

Health and Safety Staff / Learner Guide

Introduction:

Vocational Training Services are committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment for all employees, learners and others. The company will also ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that the health & safety of visitors or others who may be affected by its work are not endangered in any way.

The Health & Safety Statutory Regulations and operational guidelines contained in this Handbook forms the underlying basis on which the company carries out its business.

No one should, by their own acts or omissions, endanger the Health & Safety of themselves or others.

Employees and learners are reminded that they have duties and obligations under the act and any breach of these duties could lead to the prosecution of Vocational Training services or the individual concerned.

Health & Safety Policy:

The company policy is a legal requirement under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974. This indicates that all activities are carried out safely and without risk to health, safety & welfare, so far as is reasonably practicable.

All employees & learners should make themselves aware of the contents of the Health & Safety Policy.

Although the Managing Director has ultimate responsibility, all employees and learners have an important part to play in the successful implementation of the health & safety policy.

Team Leaders, Senior Administrators and Tutors are directly responsible for implementing the policy in their area of activity. They must ensure that anyone under their supervision adheres to all instruction and procedures regarding health & safety.

Every employee & learner is expected to work to safe operational standards and follow Health & Safety guidelines to maintain a safe & efficient organisation. They must also report all hazards & unsafe activities/near misses to their immediate supervisor for reporting, investigation and corrective action. Failure to follow safety procedures will result in disciplinary action.

The company will do everything reasonably practicable to provide a safe working environment by providing proper design of equipment and facilities for all areas of business activity. The correct information, supervision and training will be provided to ensure that employee's and learners can carry out their daily tasks to the highest possible standard of health & safety.

Regular safety meetings will take place to ensure compliance with all aspects of health & safety law and the co-operation of employees, learners & others.

Vocational Training Services promote a positive health & safety culture, utilising all relevant Approved Codes of Practice and comply with all British and European Standards.

**Responsibility for Health & Safety procedures
(Westcliff & Colchester Offices)**

The person with the ultimate responsibility for Health & Safety

Karen Pawsey: Managing Director

The person(s) with daily operational responsibilities for Health & Safety

Gail Cooksey: General Manager

Or

Jan Tassell: Health & Safety Monitoring Officer

Responsibility for safe systems & practices in the workplace

Marian Shaw : Area Manager South Essex
Elizabeth Buxton : Team Leader North Essex

Responsibility for Display Screen Equipment

Craig Alexander: Administrator (IT)

Responsibility for staff welfare and safe working environment

Gail Carroll: General Manager

Employees, learners & others are reminded that they have a statutory duty to take care of the health & safety of themselves and of any others who may be affected by their work or actions.
A copy of the Health & Safety Policy will be displayed on the Health & Safety Notice Board.

Responsibility of Managers, Team leaders & Senior staff:

- Develop skills and attributes to promote & maintain a positive safety culture.
- To ensure the staff they are responsible for are adequately trained in tasks allocated to them.
- Promote awareness of all health & safety issues and regulations and ensure that the correct amount of supervision is awarded to all employees, learners & others.
- Instigate progressive safety training across all activities and encourage open and honest discussions in all incidents relating to health & safety.
- Provide induction training to all new staff and learners.
- Ensure that all accidents/incidents/near misses are reported and investigated in the correct manner.
- To ensure that all issues raised by employees, learners or others are passed to relevant people.
- To take extra care in the training needs of young people and inexperienced learners.
- To be responsible for ensuring that all First Aid equipment is readily available and in line with current regulations.
- To ensure that suitable Fire Fighting equipment is maintained and available for use by the relevant (competent) persons.
- Ensure all employees, learners and others maintain a clean and safe working environment and practice good housekeeping in all areas of activity.

