

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

### **STATEMENT OF SAFETY POLICY**

#### **GENERAL**

The health and safety of all employees of Dover District Council is not only a prime responsibility of Councillors, Corporate Management Team, Managers, Supervisors and Team Leaders, but also of each and every employee. This responsibility extends to the safety of others who may be affected by the acts or omissions of those undertaking works for, or, on behalf of, the Council.

With this in mind, it is the declared aim of Dover District Council to ensure there is an internal culture that will pursue and maintain a "Best Practice" policy for health and safety. Specific health and safety risk assessment procedures will be part of the decision-making process at all levels of the Council. Significant findings will be documented.

To ensure continuous monitoring and improvement of health and safety, performance monitoring and targets will be included in Performance Reports.

In meeting this policy particular attention will be paid to the provision and maintenance of:-

- Plant, Equipment and Systems of Work that are Safe.
- Safe arrangements for the Use, Handling, Storage and Transport of articles and substances.
- Sufficient Information, Instruction, Training and Supervision to enable employees to identify hazards, minimise risks and to contribute positively to health and safety at work.
- Safe Places of Work with safe Access and Egress.
- A safe and healthy Working Environment.
- Suitable and sufficient Welfare facilities for all employees.
- Health and Safety Risk Assessments

#### **RESOURCES**

The Council will seek to ensure that the implementation of this Health & Safety policy is not hindered by a lack of adequate resources.

#### **RISK ASSESSMENTS**

All work places and work activities of the Council are to be subject to initial and periodic assessments to identify hazards, evaluate significant risks and, where appropriate, develop and introduce control measures. Competent persons will undertake these "Risk Assessments".

All levels of management are required to apply "Best Practice" principles when assessing the health and safety risks and control measures associated with the work under their control.

## **CONTRACTORS**

It is the policy of this Council that, where it contracts, orders or lets work or services to a third party, the standards for Health and Safety required by this policy, including any approved supporting documents, will be the minimum required of the third party.

To ensure this occurs, all work undertaken for the Council by non-employees (e.g. contractors, consultants, concessionaires, volunteers, etc.) will be subject to pre selection assessments to ensure those undertaking the work are competent to manage the health and safety aspects. In addition, Divisions must have in place procedures for periodic, recorded, monitoring of all non-employee and contractors work. Post contract evaluation records will also ensure only competent contractors are used.

## **EMPLOYEES RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Council, whilst recognising its own duties and responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, reminds all employees of their responsibilities under the same Act:-

- They must take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.
- They must co-operate with the Council to ensure that it can discharge its legal responsibilities.
- They must not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of Health, Safety or Welfare at work.
- They must report all accidents and dangerous occurrences in accordance with the Council's procedures.

## **ACCIDENTS**

When accidents have occurred their causes will be examined to identify and prioritise, as appropriate, action to prevent a recurrence.

## **CONSULTATION**

It is the Council's policy that its employees will be consulted on matters affecting their health, safety and welfare at work.

It is with this in mind that a Health, Safety and Welfare Consultative Forum has been formed. This group consists of representatives from the Elected Members and the Staff side to whom representation may be made by employees.

In addition, the Council recognises Safety Representatives nominated by recognised Trade Unions in accordance with agreed procedures for the purposes of consultation and employee representation.

A copy of this statement, being the Council's declared policy, will be available on the Council's intranet and posted on workplace noticeboards.

Signed:   
Chief Executive

Revised: May 2007

# **ORGANISATION**

## **GENERAL**

The organisation of responsibility for all matters related to Health, Safety and Welfare within Dover District Council is through the established executive and line management structure.

## **ELECTED COUNCILLORS**

Elected Councillors decide the Corporate Policies of the Authority through an executive structure, which reports to the full Council. They cannot be responsible for the implementation of Health and Safety legislation to best practice standards within the Council but are required to ensure it is done. This will be monitored through the Joint Health, Safety and Welfare Consultative Forum.

To assist them, Councillors are provided with professional advice and guidance by the Chief Executive and Divisional Heads.

The Council has a duty to allocate sufficient financial, staffing and material resources to enable officers to fulfil the Council's health and safety obligations.

## **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The most senior officer in the Authority is the Chief Executive who assists the elected membership with the development of strategic policies of the Council and is responsible for ensuring the implementation of Corporate Policy decisions.

The Chief Executive heads a Corporate Management Team, which reviews and decides upon matters within the Council's Strategic Corporate Policies. They are also responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Council and the implementation of Corporate Policy decisions. This team consists of the Chief Executive and six Heads of Service.

The Council or Statutes give delegated powers to the Chief Executive.

## **HEADS OF SERVICE**

As members of the Management Team they have collective responsibilities in addition to the specific responsibilities associated with managing their own service divisions.

They provide professional advice and guidance to the Council and exercise those delegated powers given to them by the Council or statutes.

## **REMAINING STRUCTURE**

The line management structure below Head of Service varies between departments and can be found in the Organisational Charts for each service division.

Depending upon their requirements, service divisions may have Principal Officers, Senior Officers or Managers, Managers, Supervisors or Team Leaders in Professional, Technical or Administrative posts.

## **EMPLOYEES**

For the purpose of this document the term "employee" will be used to describe all other members of staff who have no line management function and are not specifically identified above.

## **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation of this policy and will:

- As often as necessary, appraise the effectiveness of this policy and make changes where appropriate.
- As required, ensure the attention of Councillors is drawn to information regarding Health, Safety and Welfare where this has a bearing on their decisions.
- Ensure adequate resources are provided to implement and maintain the effectiveness of the Council's Health and Safety Policy.
- Ensure that a sufficient number of competent persons are available to advise on the application of the provisions for health and safety law as it applies to the activities of the Council.

### **HEAD of GOVERNANCE**

In addition to his/her general responsibilities, the Head of Governance will have additional responsibilities in relation to the Council's health and safety policies.

These are:-

- In pursuance with the Health and Safety Commission's guidance "Directors' Responsibilities for Health and Safety" the Head of Governance has been appointed by the Corporate Management Team as the Health and Safety Director.
- In pursuance with regulation 7 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 the Head of Governance is to ensure the provision of a "competent person" to assist the Council to undertake the measures it needs to take to comply with the requirements and prohibitions imposed by all relevant statutory (health and safety) provisions.
- The monitoring for and provision of advice on changes in health and safety legislation where this will affect the Council's undertaking.
- To monitor all locations and work activities where the Council has any statutory health and safety responsibilities to identify shortcomings in the implementation of the Council's policies.
- The provision of advice and assistance to the Council regarding adequate health and safety "Information, Instruction and Training" for staff to enable them to understand their responsibilities and discharge their duties.
- To maintain an accident reporting system for the whole Council and Co-ordinate the investigation of accidents and, where required, reports to the Health and Safety Executive.
- Will ensure that adequate fire fighting equipment is available, that employees are trained in its use, informed of the procedure to be followed in the event of fire and regular drills are carried out to test the reaction of staff to a fire emergency.
- Maintain a library of suitable and current information on health and safety matters that are relevant to the undertaking of the Council.
- Produce, where appropriate, documents that identify the current corporate standards required to meet the aims of this policy.

- Ensure the maintenance of, as appropriate, records of inspections, tests, assessments etc. that may be required to provide evidence of the Councils compliance with current health & safety legislation.
- Provide information and advice on matters relating to health, safety and welfare to the Joint Health, Safety and Welfare Consultative Forum.
- Provide information and data to the Health, Safety and Welfare Consultative Forum that will enable them to monitor the Councils policies and, where appropriate, instigate investigations/reports into areas of concern and/or make recommendations for improvements.

## **HEADS OF SERVICE**

Will have arrangements within their service division to implement the Council's policies for Health, Safety and Welfare into all work activities under their control and to monitor those arrangements to ensure they remain relevant and effective.

Will ensure they have arrangements within their service division for all staff to be informed of their Health and Safety responsibilities.

Will ensure all staff in their service division receive adequate training and are competent to undertake their responsibilities for Health and Safety.

Will ensure that, within their service division, the implementation and maintenance of the Council's policies for health, safety and welfare are provided with adequate resources.

Will ensure that all work and places of work under their control are subject to risk assessment procedures, which will be considered of equal importance to all other management functions.

Where assessments identify the need for measures to avoid a hazard or reduce or control a risk, they will ensure they have systems to implement, monitor and review, as required those assessments and measures to maintain their effectiveness.

Will ensure that positive action is taken over any wilful disregard of health and safety arrangements by employees, if necessary, by use of disciplinary procedures.

Are to maintain systems for the selection and monitoring of third parties who provide works or services that ensures the standards for health, safety and welfare required by the Council are maintained.

## **LINE MANAGERS**

Will ensure that all risk assessments and any subsequent arrangements necessary for the safe execution of activities under their control are undertaken, monitored, reviewed and, as necessary, revised.

Will ensure that all statutory records of tests/inspection/maintenance pertinent to their area of responsibility are maintained.

Will be responsible to their Head of Service for ensuring that personnel under their control are adequately trained and competent in all work they undertake. They must be fully aware of the hazards of the work and understand the measures currently in force to minimise and control the risks.

Will ensure that all existing work places and work activities are subject to a risk assessment. All work must be monitored to ensure that any changes that could affect the validity of risk assessments are identified and steps taken to review them

Will ensure that all new work places and work activities are subject to a health and safety risk assessment before occupation or commencement of work.

Will ensure that all significant hazards and measures taken to minimise or control them are documented.

Will ensure that all "new" and young inexperienced workers are properly supervised until they can demonstrate they are competent to carry out their duties unsupervised and are fully aware of any specific hazards or arrangements for safe working with which they will be required to comply.

Will consult the Head of Governance regarding specific health and safety training needs.

Will ensure that subordinate staff apply all legal, corporate and service division requirements pertinent to the work of their specific function, insofar as they affect health, safety and welfare at work.

Will ensure that the results of any risk assessments or service division safety arrangements are made known to all personnel who could be affected by them.

Will ensure that all accidents or hazardous occurrences involving the areas/personnel under their control are reported to their Head of Service and the Health and Safety Adviser for investigation and, where appropriate, remedial action to prevent any recurrence and notification to the Health and Safety Executive.

Will ensure the provision of welfare facilities to the standards required by law for all work situations under their control.

Will ensure that first aid, to the standards required by law, is available and made known to all their staff and periodic checks are made of first aid equipment.

Will ensure that employees are trained in the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

Will ensure that, in circumstances where the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has been identified, the type and quality selected will be appropriate and adequately control the hazards. Supervisors will also ensure that those who are required to wear PPE have been given adequate training/instruction in its use and maintenance.

Will ensure that, before they issue contracts, orders or let works or services to third parties, adequate checks are made to confirm the suitability of their health and safety policies. This will include their arrangements to provide adequate welfare facilities and manage all the activities they will undertake for, or on behalf of, the Council. All arrangements must be compatible with those required by the Council.

Will ensure that, during the execution of work or provision of services by third parties in areas under their control, they will monitor health, safety and welfare standards. Where those standards fall below that required by the Council they take such action as is necessary to remedy the situation.

## **SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES**

Recognised Trades Unions can, in consultation with the Council, identify employees to represent the employees on matters relating to Health, Safety and Welfare at work.

The functions of Safety Representatives shall in no way be interpreted as imposing a legal responsibility on them.

They may:-

- Investigate potential dangers and hazards.
- Examine the cause(s) of accidents.
- Investigate complaints relating to Health and Safety or Welfare.
- Inspect the scene of a notifiable accident, occurrence or disease if safe to do so.
- Carry out formal inspections of the workplace or part of the workplace. The maximum frequency of formal inspections will be three monthly, except by written agreement with the employer.

## ALL EMPLOYEES

The statutory duties of employees are contained in section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

Section 7: "It shall be the duty of every employee whilst at work 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 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."

It should also be noted that section 8 of the above act applies to everyone, whether employed or not.

Section 8. "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".

Notwithstanding any specific responsibilities which may be delegated to them, **ALL** employees will:

- Make themselves familiar with, and conform to, all instructions and arrangements for health and safety issued by their employer.
- Observe all safety rules and safe working procedures at all times and will not do anything likely to endanger the safety and health of persons who could be affected by their acts or omissions at work.
- Where this has been identified and provided, appropriate safety clothing shall be worn, and safety equipment used, at all times and in all places applicable to the work or situations in hand.
- Conform to all instructions given by authorised officers of the Council and others with a responsibility for health and safety.
- Report all accidents, hazardous occurrences, defects and damage to plant, equipment etc. to their immediate superior as soon as possible.
- Ensure that every injury however slight is treated and reported to the department manager/supervisor without delay. A Dover District Council **Accident & Dangerous Occurrence Report & BI 510 Record Form must be completed**. It must then be passed to the appropriate Line Manager/Supervisor for action in accordance with the Council's procedures.

If an employee, having made a representation on a matter of health, safety or welfare to their line manager, remains dissatisfied, they may either use the Council's Grievance Procedures or raise the

matter with their Safety Representative or a member of the staff side of the Joint Health, Safety and Welfare Consultative Forum to enable investigation to be undertaken.

## **JOINT HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

This committee consists of **eight** Elected Members of Dover District Council and **eight** employee representatives. It meets as required but not less than half yearly.

Its terms of reference are:- **"To consider all matters relating to the Welfare and Safety of all personnel employed by Dover District Council and to submit to the Council advice and recommendations thereon".**

## **ARRANGEMENTS**

### **GENERAL**

Arrangements for implementing and monitoring the health and safety policies of Dover District Council are provided in a number of ways.

The List below is an indication of some of them:-

- Corporate H&S Codes of Practice provided centrally by the Head of Governance
- Corporate HR policies including those relating to Home Working and Stress
- Direction/Guidance from the Council/Executive
- Risk Assessments and reviews
- Fire Risk Assessments and reviews
- Service Division safety procedures documents
- Method statements
- Written safe systems of work
- Permits to work
- Safety signs
- Selection, provision and maintenance of Personal Protective Equipment
- Purchasing policies for Equipment, Materials and Substances
- Monitoring and controlling exposure to physical agents e.g. noise, vibration, non-ionising radiation etc.
- Monitoring and controlling exposure to substances hazardous to health
- Maintenance of statutory registers of tests/inspections
- Equipment maintenance and inspection schedules
- Safety inspections/audits and reports
- Approved/select lists of contractors
- Contract terms and conditions
- Contractor monitoring and evaluation
- Health screening/monitoring of new/existing employees
- Health and safety training
- Employment of competent management and supervision
- A Health, Safety and Welfare Consultative Forum
- Recognition of Safety Representatives

The sum of all documents produced in support of the above activities will form the arrangements section of this safety policy.

### **CONCLUSION**

No safety policy has any chance of success unless management at all levels create and maintain an internal culture that is committed to it. Neither is it likely to succeed unless it actively involves the employees themselves.

It is for these reasons that training, concentrating specifically on health and safety is essential in the following circumstances:-

- On recruitment
- Change of function
- Introduction of new working methods
- Use of equipment, materials or substances new to the employee
- After an accident at work
- After a long absence from work
- Introduction of new safety legislation
- Periodically