.

Approaching an Object of Load

Before lifting or carrying, first consider:

- **Weight/Shape** – Are you able to lift the object alone or do you need the help of a colleague(s)?
- **Sections** – Can you split the load and make multiple trips carrying a sufficient, but safe load?
- **Equipment** – Sack barrows or trolleys may be available. Ask!
- **The Centre of Gravity** – Will vary with each load, find out where it is and orientate the load appropriately;
- **Package** – Check for damaged loads. A torn or damp cardboard box may split causing the load to drop. Make the object secure and sound before lifting;
- **Protrusions** – Sharp protruding edges must be made safe;
- **Ceramic and Glass Objects** – When broken provide razor sharp edges, take suitable precautions to prevent injury in the event of a fall;
- **The Terrain** – How will you negotiate the stairs, doors etc.? (Remember fire doors must not be left open longer than the time to complete the specific task). Is the ground slippery or uneven?
- **Plan** – How will you lift and carry the object? This is important when two colleagues are carrying the same load. Come to an agreement over lifting and the direction of travel;
- **Clear** – Any trip hazards or obstructions along your route and at the proposed location for the load.

Lifting the Object

1. Keep your back straight and bend your knees;
2. Position your body close to the object, keeping its centre of gravity, close to you;
3. Directly face the object and avoid twisting the torso when lifting;
4. Hold the object securely underneath and as close to your body as possible;
5. Make sure that you can see over the top of the object as you move;
6. Walk carefully, do not run. Take particular care when walking up or down stairs;
7. When arriving at your destination, place the object carefully and ensure its stability;
8. When working outside whilst lifting objects that are fairly light but with a large surface area take care that the wind does not make you lose control.

Particular Advice

Take extra care when carrying hot liquids, where possible use a lid or closed container.

IMPORTANT NOTE – IF ANY DOUBT EXISTS ABOUT MOVING AN OBJECT – DON'T TRY!

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Council has a legal duty to comply as follows:

- Provide PPE to employees whenever health and safety risks are not adequately controlled by other means;
- Select PPE suitable for the risk, the employees and the environment;
- Assess the PPE available to ensure that it is suitable in these respects;
- Maintain the PPE and provide accommodation for it;
- Ensure that it is properly used through training, informing and instructing employees.

The Town Clerk is responsible for assessing the need for PPE.

Employees have a legal duty to wear PPE whenever it is required and return it to its accommodation. Employees are also required to report the loss or any obvious defect in the PPE to the Town Clerk.

PPE includes the following clothing and equipment when it is worn for the protection of health and safety:

- Protective clothing such as aprons, apparel for adverse weather conditions, gloves, safety footwear, safety helmets, high visibility waistcoats etc;
- Protective equipment such as eye protectors, respirators and safety harness.

PPE excludes ordinary working clothes and uniforms, motorcycle helmets, sports clothing and equipment, self-defence or deterrent equipment, and portable detection equipment. These exclusions include clothing worn for the purpose of food hygiene, and monitoring equipment such as gas detectors and radiation dosimeters.

Regulations require suitable PPE to be used only as a last resort when elimination or control of the hazard at source are not sufficient to control the risk. The term 'suitable' is qualified by the reference to the:

- Health and ergonomic requirements of the person wearing the PPE;
- Capability of the PPE to fit the individual concerned;
- Possibility that other PPE may have to be worn in conjunction with it;
- Risk involved and the circumstances in which the PPE will be used.

The selection of PPE should be carefully considered in order to protect staff in those areas of employment where there is some degree of risk.

The Town Clerk should give employees to whom equipment is provided adequate instruction and information to enable such employee to know:

- i) the risk which the personal protective equipment will avoid or limit;
- ii) the purpose for which, and the manner in which, PPE is to be used; and
- iii) any action to be taken by employees to ensure that the PPE remains in efficient working order and in good repair.

Violence to Persons at Work

The Council recognises the issue of violence at work. The following procedure has been devised and implemented on the subject:

Violence is defined as:

"Any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted by a member of the public or another member of staff in circumstances arising out of the course of his or her employment."