Responsibility of Employees and Learners:

- Follow all safety procedures, policies and systems to maintain a positive safety culture.
- Ensure all accidents, incidents & near misses are reported to their immediate supervisor.
- Comply with all health & safety arrangements as applicable.
- Follow the correct safety procedure in each task they perform or asked to perform to ensure safe practices are adhered to.
- If unsure of any safety procedure, ask questions until task is completely understood.
- Co-operate fully in all accident/incident investigations, stating actual facts and not opinions.
- Act in a safe and responsible manner at all times and refrain from any kind of horseplay.
- Communicate with the General Manager immediately if: - they have a disability (permanent or temporary), that could effect the safety of themselves or others or if they become (or believe they may be) pregnant.
- Make themselves aware as to the location of the following: - First Aid Box (+ First Aiders & appointed persons), Accident Book, Fire Protection Equipment (+ sufficiently trained Fire marshals), Emergency Escape Routes and Assembly Points and the Health & Safety Law Information Poster.

Induction:

Induction is provided to ensure that all employees, learners and others receive basic Health & Safety information upon starting employment or training with the company. This is to comply with current regulations.

It is the company's policy to give training to its employees and learners not only to comply with the minimum requirements but to secure a continuing safe & healthy working environment for employees, learners and all who may be affected by the company's activities.

The company competent person will ensure this induction is carried out as soon as possible after the employee/learner commences employment/learning.

Fire/Emergency Evacuation – Westcliff Office:

Should it be the case that an employee, learner becomes aware of a fire, the first course of action is to sound the alarm. There is a push-glass alarm button on the wall at each fire exit. These can easily be broken to sound an audible alarm which will ensure evacuation takes place under suitable conditions.

A nominated person (receptionist) will contact the fire brigade while the Fire & Emergency Officer supervises the evacuation of the offices.

No attempt should be made to fight the fire unless it is at an early stage and the person has been adequately trained and is recognised as a company Fire Marshal.

Should it be absolutely necessary to attack the fire to ensure the safe evacuation of others, then the appropriate fire extinguisher should be used to contain the fire long enough to allow effective evacuation.

Guidance on the correct extinguisher to use is posted at the relevant fire extinguisher points and there is a guide printed below.

If you are working alongside a colleague who has a physical impairment that would prevent them from being aware that the alarm has been sounded, then you should provide every assistance to ensure their safe evacuation.

Individuals should make sure that they are aware of the fire assembly point:-

VTS car parking spaces, rear of building, far end of car park:

Once the alarm has been triggered, all employees, learners and others must evacuate the building and proceed to the above mentioned assembly point. Fire Marshals will man each fire exit, in the relevant suite of each floor to ensure safe egress for all employees, learners & others. The fire officer would then check all rooms and close doors (if safe to do so) and collect the signing in book before being the last to leave the suite. A roll call will be taken by the fire officer (competent person) to ensure everyone has successfully evacuated the building. Only once you have been released by the senior person on site may you leave the area. This is essential to ensure that all personnel are accounted for as soon as possible.

Individuals must not re-enter the building until the all clear has been given by the company fire officer or the officer in charge of the Fire Service at the scene.

Fire Extinguishers:

RED (Water)	Cooling	Class A
BLACK (CO2)	Smotherers	B,C and electrical
CREAM (Foam)	Smotherers	B
BLUE (Powder)	Cools & Smotherers	General A,B & electrical

Class A: Wood, Paper, Straw, Textiles etc.

Class B: Flammable Liquids, e.g. - Petrol, Oils, Paints, Solvents.

Class C: Flammable Gasses, e.g. - Methane, Acetylene

Class D: Metals e.g. - Sodium, Magnesium. Specialists are required to tackle these fires.

Fire/Emergency Evacuation – Colchester Office:

Should it be the case that an employee, learner becomes aware of a fire, the first course of action is to sound the alarm. There is a push-glass alarm button on the wall at the entrance to the suite. This can easily be broken to sound an audible alarm which will ensure evacuation takes place under suitable conditions.

Building security will contact the fire brigade while the Fire & Emergency Officer supervises the evacuation of the offices.

No attempt should be made to fight the fire unless it is at an early stage and the person has been adequately trained and is recognised as a company Fire Marshal.

Should it be absolutely necessary to attack the fire to ensure the safe evacuation of others, then the appropriate fire extinguisher should be used to contain the fire long enough to allow effective evacuation.

Guidance on the correct extinguisher to use is posted at the relevant fire extinguisher points and there is a guide printed below.

If you are working alongside a colleague who has a physical impairment that would prevent them from being aware that an alarm has been sounded, then you should provide every assistance to ensure their safe evacuation.

Individuals should make sure that they are aware of the fire assembly point:-

At rear of building, away from main entrance.

Once the alarm has been triggered, all employees, learners and others must evacuate the building and proceed to the above mentioned assembly point. Fire Marshals will man each fire exit, which are located on the right hand side of lift and straight ahead through additional offices to ensure safe egress for all employees, learners & others. The fire officer would then check all rooms and close doors (if safe to do so) and collect the signing in book before being the last to leave the suite. A roll call will be taken by the fire officer (competent person) to ensure everyone has successfully evacuated the building. Only once you have been released by the senior person on site may you leave the area. This is essential to ensure that all personnel are accounted for as soon as possible.

Individuals must not re-enter the building until the all clear has been given by the company fire officer or the officer in charge of the Fire Service at the scene.

Fire Extinguishers

RED (Water)	Cooling	Class A
BLACK (CO2)	Smothers	B,C and electrical
CREAM (Foam)	Smothers	B
BLUE (Powder)	Cools & Smothers	General A,B & electrical

Class A: Wood, Paper, Straw, Textiles etc.

Class B: Flammable Liquids, e.g. - Petrol, Oils, Paints, Solvents.

Class C: Flammable Gasses, e.g. - Methane, Acetylene

Class D: Metals e.g. - Sodium, Magnesium. (Specialists are required to tackle these fires.)

No Smoking Policy – Westcliff & Colchester:

Smoking is prohibited within the workplace, training facilities and the building. Anyone wishing to smoke must do so outside of the building in the designated area only:-

Westcliff – Area in front of main entrance at the bottom of fire escape stairs

Colchester – Outside of main building by the security office.

Smoking waste should be disposed of in the appropriate receptacle and the floor area should be kept free from such waste.

Any employee found smoking on company premises will be disciplined.

Manual Handling Operations:

Many injuries occur through manual handling tasks that could easily be avoided if the correct method and application is applied to the lift or move.

The majority of these are back related which build up over a period of time due to bad lifting technique.

Vocational Training Services recognise their duty to comply with the following regulations:-

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992.

These regulations emphasize a duty to be followed by employer and employees.

Employers Duty:

- As far as is reasonably practicable, avoid hazardous manual handling activities.
- For any hazardous lifts that cannot be avoided, a suitable & sufficient Risk Assessment must be carried out and acted upon.
- So far as is reasonably practicable, reduce the risk of injury from any manual handling task and provide mechanical assistance where possible. Where this is impractical, further examination in ways to reduce the risk should be employed.

Employees Duty:

- Comply with any safe system of work regarding manual handling put in place by the employer.
- Apply due care and attention to their actions regarding health & safety and to others who may be affected by their actions.
- Fully co-operate with employer to ensure a safe working environment is achieved.

Planning is very important in any kind of lift. Before picking up the object, know how you will lift it, the direction you are taking, how long it will take you to get there and is the way clear of obstacles.

As a starting point, ask the question, “Must this object be moved manually?”

If the answer is “yes”, examine the object and make sure:

- The object is secure and will not move or become unstable during the lift.
- There are no sharp edges or tears that will cause abrasions to skin.
- The correct number of people are available to make the lift (if object is large)
- During transportation, vision is not impaired.
- You select the easiest route, (this may not necessarily be the shortest route).
- The place where you want to put the load down is free of obstacles & clutter.

When lifting, the correct mechanism must be used to allow the correct support to the spine.

- Try and avoid leaning over the object, if possible only lift from thigh to chest height.
- To prepare for the lift – squat by bending at the hips and knees. Your ears, shoulders and hips form nearly a straight line. Keep your feet shoulder width apart and your feet turned out.
- Making sure you are close to the object, ensure your footing is solid, and keep your feet out and your heels down.
- Keep the load close to your body and keep a firm hold on the object.
- Keep your back straight as you rise up from the squatting position using your legs. Do not bend over at the neck, shoulders or waist.
- Make sure you can see where you are going and look ahead, not down at the load.
- Remember that there is a difference between what people can lift and what they can safely lift.

When unloading, remember the following points:-

- Try to unload onto a height as close as possible to the level you are transporting the object.
- Bend your knees and lower your body with the load. Keep your back straight and do not bend over the load.
- Keep hands and fingers away from the bottom of the object when placing down.

When reaching overhead:-

- If above shoulder height, use a stepping stool or ladder. Never stand on tip-toe, stacked objects or chairs.
- Allow your arms and legs to do all the work. Be sure that you can handle the load safely and have a pre-planned place to set the load down.

Large and heavy objects:-

- Allocate as many people as possible to manage the lift comfortably.
- One (competent) person to direct the lift.
- Work as a team and lift together.
- Keep the load level when carrying.
- Place load down together.

Specialised handling equipment will allow you to move large and awkward objects safely. Always select the right equipment for the task. If in doubt, please ask to ensure best safe practice.

When using carts and hand trucks:-

- Place heavy/large objects on the bottom with the main load over the axles. Place lighter/smaller objects on the top. (Be careful not to obscure view).
- Ensure awkward and loose objects are securely strapped to cart or truck.
- Push the load forward with legs and upper body. Hand positions should be between upper thigh and chest position when pushing.
- Avoid pulling the load as this increases the strain.

Hoists and other weight bearing mechanisms:-

- Always match strength to the load
- Proper inspection should be carried out before using – look for knots, twists, frays and sharp edges.
- Wear any specialised protective clothing that you have been issued.

Display Screen Equipment:

Vocational Training Services recognise their duty to comply with the following regulations:-
Health & Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992.

These regulations emphasize a duty to be followed employer and employees.

Employer's responsibilities:-

- Complete and action Risk Assessments on all work stations to ensure that the correct protective and preventative controls are in operation.
- Ensure that all hazards listed are dealt with and acted upon.
- Update, implement and maintain Health & Safety Training.

Employee's responsibility:-

- Comply with all company safety procedures relating to Display Screen Equipment.
- Make positive contributions to achieve best practice in all health & safety training methods and the appointment of Competent Persons.

How often you use your Display Screen Equipment and its purpose in your daily routine will provide details as to your status as a "user":-

- The use of Display Screen Equipment is dependant to the individual's task.
- There is no personal choice as to whether the individual can use/not use the equipment.
- Specialised skills or relevant training with Display Screen Equipment is necessary for the individual to perform their task.
- Display Screen Equipment is used continually by the operator for periods of one hour or more on a regular basis.
- Display Screen Equipment is used in this manner on a daily basis.
- A requirement of the task is that the operator needs to input information at a very fast rate to perform the task.
- High levels of performance and concentration are required by the operator to perform the necessary task. (Error may be crucial).

The correct procedure for operation & placement at workstations:-

- When sitting at the workstation, the posture should be comfortable and relaxed. Do not lean too far back or stoop forward.
- Ensure your seat is adjusted to the correct position.
- To avoid strains to neck and spine, sit with the keyboard and monitor directly in front of you so that you do not twist at an un-natural angle.
- The screen should be 50-60cm away from your eyes.
- The monitor should have a built in swivel & tilt feature.
- Ensure that the screen is cleaned regularly.
- Keep your desk (and underneath your desk) tidy and free from clutter.
- Refrain from overstretching or performing repeated awkward movements.
- Combine tasks involving sitting and moving around to avoid strains.
- Adjust monitor/screen on desk to suit the operator.
- Your eyes should be level with the top of the VDU.
- The hips should be slightly higher than the knees
- Feet should be flat on the floor or on a footrest.
- Ensure good keying technique, use soft keystrokes and rest your fingers lightly on the keys to create a smooth action.
- To reduce the use of the mouse, use the appropriate short cut keys.
- Laptops are not ergonomically designed for prolonged use. When spending increased time in the office, a relevant connection to desktop should be used.

Office Safety:

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health:

Vocational Training Services recognise their duty to comply with the following regulations:-
COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) Regulations 1999.

During training and work placements, assessors and learners will come into contact with substances listed under the COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) Regulations 1999.

Risk assessments will be carried out on all activities that involve the above regulations including relevant control measures, suitable personal protective equipment and the correct method of disposal of waste.

All employees and learners will be provided with such protection as is adequate to protect themselves from any hazard or risks and receive comprehensive training to the type of work carried out.

Safety Sign:

Vocational Training Services recognise their duty to comply with the following regulations:-
The Health & Safety (Safety Signs & Signals) Regulations 1996.

Legislation requires that a safety sign must be displayed where there is a risk that cannot be controlled by any other means.

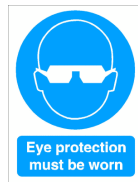
The European Safety Signs Directive has standardised safety signs so that an illustration appears with the relevant wording to avoid any misunderstanding and risk to safety.

Listed below are examples of 4 of the main categories of safety Signs you will need to be aware of:-



Prohibition
(Must not do)

Colour:-
Red



Mandatory
(Must do)

Colour:-
Blue



Hazard/Warning

Colour:-
Yellow



Safe Condition

Colour:-
Green

Health & Safety in an office environment is very important and requires the following points to be met:-

- Always fill filing cabinets from the bottom up (they must not be top heavy).
- Ensure you close all cabinet draws/doors after use.
- Cables and trailing leads should be neatly tied under desks and tables.
- Do not use chairs as a stepping stool or to gain leverage.
- Ensure that clutter is kept away from work areas and that passages are clear of obstacles.
- Containers with hot drinks and liquids should be kept away from pc's and laptops.
- Avoid placing large/heavy objects on cabinets that are above shoulder height.
- Do not overfill waste bins, empty if contents becomes too much.

Young Persons:

Young workers may be particularly at risk from workplace hazards because of their lack of awareness of existing or potential risks, immaturity or inexperience.

The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires risk assessments to be carried out to take into account their lack of experience in the following areas:-

- Young persons cannot be employed to perform a task that is beyond their physical and psychological capacity.
- Involves harmful exposure to radiation or agents (toxic, carcinogenic etc).
- Involves a risk to health from extreme cold, heat, noise or vibration.

The use of Company Cars/Vehicle Usage:

Employees who drive a company car or who are authorised to drive on company business in a vehicle owned by the employee must adhere to the following rules:-

- Pay all fines incurred through not complying with road safety legislation.
- Ensure vehicle is fit to drive and servicing is kept up to date.
- Drive sensibly and ensure all road safety guidelines are met.
- Keep driving licence clean and endorsement free.
- Present vehicle in a clean and tidy condition to represent company on all official business.
- Do not drive when tired or after consuming any units of alcohol.
- Refrain from using a mobile phone while driving unless the vehicle is fitted with a hands free kit.
- When vehicle is unattended, lock all doors and keep valuables out of sight.

Risk Assessments:

Vocational Training Services will perform, monitor and review all risk assessments as necessary under the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (section 3).

The following steps need to take place in all Risk Assessments:-

- **Identify the Hazard** – Something with the potential to cause harm.
- **Assess the Risk** – The likelihood that harm is realised and the severity of the outcome.
- **Decide Action** – Take into account the level of risk identified. Preventative measures should be identified before protective measures.
- **Record Details** – If findings of the assessment are significant, a written record must be kept.
- Significant findings will include:-
 - All major hazards identified.
 - Control measures and their effectiveness
 - Those affected by the hazards identified.
- **Review** – To ensure Risk Assessments remain valid, routine reviews need to take place.

Risk Assessments must be carried by people with suitable & sufficient training who are recognised as being competent to do so.

Workplace Regulations:

Vocational Training Services recognise their duty to comply with the following regulations:-
The Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992

To maintain the objectives of these regulations, regular inspections of the workplace and relevant areas are carried out by the nominated competent person
These inspections also provide an opportunity to review the policy's continuing effectiveness and to identify any areas where changes could be needed

Topics covered at inspection should include:-

- Maintenance of the workplace and all equipment being used.
- Ventilation, temperature and lighting conditions.
- Cleanliness of inspected areas.
- Workspace allocation.
- Workstation design and arrangements.
- "Traffic" routes and floors.
- Glazing, doors, sanitary and washing facilities.
- Drinking water and facilities for rest & meals.

Staff/Learner Personal Safety:

Vocational Training Services are committed to ensuring the Health, Safety & Welfare of all employees and learners while at work and travelling to and from work.

In our daily lives, we all want to live freely and safely whether we are at home, work or out and about. However, we do live in a more aggressive society and the fear of personal assault can be a constant thought in our minds.

It is important to remember that most assaults are on men by men and with the correct application of thought and procedure, the risk of personal attack can be reduced to the lowest level.

Whether you are walking to or from work, to see a client or just out and about on your lunch break you should take note of the following advice:-

- Always look confident and keep a good posture. A confident person is much less likely to be attacked.
- Hold your head up and be aware of your surroundings and any potential hazards.
- Avoid confrontation, stay calm and talk your way out of any potentially hazardous situations. Do not meet aggression with aggression.
- Ensure valuables or cash are kept out of sight and that bags are kept close to the body.
- Keep to recognised routes that are well lit and populated by occupied buildings.
- If you carry a mobile phone or other communication device, keep it switched on.
- Plan your journey in advance to avoid entering areas you are unfamiliar with. Remember that appearances can be deceptive and people are not always what they seem.

People tend to feel safer in their cars but the following precautions should be followed:-

- Plan your journey and if possible be a member of a national breakdown organisation.
- Keep all doors locked and all valuables out of sight (ideally locked away in the boot).

- Use well lit car parks in pedestrian areas when parking your vehicle (especially if you are not returning until after dark). Check back seat before entering (use a torch if necessary).
- Do not leave your engine running or your car open whilst paying for petrol or parking.

If you are confronted by a stranger, try and remain calm and speak gently. Try to get away from the situation as quickly as possible. Walking fast is usually safer than trying to run. Do not look back. If you carry a personal alarm, this will disorientate the attacker and create vital seconds for you to get away. If you believe you are being followed, cross and re-cross the street. If they persist, move to the nearest populated area and call the police.

Physical defence should only be used as a last resort. It will limit your options and commits you to a fight you could easily lose. Remember that it is not weak to walk away from violence.

If a vehicle stops next to you and you feel threatened, turn and move quickly in the opposite direction. People can turn faster than cars, make for the nearest public place and call the police.

Report any incident (no matter how trivial) to your immediate supervisor. This action may prevent someone else experiencing the same event.

(The above guidance on Personal Safety is taken from Living Safely, a documented brochure supplied by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust).

This Staff / Learner Guide has been designed to provide an introduction to Health & Safety awareness and to create a positive safety culture in the individual that can be utilised fully in the workplace. If there is any Health & Safety regulation that you are unsure of or a procedure/situation that you are unhappy about, always consult your immediate supervisor for advice and best practice techniques.