

Dawlish Town Council

Policy on the Workplace Environment

1. Statement of Policy

Environmental factors such as temperature, lighting, ventilation, etc. can, if poorly regulated, have an adverse effect on efficient working and can affect health. These factors can have a direct effect on health, e.g. very high temperatures can lead to heat stress and heat exhaustion, or may combine with other factors to contribute to mental stress. Physical factors in the workplace, e.g. poor layout or overcrowding, can lead to common types of accident such as tripping or striking against objects. Overcrowding and excessive clutter in the workplace can also have an adverse effect on the ability of people to escape swiftly in the event of fire.

There is legislation covering the working environment. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Section 2(2)(e) requires employers to provide an environment that is safe, without risks to health, and has adequate welfare facilities. The Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 expand on this duty.

The above regulations apply to all workplaces but are of particular application within buildings. They do not apply to construction sites (which have their own regulations) but do apply to temporary work sites. Most of the requirements do not apply to open-air agricultural or forestry workplaces. The exceptions to this are the requirements for sanitary conveniences, washing facilities and drinking water which must, so far as is reasonably practicable, be provided. See appendix 1 for a summary of the requirements of the Regulations.

The Council is committed to providing a working environment that is conducive to efficient working, that is safe and without risks to health and that meets or exceeds all legal requirements.

2. Organisation and Arrangements

2.1 Town Clerk

The Town Clerk should be the first port of call for staff with concerns about the working environment. In some cases the staff member may not have direct control over the working environment, but should be consulted and will be able to influence decisions taken regarding conditions. They will:-

- so far as it is in their control do so, ensure that workplace environment is safe and without risks to health. Appendix 1 summarises the Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations and the headings can be used as a useful list of topics to be considered;
- in planning any new workplace or any major renovation of an existing workplace, consider the requirements of the Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations. Summary is given in appendix 1
- will endeavour to ensure that the working environment provided within the buildings at the Manor House and Leonard Lamb Community Centre site is safe and without risks to health and meets the minimum requirements of the Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations;
- will liaise with staff and others as appropriate on matters dealt with in this policy.
- will advise staff, as appropriate, on health and safety issues relating to the working environment.

2.2 All staff

- have a responsibility to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected. They should make proper use of any plant or equipment provided to improve health and safety in the working environment and should report any defects that they discover.

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Appendix 1

Summary of the Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regs. 1992

- Reg 1 Names the regulations and gives a commencement date.
- Reg 2 Defines terms.
- Reg 3 Specifies where the regulations apply and where they do not.
- Reg 4 Places responsibility for meeting the requirements on employers and also those in control of workplaces. An exception is made in respect of a self-employed person undertaking his own work.
- Reg 5 **Maintenance.**
- Requires that equipment provided to meet the requirements of the Regulations is maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair and where appropriate, is subject to a system of maintenance
- Reg 6 **Ventilation.**
- Enclosed workplaces should be provided with effective and suitable means of ventilation. In some enclosed workplaces, e.g. those without opening windows to the outside of the building, mechanical ventilation may be required.
- Reg 7 **Temperature.**
- Deals with temperature in indoor workplaces. The regulation requires temperature during working hours to be "reasonable". A minimum temperature of 16 degrees Celsius (or 13 where the work involves severe physical effort) is mentioned in the Approved Code of Practice (which has a special status in law), but no maximum temperature is given. Generally the comfort range is taken to be 16 to 24 degrees Celsius, although humidity has a significant effect on how comfortable people actually feel.
- This regulation also prohibits heating or cooling of the workplace by any method that emits "injurious or offensive" fumes. A further requirement is to provide thermometers in workplaces within a building.

Reg 8 **Lighting.**

Lighting within a workplace should be “suitable and sufficient” and should, so far as is reasonably practicable, be by natural light. The HSE has published separate guidance on lighting at work. This regulation also requires emergency lighting to be provided in any room where failure of artificial lighting may result in persons at work being exposed to danger.

Reg 9 **Cleanliness.**

Workplaces, including furniture and fittings, must be kept sufficiently clean. Surfaces of floors, walls and ceilings of workplaces must be of a construction that allows them to be kept clean. Waste material must not be allowed to accumulate in the workplace unless it is in suitable receptacles.

Reg 10 **Room dimensions and space.**

Rooms where people work should have sufficient floor area, height and free space. In general each person should have at least 11 cubic metres of free space (excluding that part of the room over 3 metres high).

Reg 11 **Workstations and seating.**

Places where people work should be suitable for the individual(s) who work there and also for the type and nature of the work being done. Outdoor workplaces should, so far as is reasonably practicable, give protection from adverse weather, permit people to leave swiftly in an emergency and be free from slip or trip hazards. Where work can be done seated then a seat must be provided and, if necessary, a footrest. Any seat provided has to be suitable for the person for whom it is provided.

Reg 12 **Condition of floors and traffic routes.**

Floors have to be suitable for the purpose for which they are used and be free from holes and obstructions likely to cause people to slip, trip or fall. Slopes should not be excessive and surfaces should not be uneven or slippery. Handrails should be provided on staircases.

Reg 13 Falls or falling objects.

Suitable methods have to be in place to prevent people falling from a height or being struck by a falling object. So far as reasonably practicable methods other than personal protective equipment, information, instruction, training or supervision should be used to control the risk. Where some risk remains this should be indicated.

Reg 14 Glazed windows, doors and wall panels.

Windows, glazed doors and walls or partitions with glass panels must be adequately protected against breakage and also be appropriately marked. This applies where there is a risk to people who may come into contact with the glass. In general it applies to doors where the glass is at shoulder height or below and to glass panels in walls where they are at waist height or below. Adequate protection would be use of safety glass e.g. laminated or toughened glass. Safety glass is glass that does not break in such a way as to produce large sharp pieces. Wired glass is often used in vision panels in doors.

Reg 15 Opening of windows etc.

Windows, skylights and ventilators should be capable of being opened without risk to the person doing the opening. Windows should not open to a position that puts anyone at risk. This covers the risk of people colliding with the open window and also of falling out of the window.

Reg 16 Cleaning of windows etc.

It must be possible to clean windows safely. Ladders may be used to reach the outside of windows but these must rest on firm level ground and if more than six metres long, ladders must be tied to suitable anchorage points. Provision of anchorage points for safety harnesses, use of travelling ladders or suspended cradles or windows which turn inwards to allow cleaning should also be considered.

Reg 17 Organisation of pedestrian and vehicle traffic routes

Pedestrians and vehicles should be able to circulate safely in a workplace. Traffic should not pose a risk to people working near pedestrian or vehicle routes. There should be sufficient separation between pedestrians and vehicles. Signs should be posted on traffic routes where this improves safety.

Reg 18 **Safety of doors and gates.**

Doors and gates have to be so constructed as to be safe to use. Sliding doors should be provided with a device to prevent the door coming off its track when in use. Upward opening doors and gates should be fitted with a device to prevent them from dropping down. Powered doors should not cause injury by trapping people. Powered doors should be capable of being opened manually in the event of power failure. Doors that swing both ways should be fitted with vision panels.

Reg 19 **Escalators.**

Escalators and moving walkways should be fitted with one or more emergency stop. They should incorporate safety devices as necessary and should function safely.

Reg 20 **Toilets.**

Toilets (sanitary conveniences) should be provided in sufficient numbers and should be readily accessible. They should be adequately ventilated, well lit and kept clean and tidy. Separate conveniences should be provided for men and women unless each convenience is in a separate room with a lockable door.

Reg 21 **Washing facilities.**

Adequate washing facilities should be provided at readily accessible places. They should be provided close to every toilet but may additionally be provided elsewhere. Hot and cold water must be provided as must soap and towels or hand dryers. Rooms containing washing facilities must be well ventilated and lit and kept in a clean and orderly condition.

Reg 22 **Drinking water.**

Drinking water must be provided in the workplace. Drinking water supplies should be adequately marked and be readily accessible. Cups must be provided unless the drinking water is in the form of a jet from which people can drink without cups.

Reg 23 **Accommodation for clothing.**

Suitable accommodation must be provided for clothing. This is for personal items of clothing which are not worn at work and also for items of workwear provided by the employer and not taken home.

Reg 24 **Changing facilities.**

Where an employee has to wear special clothing for work then the employer has to provide changing facilities unless the person can change in another room without risking health or propriety.

Reg 25 **Rest facilities.**

Rest facilities have to be provided and have to be readily accessible. Where food is regularly eaten in the workplace then facilities should be provided for this. Where food may become contaminated if eaten in the workplace then the facilities should include a place to eat meals. Non-smokers using rest facilities have to be protected from discomfort caused by tobacco smoke. Pregnant women and nursing mothers should be provided with suitable rest facilities including, if necessary, the facility to lie down.