Assault is defined as:

"The unlawful laying of hands on another person or an act which causes reasonable fear of the infliction of injury."

Legal Position

Violence towards employees generally comes from two sources:

- a) the public, whether customers, client or bystander; and
- b) other employees.

An employer's responsibilities extend to protecting staff from violence.

It is considered that violence between employees should be dealt with as a personnel matter and the Council's disciplinary procedure will apply.

Reporting incidents of violence

In order that, so far as is reasonably practicable, staff are protected from violence at work, it is necessary that all incidents are reported to the Town Clerk.

Incidents involving the Town Clerk as reported to the Chair of the Town Council.

When any member of staff suffers actual assault, the Town Clerk should ensure that the matter is reported to the Police as soon as is practicable. Staff will be encouraged and supported to assist the Police in collection of evidence and prosecution of assailants.

The Council will co-operate fully with the Police in bringing prosecution and, where the Police decide not to institute proceedings, unless on the grounds of lack of evidence, the Council will decide whether or not to pursue a private prosecution. In appropriate circumstances, the Council may seek an injunction against members of the public.

Contractors

The Town Clerk will ensure that contractors are vetted to ensure their competence and to ensure that they take account of health and safety risks.

The Town Clerk will monitor contractors' regard for health and safety whilst they are carrying out work on behalf of the Council.

Fire and Emergency Safety

Fire

Fire and smoke are extremely dangerous and may cause loss of life and injury. The Council has the following comprehensive procedure for protecting all employees from the hazards of fire. The aim of the Council procedure is to protect life **'Property can be replaced – you can't.'** Make sure you read the following:

- Instructions
- Drills

Fire requires three components – fuel, oxygen and ignition. To avoid fire, we need to prevent these components being present together. Oxygen is present in the air. Fuels include paper and solvents. Ignition sources include discarded matches and cigarettes and electrical equipment. Be observant in your workplace and take care.

Failure to prevent fire will result in the presence of:

- Flames and heat (which ignite other fuels)
- Smoke and fumes (poisonous gases)
- Weakened Building structure (e.g. collapsing floors)
- Panic and confusion (know your exit routes and what you must do).

General Advice

FIRE AND SMOKE - can move very quickly, particularly in well ventilated places, such as corridors and staircases, where people may be present. Fires should be contained by closing doors and windows. A fire in a closed room with no air may extinguish itself. However, never enter a smoke or fire filled corridor or room. Never open a door to check on a fire, doing so will put your life at risk, as fresh air will enter and may cause the fire to flare up. Leave all checks of smoke to fire filled rooms or corridors to the Fire Brigade. Remember most casualties of a fire choke or suffocate due to smoke.

SMOKE IN CORRIDORS – smoke may enter a corridor used as a fire exit route. As smoke consist of hot gases, it may rise to the ceiling. In such a situation (unless there is an alternative escape route, dropping to your knees below the smoke layer and crawling to safety along the corridor, may be possible, keeping your head and body low.

TRAPPED IN A ROOM BY FIRE AND SMOKE – close all doors. Block the space around the door to prevent smoke entering the room. Stand by an open window and shout for attention.

HOT HANDLES – never open a door with a hot handle or with smoke coming through the frame. Fire may be on the other side and opening the door may put your life at risk. Use an alternative route.

ANY DEFECTS to equipment, fire doors, notices etc., must be notified immediately to the Town Clerk.

Date effective from:	21 June 2022
Date of review:	28 September 2026
Minute ref	26-62e
Next review:	September 2027

APPENDIX 1

EXTRACT FROM THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT 1974

7. General duties of employees at work. It shall be the duty of every employee while at work:

- (a) to take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself and of other persons who may be affected by his acts or omissions at work;
and
- (b) as regards any duty or requirement imposed on his employer or any other person by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions, to co-operate with him so far as is necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with.

8. Duty not to interfere with or misuse things provided pursuant to certain provisions.

No person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions.