

SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL

AS APPROVED:

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY (All employees)



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1. SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL POLICY ON HEALTH & SAFETY

- 1.1 It is the policy of the Shetland Islands Council (the Council) to protect and promote the health, safety and welfare of its employees at work and members the public against risks arising out of or in connection with the activities of its employees undertaking the work of the Council.
- 1.2 The Council will make adequate arrangements for consultation with safety committees, safety representatives and other employees on measures for promoting health and safety at work.
- 1.3 The Council will ensure that all employees are provided with sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision, and will ensure that all employees are competent to carry out their tasks.
- 1.4 The Council will observe all statutory obligations arising from health and safety legislation. It will act upon Approved Codes of Practice, Guidance notes, other documents as appropriate, advice from HSE and MCA Inspectors. It may publish in-house codes of practice on specific health and safety matters that may interpret or extend basic legal requirements.
- 1.5 The Council will continue to be committed to health and safety with the aims of resolving problems and implementing the health and safety policy.
- 1.6 The Chief Executive and Executive Directors will ensure, through Service Heads, that this policy is supplemented and supported by safe systems of work and procedures specific to individual departments to ensure that all activities are undertaken in compliance with this policy.
- 1.7 The Council will take all reasonably practicable steps to protect its employees and others who may be affected by its operations by maintaining safe and healthy working conditions, and shall undertake to prevent accidents and cases of work related ill health.
- 1.8 The Council will provide such resources and take such measures as are necessary to meet the targets that are applicable to Local Authorities under the Revitalising Health and Safety and Securing Health Together initiatives, and any other relevant initiatives directed by Government.
- 1.9 This policy will be reviewed as necessary in the light of new legislation or working practices, and will in any event be reviewed at least once every three years.

Signed Convenor Date.....

Signed Chief Executive Date.....

2. ORGANISATION

2.1 General

2.1.1 Generally employees at all levels are responsible for the health and safety consequences of the work they or those under their supervision and/or control undertake. Requirements are imposed by specific health and safety legislation and the common law.

2.1.2 All employees are required to:-

- (i) Take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, staff under their supervision or control, and anyone who may be affected by their activities or omissions.
- (ii) Co-operate with the Council and senior management in order to comply with health and safety requirements.
- (iii) Promptly rectify dangerous situations, or ensure that senior managers are informed of the hazards so that remedial action can be taken.
- (iv) Report accidents, dangerous occurrences or matters causing ill health so that appropriate investigations may be carried out and measures taken to prevent recurrence. Separate guidance is available which details the accident reporting, investigation and recording procedure.
- (v) Ensure that they do not misuse anything provided to safeguard the health and safety of themselves or any other person.

2.1.3 Special responsibilities for health and safety matters lie with senior management, those employees with responsibility for the control of premises or work sites and for professional health and safety staff. These are outlined in general terms below, for information.

2.1.4 Work involving contractors is a special case where the health and safety responsibility of each of the parties to a contract must be clearly addressed. Guidance for specific instances may be obtained from the Safety Manager.

2.2 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring that Health and Safety matters are appropriately addressed throughout the Shetland Islands Council. In particular, he will ensure that:-

- (i) There is an effective Health and Safety Policy within the Council, maintaining compliance with the legal requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, together with all associated statutory provisions, and the policy is regularly reviewed and revised as necessary.
- (ii) There is a Safety Management System in place within the Council that ensures effective control of all hazards and compliance with relevant legislation.
- (iii) There are sufficient staff and resources available to all Departments of the Council to enable compliance with statutory requirements and to meet the desired standards of health and safety performance and management, including attainment of the targets set out in related Government strategies.
- (iv) Responsibility for health and safety throughout the Council is properly assigned, and communicated.
- (v) Sufficient information is received from managers and professional staff to enable health and safety performance monitoring so that remedial action can be initiated if that performance falls below acceptable standards.
- (vi) Appropriate procedures and information systems are available for the implementation of this policy.

2.3 Executive Director

2.3.1 Executive Directors are responsible for the health, safety and welfare of employees and of all other persons who may be affected by the work activity of their department. This includes visitors, pupils, residents and other members of public.

2.3.2 In particular, but not exclusively, Directors are responsible for :-

- (i) The implementation of this safety policy within their department.
- (ii) Developing and implementing safe systems of work and procedures appropriate to departmental operations and ensuring that these procedures are brought to the attention of relevant personnel.
- (iii) Ensuring that training needs of employees are met, and that staff employed are competent to undertake their duties safely. Providing appropriate supervision to ensure that they

do so. Maintaining adequate records to demonstrate that such training has been provided.

- (iv) Ensuring that systems are in place that require all injuries, incidents and work related ill health matters occurring as a result of SIC operations to be properly investigated and recorded, and that these are brought to the attention of the Safety Manager. Such information shall also be forwarded to the Chief Executive where appropriate.
- (v) Ensuring that recommendations arising from all health and safety investigations are acted upon as appropriate, and that findings with corporate application are adequately communicated.
- (vi) Ensuring that information is available to all relevant staff about hazards or potential hazards of all processes, substances and equipment in use, and what precautions may be necessary.
- (vii) Monitoring health and safety within the department's operations by examination of negative indicators, such as accident and absence management records, and by positive measures such as management inspections. Reporting the results of such monitoring to the Chief Executive.
- (viii) Encouraging Union Safety Representatives and all other employees to raise matters of concern in health and safety, and ensuring that such concerns are acted upon as appropriate. The establishment and regular meeting of Safety Forums at appropriate levels will provide such consultation arrangements.

2.4 Establishment or Service Manager

2.4.1 In addition to their general responsibilities, employees who have control of premises or a particular service are responsible for:-

- (i) The application and enforcement of this safety policy, Departmental codes and guidance within the establishment or service.
- (ii) Identifying potential hazards within the Establishment/ Service by routine inspections with a view to maintaining and improving health and safety standards.
- (iii) Ensuring that training needs are identified and implemented for all employees and that no employee is requested to do work involving potential hazards unless suitably qualified by training or experience to do that work.
- (iv) Promptly investigating all accidents, incidents and ill health matters occurring within the establishment or service,

implementing remedial action where appropriate and reporting the results to the Executive Director and the Safety Manager.

- (v) Ensuring that information is available to employees about the hazards of all materials, substances and equipment used. Where necessary, obtaining such information from suppliers or other appropriate sources. This will require maintaining up to date risk assessments for the establishment/service and pertinent written safe systems of work.
- (vi) Maintaining the premises in a safe and secure condition, ensuring that both employees and non-employees are not exposed to any hazard. Special care is required where the persons may be young, infirm or disabled. Security is particularly important where children may be tempted to visit the premises after working hours.
- (vii) Liaising with relevant technical staff when maintenance or refurbishment works are planned or undertaken, to ensure the needs of the occupants are recognised and relevant legislation complied with when works are undertaken.
- (viii) Consulting regularly with employees to ensure that all levels of staff are able to assist in raising standards and are made aware of the importance of safe working practices.
- (ix) Maintaining a compilation of all current, relevant health and safety documentation available for consultation as appropriate by any employee.
- (x) Ensuring that suitable procedures exist for routine inspection and maintenance of plant and equipment, and such items that develop hazardous faults are removed from service until repaired or replaced.
- (xi) Ensuring that health and safety is an integral part of procurement procedures for all goods and services.

2.5 Safety Manager/ Safety Officer

2.5.1 The Safety Manager and Safety Officer shall act in the capacity of Competent Persons as required and defined by the 'Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999'.

2.5.2 The Safety Manager and Safety Officer are responsible for advising at all levels on health, safety and welfare matters in connection with all Council activities. In particular, but not exclusively, this will include:-

- (i) Interpreting and assessing the impact of existing, new or proposed legislation and codes of practice etc. relating to health, safety and welfare, and advising Executive Directors, Heads of Service and other appropriate officers, Committees and the Council of implications for the Council's current and future operations, practices and policies.
- (ii) Monitoring performance in health and safety across the Authority by planned inspections, surveys and audits, and providing reports to responsible line managers.
- (iii) Monitoring management activity in health and safety and highlighting where additional measures are required.
- (iv) Maintaining central records and statistics of accidents, incidents and work related ill health and preparing regular reports highlighting trends or matters of general concern.
- (v) Identifying, in co-operation with line managers at all levels, programmes of training designed to stimulate and improve health and safety performance, and to promote clearer understanding and awareness at all levels. Where such training is delivered by a third party the Safety Manager will ensure that the training is adequate to meet the identified needs.
- (vi) Preparing and publicising general guidance on matters affecting health and safety throughout the Council.
- (vii) Maintaining information sources and contacts to enable health, safety or welfare queries to be answered within a reasonable timescale.
- (viii) Servicing the Councils Central Safety Committee and monitoring Departmental Safety Forums.

2.6 Safety Representatives

- 2.6.1 The Council undertakes to ensure that all employees are adequately represented during consultation on matters of health, safety and welfare at work.
- 2.6.2 Trades Union representatives have the rights and functions defined in the “Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977”, and associated guidance notes in the Health and Safety Commission booklet “Safety Representatives and Safety Committees”. Safety representatives on Ferry vessels have the rights and functions as defined in The Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Health and Safety at Work) (Amendment) Regulations 2001.
- 2.6.3 The Council recognises that Safety Representatives can make a positive contribution to the Council’s efforts towards maintaining a safe and healthy working environment, and such contributions are positively encouraged.
- 2.6.4 Representations from union safety representatives should be directed in the first instance to those officers in charge of the service, establishment or vessel. It is accepted that Executive Directors and the Safety Manager may be required to become involved in some matters.
- 2.6.5 Non-union safety representatives may be elected by departmental staff to represent them at Safety Forums and at the Central Safety Consultative Committee. This representation is supplementary to the agreed trades union representation provisions.
- 2.6.6 Non-union representatives will be provided with such instruction and training and time resources as is necessary to enable them to carry out their functions in a competent manner.
- 2.6.7 All recognised Trades Unions will be afforded representation on the Central Safety Consultative Committee, and on relevant Safety Forums.

2.7 Safety Committees

- 2.7.1 The Council undertakes to ensure the provision of consultative bodies to consider health and safety matters. There will be a Central Safety Consultative Committee attended by staff and Union representatives. This Committee will deal with corporate health and safety issues.
- 2.7.2 Departmental Safety Forums will be held to enable consultation on health and safety issues at this level. Further Forums shall be provided at other levels as appropriate to ensure all staff members have adequate consultation on these matters.
- 2.7.3 Forums will have access to the Council Safety Consultative Committee through safety representatives and the submission of reports via the Safety Manager.
- 2.7.4 The Central Safety Consultative Committee and Departmental Forums will meet at regular intervals to enable formal consultation between senior management, staff and safety representatives.
- 2.7.5 The Safety Committee and Forums are concerned with all matters affecting health, safety and welfare arising from the Council's operations. The forum for ferries will also include environmental concerns. They receive reports on various matters, and safety representatives are encouraged to submit items for the agenda.
- 2.7.6 Recommendations arising from Safety Committee meetings will be actioned where appropriate by officers of the Council, or may be referred to the appropriate Committee for further discussion where any Council decision is required.
- 2.7.7 All employees are encouraged to contribute to the work of the safety forums and Committee, but it must be emphasised that such bodies are concerned with strategic decision making, not the day-to-day hazards encountered in the workplace which should be addressed and corrected at supervisory/management levels whenever possible

2.8 Contractors

- 2.8.1 SIC has a responsibility to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that works carried out on its behalf by contractors are carried out in a safe and healthy manner.
- 2.8.2 In any contract awarded for building works, only those contractors who can demonstrate that they are capable of undertaking such works in a safe manner will be permitted to tender for the works where a tendering exercise is undertaken. In order to ascertain the suitability of building works contractors, an assessment of the validity of the contractor's safety policy will be required and, where applicable, will require a method statement outlining the procedures and precautions to be implemented during the works.
- 2.8.3 Where a tendering exercise has not been progressed the same standards will, nevertheless, apply and must be adhered to.
- 2.8.4 Any employee responsible at any stage for contract works must ensure, so far as is possible, that the standards of health and safety achieved on the contract are no less than would apply if the Authority were undertaking the works on its own behalf. SIC must not award any contract (for building works, for services or any other matter), unless it is satisfied that health and safety standards will be maintained.
- 2.8.5 Contract documentation must clearly allocate responsibility for Health and Safety matters, and officers exercising any degree of control over the execution of the contract must ensure that those responsibilities are understood, accepted and applied.

3. ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 General

No single document will suffice to secure the operation of this Policy, because of the diverse nature of the functions of departments, and the wide variety of subjects to be considered. Additional corporate policies will support this Policy and individual Departmental procedures will also be developed.

3.2 Departmental Procedures

Departmental procedures must be prepared under the authority of Heads of Departments following consultation with union safety representatives and the safety advisor as appropriate. These documents will describe the potential hazards of the work being considered, and the measures to be taken to reduce risk from those hazards to an acceptable level.

3.3 General Council Procedures

- (i) Procedures with Council-wide application will be prepared when necessary giving guidance for all departments on particular subjects. These codes will be prepared by the Safety Manager, following consultation as appropriate, and will be issued under the authority of the Central Safety Consultative Committee.
- (ii) Where such codes are prepared, the standards required will not be less than those allowed for in statutory provision or approved codes of practice.

3.4 Compilation

- (i) Heads of Services and establishments are responsible for ensuring that a compilation of all current applicable documentation is maintained within the establishment and is available for consultation by any employee. This shall include, but is not limited to, risk assessments, guidance notes and applicable legislation or manufacturers documentation.
- (ii) The Safety Manager will maintain copies of all current Council wide health and safety documents, and will make arrangements for such documents to be placed on the Council's Intranet site.