



HOUSING MAINTENANCE AND COMPLIANCE

# **Employee handbook**

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## Introduction

New Forest District Council (NFDC) is committed to on-going improvements to its health, safety and welfare arrangements and to prevent accidents, injury, and ill health, as far as is reasonably practicable. As part of this commitment, you have been issued this handbook to help you carry out your day-to-day duties in a safe manner.

The housing department provides a valuable and highly regarded service to the housing tenants of the New Forest. It is important that, as you are in the public eye, that you do not become complacent or careless as this may place yourself, your colleagues, or members of the public at risk.

If you have any questions or are unsure of anything contained in this handbook, please speak to your supervisor, manager, safety representative, or a member of the corporate health and safety team.

### **Richard Knott**

Strategic Director, Housing and Communities

## Employee standards

Every employee must aim to:

- take responsibility for own workload
- identify and take opportunities to learn and develop
- adapt and be flexible to new ways of working
- raise work related concerns with supervisor or manager
- commit to producing accurate and high-quality outcomes within appropriate time frame
- have adequate technical or professional skills to fulfil the requirements of the role
- use relevant forms of communication effectively
- maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality
- plan time and manage workload effectively
- make decisions appropriate to the requirements of the role
- commit to achieving full attendance at work
- understand health and safety issues and safe working practices for self and others
- make every effort to be aware of and promote sustainability in all aspects of their work
- have a good understanding and application of equal opportunity and diversity
- work towards continuous improvement
- challenge current procedures and processes in a positive manner
- understand and promote New Forest District Council values
- take on feedback to develop in their role

## General housing do's and dont's

To ensure that all staff are safe at work, these simple "golden rules" have been put in place. Please be aware that failure to adhere to these rules may result in disciplinary actions being taken.

### **Do:**

always use good manual handling techniques

keep your PPE in good condition and always use it correctly

report all accident and near misses

ask if you have any doubts

check the risk assessment, does it apply, is it up to date, what do the method statements say

discuss changes in a job, especially if it adds a hazard that may not have been expected

check the asbestos register when required

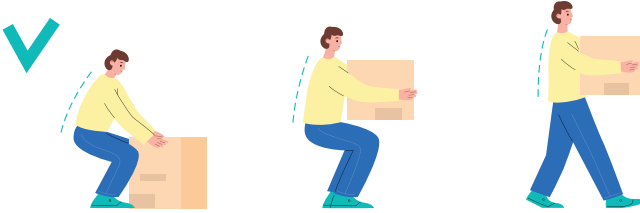
### **Don't:**

use your personal mobile phone during working hours unless it is an emergency

use equipment unless you have been trained or authorised to do so

smoke in the cab of a council fleet vehicle

carry out work unless trained or authorised to do so



## Manual Handling

Poor manual handling techniques are responsible for several very painful injuries which in many cases can affect you for years or even result in permanent damage.

This may include:

- a slipped disc
- muscle damage
- hernias
- torn ligaments and tendons

The discs in your spine do not have any nerves so you may be unaware of the damage that you are causing to your back until it is too late.

It is important to not try to carry or move anything outside of your physical capability as this will often be what leads to an injury occurring. If you will struggle, then ask for help.

## TILE

Before lifting anything, stop and think about TILE.

**TILE = task, individual, load, environment**

**Task:** What am I going to lift and how far?

**Individual:** Everyone is different. What are my limits? Do I need assistance?

**Load:** Is it bulky or awkward to hold? Does it have sharp edges?

**Environment:** Do I have to move it up or down steps or over uneven surfaces?

## Do's and don't's

When lifting:

- place one foot forward
- unlock your knees
- turn by moving your feet
- keep the load close to you
- ask for help when needed
- do not lift with your feet in-line
- do not use your back to start the lift
- do not twist your body
- do not reach above your head
- do not lift more than you are able to

Several manual handling tasks that are completed are identified as two persons required to lift. All housing staff must follow the control measures outlined within the relevant task specific manual handling risk assessment. If it states that it is two persons required lift, then do not try to do it alone as it will most likely result in an injury to yourselves.

When undertaking a dynamic risk assessment of your working environment you may identify several hazards which could pose a significant risk of injury, you should report these to your supervisor and request assistance, when required.

All task specific manual handling risk assessment are available on [your service's Directorate H&S Hub](#). If you are unable to access this resource, please contact your supervisor for further assistance.



## 2-person lift request

A key element of many risk assessments within the council is for staff to undertake a continual dynamic risk assessment of their working environment.

### What is a dynamic risk assessment?

A dynamic risk assessment is the process of identifying, measuring, and evaluating risk in real time. This is something you will be doing every day in your normal life; a basic example is crossing the road or driving to work.

When arriving on site you should be undertaking a dynamic risk assessment, this does not have to be recorded. If you identify any hazards which cannot be controlled, such as undertaking a manual handling activity which could result in an injury and could require a 2-person lift, you must contact your supervisor for assistance from another colleague. Staff must not undertake risky behaviour or working practices to complete their task.

## Infectious diseases

### Tetanus

Tetanus is an acute disease caused by bacteria normally found in soil, dust and animal faeces. But it can be found in any dirty environment.

#### How do people get tetanus?

Commonly called 'lockjaw', the bacteria enters the body through cuts and grazes releasing a poison which causes the Tetanus symptoms. The bacteria spreads through the bloodstream blocking the nerve signals to the muscles. This causes muscle spasms and muscle stiffness throughout the body, the neck and jaw.

Normally the incubation period (the time from being affected to when the symptoms occur) is approximately 10 days.

#### Am I at risk?

Tetanus is a particular threat to employees working in housing. Potential contamination in properties is a risk to staff while carrying out work and those who may also be involved in associated tasks. However, any contamination to damaged skin by extraneous organic matter such as earth, debris, or material contamination in or outside properties could result in infection.

#### Avoiding tetanus

To avoid tetanus, always:

- wear gloves and other suitable PPE
- clean and cover cuts and grazes
- clean hands before eating, drinking, and smoking

#### Is there a vaccine available for tetanus?

Employees can be protected from tetanus by vaccination, and you are encouraged to take this up at all times.

Your GP surgery should offer a free service to all patients who request the treatment.

### Hepatitis B and C

Hepatitis is a bacterial disease caused by contact with infected body fluids.

#### How do people get hepatitis B and C?

The bacteria are transmitted through cuts, puncture wounds or damaged areas of the skin.

The bacteria can live for at least seven days on contaminated surfaces. The incubation period (from contact to the first symptoms) is normally between 6 weeks to 6 months.

In some cases, people can be infected but show little, if any symptoms. Where symptoms are experienced, they can range from flu like symptoms, weakness, aches, fever, loss of appetite, diarrhoea to liver failure, liver cancer and jaundice.

Hepatitis is infectious, and contact with a small amount of contaminated fluid can pass on the disease.

#### Am I at risk?

Cases of hepatitis in the UK are low. However, it is still important not to be complacent and take the following precaution.

## Avoiding hepatitis B and C

To avoid hepatitis B and C, always:

- wear your gloves when handling refuse
- clean and cover all cuts and grazes quickly
- follow the procedures for collecting refuse and dealing with needles and other sharp objects

## Is there a vaccine available for hepatitis B and C?

There is a vaccination available for hepatitis B, but currently there is not a vaccination for hepatitis C.

Where the risk assessment indicates a high risk of infection, then employees are encouraged to get a vaccination from their doctor.

Any costs involved with the above will be reimbursed by the council.

## Weil's disease

Weil's disease (Leptospirosis) is a disease from a bacteria found in contaminated rat urine. In some cases, the disease can be fatal.

There is no vaccination against Weil's disease.

### What are the symptoms?

From infection, approximately 9 to 14 days, flu like symptoms will occur. Further symptoms vary but can include liver damage, kidney failure, meningitis, and conjunctivitis.

### How people get Weil's disease

People can get Weil's disease from:

- touching their mouth and eyes with contaminated hands. For example, smoking, putting glasses on, taking glasses off, or eating
- uncovered cuts and grazes

### Am I at risk?

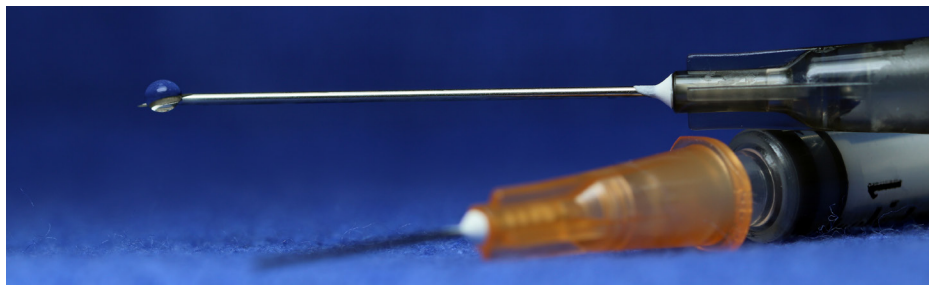
Sewer workers, maintenance and engineering operational staff, housing and property services inspectors, and those working on associated tasks are considered most at risk.

### Avoiding Weils's disease

To avoid Weil's disease, always:

- wear your gloves when handling refuse
- clean and cover all cuts and grazes quickly
- wash your hands before eating, smoking, and touching your mouth





## Needles (sharps)

### Why are needles a problem?

Discarded hypodermic needles can carry viruses and bacteria that can cause very serious health problems and diseases.

The main problem with needles is needle-stick injuries, where the needle punctures the skin. The main illnesses associated with needle-stick injuries are hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV.

### Where can needles be found?

Needles can be found anywhere within or outside (within the curtilage of) a property. Employees must take care when placing their hands where they cannot see, or when handling clothes and other tenant items.

If you find a needle, you should:

- make the area safe
- always assume that there are other needles in the same area
- only collect the needle if:
  - » you are trained to do so. Contact your supervisor to arrange training if required
  - » you have the correct sharps equipment, including PPE
  - » you are in no danger and can clearly see the area where the needle is

### What should I do if I have a needle stick injury?

If you have a needle-stick injury, you should:

1. Encourage the wound to bleed by gently squeezing the area around the wound.
2. Wash and clean the wound with soap and water.
3. Report the accident immediately to your supervisor or manager.
4. Go to the nearest hospital with A&E department.
5. Take the needle with you to hospital, if safe to do so, in a sharps container.
6. Complete an accident report form with your manager.

If you have a needle-stick injury, you should never suck the wound.

## Display screen equipment (DSE) and home working

### DSE training

DSE applies to any computer, laptop, or screened items that are used as part of your working day. As part of your health and safety induction, all employees who are considered DSE users\* must complete the DSE e-learning.

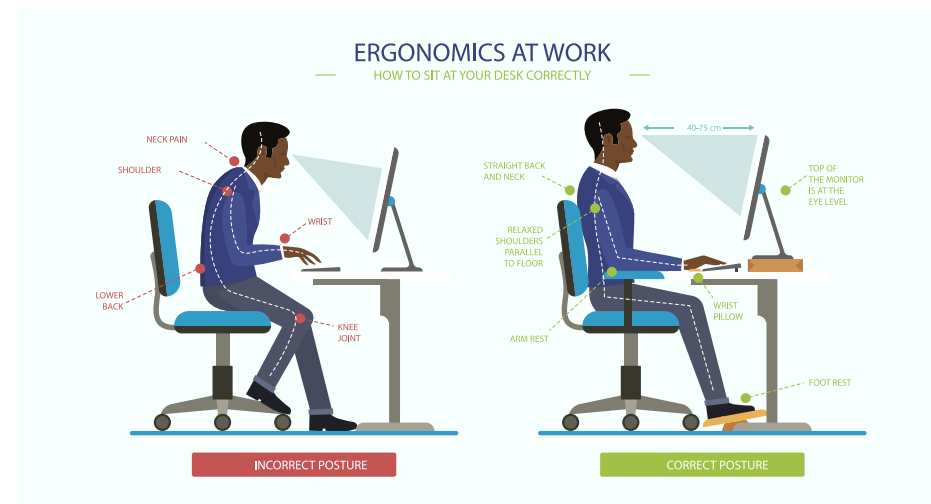
| For more information, please visit our [DSE page](#).

\*Workers who use DSE daily, for continuous periods of an hour or more.

### DSE self-assessment

As part of the e-learning training, you will also have to complete a DSE self-assessment e-form. This is legally required for all DSE users. All employees are required to undertake a DSE self-assessment every 3 years, or if there has been a significant change in their workstation, working practices, or health concerns. If you have any concerns about your workstation, please contact your line manager and a member of the corporate health and safety team.

| To complete the DSE self-assessment e-form, visit: [DSE - Self-assessment](#).



### Setting up your workstation

How should I set up my workstation?

- Top of screen level with eyes, about an arm's length away
- Relax your shoulders - try to position yourself high enough so you don't need to shrug your shoulders
- Computer and screen directly in front of you on desk or other surface
- Keyboard just below elbow height
- Back of the seat provides good lower back support (or use cushion, to provide additional back support)
- Seat height equally supports front and back of thighs (or use cushion to raise seated position)
- Gap of 2-3 cm between front of seat bottom and back of knee
- Screen and keyboard central - don't twist your back
- Mouse in line with elbow

## **Do I need to follow good HSE practices when working from home?**

Yes, the Display Screen Equipment Work: Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 also applies when home working.

When setting up your home workstation, you should copy the set up you have in the office. When needed, you can request a mouse, keyboard, and monitor from IT. This can be done via council laptops, phones, and tablets.

To request any of these items, visit the ICT Portal and [log a request](#).

### **DSE top tips**

If you are using an adjustable chair place your feet firmly on floor, sit right back into the chair, adjust to the correct height to ensure forearms are level on table surface in front of you, avoid leaning forward or twisting so bring your keyboard central and do not over reach when using your mouse, use a stable pile of books that will not slip off each other or a box to place your feet on if they are not flat on the floor.

Your screen should be about arm's length away and the top of screen height should be eye level.

If you are using a non-adjustable chair sit right back into the chair and bring equipment towards you, use a cushion to sit at the correct height for forearms to be level on the table surface and use a cushion or a rolled-up towel to support your back, try to relax your neck and shoulders.

You can even work from the sofa by using cushions to support your back, you can also use a cushion and a book to support your tablet on your lap, you can even use your height adjustable ironing board

to place your tablet on in front of you whilst sitting on the sofa.

Keep adjusting your work posture and vary your positions throughout the day. For example, use your work top in the kitchen or your height adjustable ironing board for some stand up working keeping shoulders and neck relaxed and take plenty of breaks from this position.

Take regular breaks throughout the day of at least 5 minutes every hour.

## Employee support line

All NFDC employees can access a support line run by an external and independent organisation. This is called the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

The service is confidential, free, and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The service offers help and assistance on a wide range of topics, both at work and personally.

The number to call is: 0800 1116 387

Examples of the topics that you could contact them about are:

- work or career advice
- financial advice
- marital and family matters
- drug and alcohol issues
- emotional and personal issues or counselling
- stress

You can access support online by visiting [my-eap.com](https://my-eap.com), the invite code is 'newforestwell'. This online service is also confidential.

If you have any questions about support at work, please contact the HR advisory team by email: [hradvisory@nfdc.gov.uk](mailto:hradvisory@nfdc.gov.uk)

## Personal protective equipment (PPE)

The council is required by law to provide staff PPE where a risk assessment indicates that it is required, and the hazard cannot be controlled by other methods. Visit the [PPE H&S SharePoint](#) page.

The employee is required by law to always ensure that:

- you have all your PPE before you start work
- your PPE is in good condition, if not then it must be replaced
- you know how to correctly use your PPE, if you have any doubts then speak to your supervisor
- always use your PPE



The PPE provided to staff includes:

- a hard hat
- safety glasses
- safety goggles
- ear defenders
- ear plugs
- a dust mask (FFP3)
- a face shield
- a hi vis top (Class 1, 2, and 3)
- a hi vis coat (Class 1, 2, and 3)
- a hi vis trousers
- safety boots (S3)
- nitrile gloves
- gloves (x.x.x.x)

## Working in rural areas

While working at New Forest District Council you will likely be working in rural areas.

Working in rural environments brings several hazards, including:

- poor phone signal
- poor lighting
- unstable or unmaintained footpaths
- falling trees
- contact with wild animals

While working in rural environments it is important to follow your local arrangements, as identified on your team's risk assessments.

Additionally, you must ensure:

- your outlook calendar is kept up to date with meetings and visits. Include any visit information, location, and time frame of your visit if using this process for workday planning.
- you follow your local lone working procedures
- when working outside of day light hours, you avoid areas of poor lighting
- you walk on well-maintained well-lit pathways
- you have suitable footwear for the task
- you keep in regular contact with your colleagues and line manager or supervisor
- you give yourself plenty of time when travelling to and from appointments
- you keep your distance and reduce your speed when encountering animals in the district

## Alcohol, medication, and drugs

Alcohol, medication, and drugs can affect both your own, your colleagues and other people such as members of the public or client's health and safety while you are at work. It is important to come to work in a condition that is safe for you to carry out your duties. Furthermore, in addition to the risk to others coming to work while under the influence may also be illegal.

Not only recreational drugs can impact your ability to work safely at work, but prescription drugs may also affect your ability to drive or operate machinery, if you are prescribed medication (drugs) by your doctor that may affect you then you must discuss this with your line manager.

This also applies to some non-prescribed over the counter drugs which can also affect you, for example some hay-fever medication can cause drowsiness.

Remember:

- if you are taking medication as directed and your driving is not impaired then you are not breaking the law. Keep taking medication as described.
- do not drive if you feel drowsy, dizzy, are unable to concentrate, or if you have blurred vision
- if you're driving is impaired, then you are guilty of breaking the law

Alcohol remains in your systems for a considerable amount of time. As an approximate guide, it takes the liver one hour to remove one unit of alcohol from the body.

Drinking alcohol in the evening may result in you being unfit for work the next day. You may also be over the legal driving limit.

The council has the ability to undertake drug screening and alcohol tests where there is reason to suspect that an employee is under the influence, and that the employee or other people's safety could be affected. Please speak to your supervisor if you need more information on this.

The council operates a with cause testing policy. Should any line manager have concerns they are to raise this to their line manager to go through the for-cause testing process.

## Driving on council business

When driving on council business as part of your role you are representing the council, so it is important to remember to do the following:

- drive safely and at a suitable speed for the environment you are in while obeying all speed limits
- drive conscientiously and take care of other road users including vehicles, cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians
- obey road width and height restrictions
- take extra care and consider river depth markers, prior to attempting to pass through Forest Fords. Fords may be impassable during periods of high water
- drive with due care and attention to wild roaming animals that may be in or near the road. We work in the New Forest so there is the risk of animals wandering into roads in certain areas, so it is important that you think and look at the way you drive when passing so as not to injure or startle them.

When planning your route, it is important to consider traffic, road closures, weather conditions and to make sure you have a sufficient time and fuel to complete your journey.

If you are driving a council van, these are insured by the council for you to drive in fulfilling your official council business duties. You may take your van home, and in these instances, it is important to remember that any time you are in your vehicle you must obey the Highway Code, not just during work hours. You are not insured to carry private passengers nor for private use.

To ensure your safety while driving should an accident occur all tools and materials are to be stored in the rear of the vehicle and not on

the front seat. This is to prevent them from becoming “missiles” in the event of an accident.

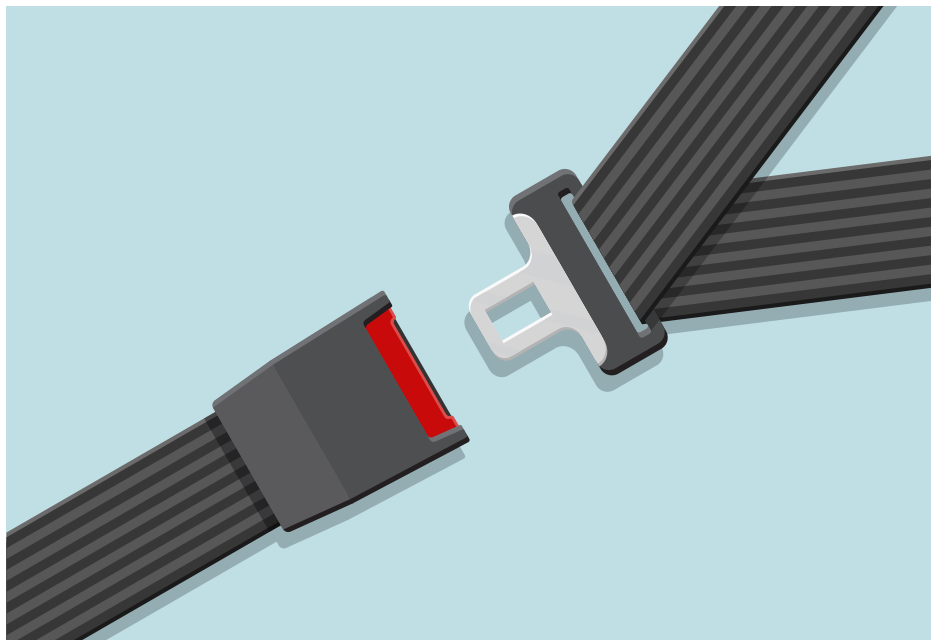
All vans are expected to be kept in a clean and tidy condition in particular the cab areas where you may take breaks or complete paperwork and a power wash station is available at Marsh Lane Depot for fleet drivers use. Vehicles will be inspected on a regular basis and should any vehicles be in poor condition management will undertake more regular checks to ensure it is kept in a good and clean state.

Council fleet driving staff will be provided with a separate NFDC Driver’s Handbook.

If you are driving your personal vehicle, this vehicle must be insured by yourself for business use for you to drive it as part of your duties. The council expects all staff who drive for council business to obey the Highway Code.

[For more information on driving at work, please visit information page.](#)

Drivers of fleet vehicles are responsible for all driving offences and payment of intended driving prosecutions received by the council.



## Seat belts

Always wear your seat belt when travelling in a vehicle, it is the law. The council expects all its staff to comply with the rules of the road. If the police, see anyone in a vehicle not wearing their seat belt they will issue the driver with a fixed penalty fine and points on their license.



## Mobile phones

It is against the law to use handheld mobile phones while driving or being in charge of any vehicle.

Using a mobile phone while driving may result in you being prosecuted for driving without due care and attention and/or dangerous driving.

If you need to make a phone call, find a safe place to stop and turn the engine off while making the call.

There have been changes to the highway code relating to hands-free and the use of mobile phones while driving. Please ensure you are fully aware of these rules.



## Smoking

It is against the law to smoke in any public building and workspace. This includes any residents' properties, Voids, communal areas, council vehicles and includes the use of e-cigarettes (or equivalents). All employees who smoke must do so within the designated smoking areas on site. Employees must not smoke in their fleet vehicle or when within residents' properties, when smoking away from a council office or depot, this must be done out of site from the public.

It is important to be safe when smoking, when smoking in an allowed area it is important to do so safely and to dispose of your cigarette ends correctly. It is important to ensure any waste is fully extinguished before disposal.

### Residents smoking in their properties

While visiting residents in their properties you may come across those who choose to smoke. The council does not ban residents from smoking in their home, however, they do have to respect council staff rights to a smoke free workplace and not to smoke within the immediate vicinity or room where work is being carried out.

Where it is evident that a resident smokes within their home and prior to work commencing, residents are to be politely asked to refrain from smoking within the immediate vicinity or room where work is to take place for the duration of the visit.

Should a staff member not feel comfortable to work in a resident's property due to ongoing smoking they are allowed to leave the property and call their line manager to discuss finding a resolution to the issue. Should the resident refuse to stop smoking in the work area then the employee has the right to refuse to carry out the work.

## Safeguarding

All members of staff have a responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns they have or come across during their working day.

If you do identify any safeguarding concerns, please refer to the safeguarding policy and follow this guidance:

**Observe:** What is the concern?

**Discuss:** Discuss with a line manager or the safeguarding team.

**Decide:** Decide an action. Such as monitor it, refer to appropriate agency, or no further action needed.

**Report:** Report it. For example to the police, adult services, or children's services.

If it is an emergency and someone is at immediate risk, please dial 999.

For concerns relating to a child, young person or adult please contact a member of the safeguarding team: safernewforest@nfdc.gov.uk

Further information can be found the [safeguarding page](#) on New Forestnet, just search safeguarding in the search field.



## Safe use of ladders and step ladders

Ladders and stepladders are not banned under health and safety law.

The law calls for a sensible, proportionate approach to managing risk, and ladders can be a sensible and practical option for low-risk, short-duration tasks.

Prior to using a ladder or step ladder, employees must undertake a visual inspection of the equipment prior to use.

Employees must consider if:

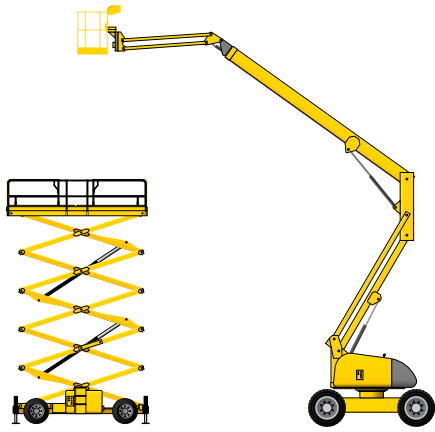
- the feet are damaged or worn
- the stiles are dented, bent, and cracked
- any of the rungs are loose, bent, worn, or cracked
- any tie rods are missing or damaged
- there are any cracked or damaged welded joints, loose rivets, or damaged stays

Pre-use checks and inspections of ladder stability devices and other accessories should be performed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

If any defects are found during your inspection, you must not use the equipment and contact your supervisor.

All ladders must be formally inspected by a competent person, every 6 months. All formal ladder inspections will be undertaken by our warehousing staff at Marsh Lane Depot Stores. Operatives must only use ladders or step ladder which have been inspected and tagged by a competent person.

If there is no ladder tag or it is out of date, then the ladder is not to be used. Raise this with your line manager and arrange to visit Marsh Lane Depot Stores to get your ladder re-inspected.



## Mobile elevated work platform (MEWP)

During your employment, you may be required to use or work from a MEWP. MEWPs are useful pieces of plant when used properly. However, they combine height with mobility and can be extremely dangerous if misused.

Only persons who have had adequate formal training are allowed to operate MEWPs, this is specific to either a 3a (boom) or 3b (scissor lift). IPAF (International Powered Access Federation) is one example of adequate accreditation. If you are trained in one, it does not mean you can use the other.

If you are not trained and your work requires the use of a MEWP, you must report this to your manager and are not to attempt to use a MEWP until you have received formal training.

When working from a MEWP if you are not operating it, then harness training may be all that is required for the work. This needs to be discussed with your line manager and risk assessed before any work is carried out.

The main hazards when working from a MEWP are:

- falls from height.  
While working from the platform you must stay within the basket and not lean outside of it in an unsafe manner and wear a secured harness at all times.
- falling object.  
While working from the platform you need to be aware of what is going on below you, for type 3a (boom) MEWPs you can often move above items and others while getting into position. It is important to consider what is below you and keep the area clear of individuals. All tools being used should be secured so they cannot fall to the ground from the basket, materials should also be secured where possible.
- pinch and crush injuries.  
When carrying out maintenance or when the MEWPs in elevating, lowering or retracting it is important to keep clear of the mechanism and ensure others are not in close proximity. Should someone be in close proximity they are to be asked to move away from the MEWPs during its operation or movement.
- increased movement due to extension while travelling.  
When needing to move the MEWP to a new location it is important to do so while fully retracted to the minimum setting to avoid instability, fall over or the operator being thrown from the basket.

For all MEWPs users it is important to remember that both prior and after use it must be inspected to ensure that it is safe and there are no obvious defects. These must be recorded on an inspection sheet and retained for council records. All inspections must be carried out in line with manufacturer's instructions.

Should you have any questions please do talk to your line manager for more information.



## Verbal abusive behaviour and dangerous animals

During your employment, you may come up against tenants who display aggressive and abusive behaviour towards you. In these circumstances you must remain calm, and where suitable remove yourself from the premises.

All incidents of violence and abuse must be reported to your supervisor and the corporate health and safety team.

Reports can be made using our online report form or via paper copy or reported to your supervisor via telephone. All report forms can be accessed via [Sharepoint](#) via your mobile device.

When attending visits, you may also encounter potentially dangerous animals. All residents have been asked to lock away any pets in another room prior to you visiting the property. If when knocking on a door you can hear a dog barking, you must politely ask for the resident to put the animal in another room. You should not enter the property until the resident has done this. All aggressive animals should be reported to your supervisor and the corporate health and safety team.

When booking in a job, if you do not have direct access to the [Warning Marker Register \(WMR\)](#), the planners will check the council WMR on your behalf. If you have direct access you are expected to check yourself prior to the visit occurring. The WMR is the council central register which holds information on individuals and animal who may present a risk to employees and third parties. You must follow the control measures identified on the WMR when attending a visit with an individual who is placed on it. Employees can make requests to add someone to the WMR, following an incident of verbal or physical abuse. As identified in the section above, all requests should be made to your supervisor or a member of the corporate health and safety team.

## Reporting accidents and incidents

As per the section above, all accident and incidents must be reported to your supervisor and a member of the corporate health and safety team.

### What is the difference between an accident and incident?

An incident (or near miss) is an event not causing harm but has the potential to cause injury or ill health or damage. This also includes verbal abuse.

An accident is an event that results in injury or ill health.

As well as reporting any incidents or accident you have been involved in, you must also report any incident or accident suffered by a tenant or member of the public.

Member of the public incident and accidents must be reported via the [member of the public accident or incident report form](#).

All accident and incident forms can be found on Sharepoint, on the [operative accidents, incidents, and near-misses page](#).

In some circumstances the health and safety team need to report certain incidents and accidents to the Health and Safety Executive, known as [HSE](#). This includes any incident which result in an employee missing more than 7 days of work.

It is extremely important all accidents and incidents are reported to your supervisor and the health and safety team as soon as possible.

## Office and depot fire safety

Employers have a legal duty to ensure adequate provisions are in place for fire safety. This is done through fire risk assessments of council buildings and depots, the provision of fire evacuation strategies, training and fire wardens.

When visiting any council depot or premises it is important that you are aware of the assembly points in the instance of a fire and the evacuation procedures. If you are not aware, please ask your line manager for information.

It is important that should you discover a fire in any of the council depots or premises that this is reported immediately. This can be done by directly triggering the fire alarm and informing any staff in the local vicinity of the fire as you leave the building. It is important that you do not attempt to fight a fire or put yourself at risk trying to control it.

If your emergency escape is blocked by a fire and you have no alternative escape routes, then please use the fire extinguishers at key points throughout the buildings.

For any other council properties including social housing, extra care and other areas local arrangements apply. These arrangements can be found by talking to your line manager and by observing local signage.



## Warning marker register

The council has a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees.

Where an individual, this may be a member of the public, resident, tenant, or animal displays behaviour which leads the council to believe that they may pose a risk to employees that encounter them, the council must take action to reduce the risk to its employees as far as is reasonably practicable.

The council, therefore, keeps a central Warning Marker Register (WMR) which records information relating to individuals who pose, or could potentially pose, a risk to employees who come into contact with them.

The WMR is a secure database, only accessible with a username and password. Access will be provided to all employees who may be at risk or have cause to attend residential or business addresses in the course of their employment.

To request access to the WMR, your line manager must complete a request form, this can be done via [the WMR site](#).

Employees can also request an individual is added to the WMR, this can be done by reporting a new incident, as above.

### Should I report third party incidents?

Where an employee of the council knows that a third party (including contractors of the council) through their dealings with the council is likely to come into contact with someone who appears on the WMR, the senior manager should consider if the information on the WMR should be passed to the relevant third parties.

This information will only be passed to a third party where:

- failure to share information may place staff at the other agency or organisation at risk of harm  
or
- the council is required by the law to pass such information to the other agency or organisation if any of the above circumstances apply. The service should disclose the third-party manager only such information they consider necessary for the manager to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees.

For further information please contact a WMR administrator on [WarningMarkerRegisterAdmin@nfdc.gov.uk](mailto:WarningMarkerRegisterAdmin@nfdc.gov.uk)



## Working out of hours

As part of their duty employees may need to carry out work outside of usual working hours. When working out of hours employers have a legal duty of care to ensure that employees are safe and that this work is carried out in the correct manner, with adequate supervision, risk assessment, controls and training.

This is done through the induction and training processes for all staff who will undertake these duties.

The lone working and out of hours working process is to log the work that is occurring within a system to keep track and notify management should an issue occur aids in ensuring that staff are protected.

For more information on lone working see the Lone Working section that discusses the systems in place.

For people working outside of usual hours it is important to know the controls, limitations and risks associated with doing so. Please speak to your line manager for more information and to make sure you are fully aware of the processes, risk assessments and method statements you may be required to follow.

## Lone working

Health and safety law requires employers to consider and address any health and safety risks its employees and those effected by their work are faced with, this includes the risk associated with lone working.

### What is a Lone Worker?

A lone worker is defined as someone who works by themselves without close or direct supervision.

### The Appello Lone Worker app

The Appello Lone Worker System must be used by all lone workers who have been identified as medium risk. In the housing service, this includes all employees who undertake lone working visits with residents or members of the public. As part of an employees health and safety induction, where they have been identified as a medium risk lone worker, they must be provided with a username (usually your work mobile number) and PIN for the system.

To gain access to a username and PIN please complete the lone worker [pre-registration form](#) available on Sharepoint. If you have any issues accessing this, please raise to your line manager.

The Appello Lone Worker System is available on any NFDC device and can be downloaded via the NFDC Play Store. The corporate health and safety team have put together a useful [user guide for employees](#).



## Asbestos

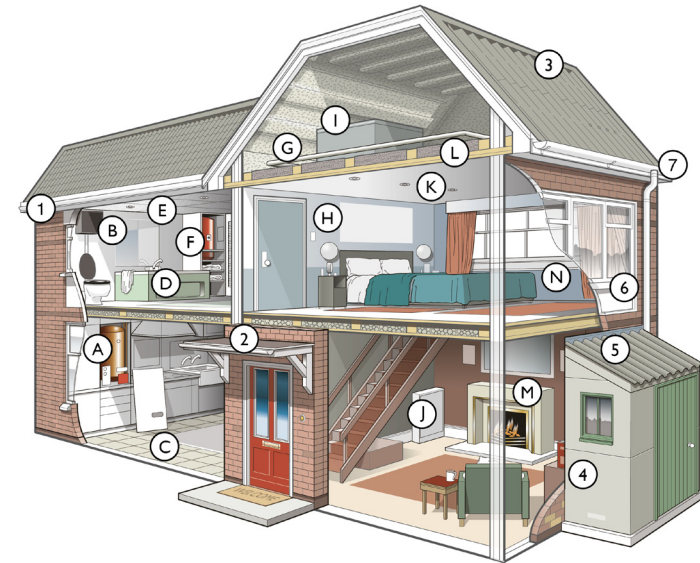
Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibre that was widely used in construction and other industries until the late 1990s. The 3 types of asbestos fibres most used in the UK were blue (crocidolite), brown (amosite), and white (chrysotile).

If asbestos inside buildings remains intact, it poses very little risk. Its only when it is damaged or disturbed those asbestos fibres can be released into the air and enter your lungs when breathing. The symptoms of asbestos-related conditions take many years, even decades to appear after the original exposure to asbestos.

The council holds all its asbestos information on a system called Keystone. Staff working in the field can view the information on Keystone by accessing an app on their mobile devices called Keystone Mini.

Prior to undertaking any work which could result in the potential disturbance of an asbestos containing material, staff must check the council's asbestos register via Keystone or Keystone Mini.

Only trained competent persons are to undertake any work on non-licensed asbestos, as outlined with the HSE's asbestos essentials task sheets. Staff are not to undertake any notifiable non-license work.



### Inside

- A. asbestos insulating board (AIB) around boiler
- B. toilet cistern
- C. vinyl floor tiles backed with asbestos paper and bitumen adhesive
- D. AIB or asbestos cement bath panels
- E. AIB ceiling tiles
- F. AIB airing cupboard and/or sprayed insulation coating boiler
- G. pipe lagging
- H. AIB partition wall
- I. asbestos cement water tank
- J. AIB behind fuse box
- K. textured decorative coating, for example Artex

L. loose fill insulation

M. AIB behind fire

N. AIB or asbestos cement interior window panel

### Outside

- 1. AIB or asbestos cement soffits and fascias
- 2. roofing felt
- 3. asbestos cement roof tiles/slates
- 4. asbestos cement panels
- 5. profiled asbestos cement sheeting
- 6. AIB or asbestos cement exterior window panel
- 7. gutters and asbestos cement downpipes



## Waste disposal of construction and demolition waste

When disposing of construction and demolition waste, it is important that this is done in line with the waste disposal process on site. For much of the work that is undertaken by staff for the council, this will result in staff bringing waste back to Marsh Lane Depot and disposing of the waste into the skips on site. For larger projects, a skip may be present in the location where work is occurring and disposal of waste into this skip may then occur.

If a skip is on site where the work is occurring, it is important to secure the lid if a lid is fitted to prevent members of the public from also using the skip to dispose of waste. This is to ensure we are aware of what waste is being disposed of and to minimise costs to enable efficient use of the skip.

The skips on site must be used to correctly, sort the different waste types being brought back into the depot. Should the wrong material get put in skip do not remove it unless it is easy to do so without leaning into the skip. Contact stores to ask for assistance in removing the incorrect material if it is not able to be easily removed.

Do not leave waste on the ground in the yard or in vehicles. Dispose of waste fully and correctly.

For paint, chemical waste depending on the type there is a covered container for storage. If you are not sure where this is, please speak to stores who can show its location.

If dealing with asbestos, only authorised and trained individuals are to carry out the work. To dispose of asbestos waste the sealed asbestos skip at Marsh Lane Depot must be used. All bags of waste are to be double bagged with a red bag inside a clear to clearly

show the content. If you are not authorised to carry out asbestos work and think you have disturbed some asbestos containing material, please contact your line manager immediately.



## Dust control

Dust can be a problem in almost any industry. The hazards from dusts like silica and wood are well recognised.

Many work activities can create dust, for example:

- filling bags or emptying them into skips or other containers
- weighing loose powders
- cutting
- sieving and screening operations
- crushing grading
- clearing up spillages
- grinding sanding down, or other similar operations

### How am I at risk from dust?

#### Breathing dust in

Dusts can be inhaled as you breathe, depending on what it is this may have health risks associated with it. Dust can be:

- Inhalable  
Classed as any dust that can be breathed into your mouth or nose.

- Respirable  
Classed as very fine dust that can be breathed deep into your lungs where the gasses are exchanged. This can lead to shortness of breath, lung disease and scarring, cancer, fibrosis and more.

#### Dust in the eye

Eye Contact with dust can lead to eye damage or irritation, some dusts may also cause harm to eyes due to their chemical nature.

#### Dust on the skin

Skin contact with dust can lead to ulceration of the skin and irritation.

### How to control the risks from dust

When undertaking tasks which may produce dust, it is important to following all control measures outlined within the relevant generic and task specific risk assessments.

Where required staff must use suitable FFP3 rated respiratory protective equipment. This may be either a tight fitting mask or powered unit. In order to use a tight fitting mask, you must be face fit tested and clean shaven while wearing it, failure to do so will result in the mask not providing adequate protection. While using powered units these must be charged and pass the pre-use flow rate tests, if these fail then the unit cannot be used and management must be contacted.

If using a powered tool, the use of on tool dust extraction must be considered to minimise the amount of dust released into the air as part of the process.

All risk assessment are available to staff via the Directorate H&S Hub.



## Tools and equipment

### Powered tools

The council issues powered tools to staff, these tools are inspected and maintained by the stores team. Should any defect occur then this is to be reported immediately to your line manager and the tool taken to the stores team to inspect and replaced where required.

Powered tools are usually battery powered. When charging, if batteries show signs of a defect, such as swelling or overheating, they should be disconnected immediately and replaced.

Items such as drill bits and other similar items are consumable and can be replaced via purchasing at one of the 5 New Forest district Travis Perkins branches via your issued TP Trade Purchasing Card.

When using powered tools, it is important to make sure they are operated in line with the risk assessment and safe system of work, this includes wearing of the correct PPE and considering the impact of any dust or waste produced.

### Trade hand tools

The council does not issue trade specific hand tools to operational trade staff, but instead provides a monthly tool allowance to staff for the ongoing supply and replacement.

If a defect occurs with a hand tool owned by operational trade staff, the staff member is expected to replace the tool funded by their tool allowance. If an operational trade staff member is found to be using defective hand tools knowingly to avoid expenditure this could lead to an investigation and disciplinary action being taken.

When using tools, it is important to make sure they are operated in line with the risk assessment and safe system of work, this includes wearing of the correct PPE and considering any dust or waste produced.

### Other equipment

The council may issue other equipment on an as needed basis, such as props, these items are the responsibility of the staff to maintain. If a staff member find an item defective they are to stop using it and report it to their line manager.

## First aid in the office

### If you require first aid assistance

All first aiders are included in a location-based first aid response group on Teams. If you require first aid assistance, then a call to the response group in Teams will dial all first aid qualified staff logged in.

### Using Teams to call for first aid

1. Open the Teams app.
1. Click 'Calls' on the left hand side bar.
1. In search bar, above the keypad, type 'first aiders'.
1. Click the appropriate group option for your location.  
For example, 'First Aiders ATC CQ'.
1. Ensure you select the option ending with 'CQ'.
1. Click 'Call', the purple button below the keypad.
1. Your call will be answered by the first available first aider at your location.

All first aid qualified staff will log in to this system when they are at their designated place of work and your call will simultaneously call all those logged in.

Once your call is answered by a first aider, please give them the following information as clearly as possible:

- What the incident is.  
Describe briefly what the incident is. For example, casualty has cut themselves, collapsed, or fainted.
- Where the incident is.  
For example, ground floor in reception, first floor by the Council Chamber.

### What if there is no response when I call?

#### For Appletree Court and Lymington Town Hall:

If a first aider is required (more than a plaster or ice pack) and there is no answer when you call the appropriate first aid response group then employees should contact the site officer in the first instance.

Site officers are qualified first aiders and are in the building for the majority of the day, also the site office represents the best place to attend with first aid requirements as a first aid kit and the defibrillators are situated there.

#### Other locations:

| [View the up-to-date list of first aiders on](#)

If you are still unable to locate a first aider and you feel that the level of first aid required requires trained medical assistance, then call 999 from any available device.

## During an incident

If someone is injured, you should:

- first check that you and the casualty aren't in any danger, and, if possible, make the situation safe
- if you feel it is necessary, dial 999 for an ambulance when it's safe to do so.

Possible reasons for calling an ambulance could include:

- if somebody is unconscious and not breathing
- if you think that somebody is suffering with anaphylactic shock (allergic reaction)
- heavy bleeding
- burns or scalds
- if you think somebody is suffering a heart attack
- if you think somebody has swallowed a poisonous substance
- if you believe somebody has suffered or is suffering a stroke

When you call 999, you'll be asked what service you need, as well as:

- your telephone number
- the address you're calling from
- a brief description of what's wrong with the casualty and whether they're bleeding, unconscious, or not breathing.

The call handler may advise you on how to assist the casualty until further help arrives

## Risk assessments

Employers have a legal requirement to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to health and safety of his employees to which they are exposed whilst at work. The council has undertaken various generic, task and manual handling risk assessments of the activities you will undertake as part of your work.

All risk assessments are available on the Directorate H&S Hub.

To access the hub on your mobile device, the hub will be visible via the libraries section on your OneDrive app.

As well as following all control measures identified within the relevant risk assessments, all staff must ensure to undertake a continual dynamic risk assessment of their working environment. Staff must not place themselves, other employees, or member of the public at harm. Staff should contact their supervisor if they are undertaking a task outside of the scope of a risk assessment for further advice and guidance.

Any new tasks that do not have a risk assessment in place for them should be risk assessed with your line manager prior the task starting. It is important that any control measures that are implemented are done so in a practical way that can be maintained and followed. If you are unable to follow a control, please raise it with your line manager immediately and discuss it.

## Method Statements

Employers have a legal requirement to provide adequate guidance and instruction following risk assessment, Method Statements are generated to provide this instruction and guidance. The council has undertaken various generic method statements, task specific method statements and will as needed make situation specific method statements.

All Method Statements are available on the [Directorate H&S Hub](#).

To access the hub on your mobile device, the hub will be visible via the libraries section on your OneDrive app.

As well as following all control measures identified within the relevant risk assessments and method statements, all staff are to follow the step-by-step process as laid out in the Method Statements. If a staff member is unable to follow the method statement, they are to contact their line manager for further advice and guidance.

## Corporate health and safety team

The corporate health and safety team provides all services within the council with competent advice and guidance. The team is available via email, teams, and telephone at all times during weekday working hours (9am to 5pm).

When required please do not hesitate to contact the team via Email at [healthandsafety@nfdc.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@nfdc.gov.uk) or direct to any individual member of the team.

Before going direct to the health and safety team please ensure you have discussed any issues with your line manager to see if there is an existing solution to the issue.

## Housing health and safety representatives

Under health and safety law, the council has a duty to consult and communicate with employees regarding health, safety, and welfare in the workplace. This is achieved through a variety of methods of which employee health and safety representatives are an integral part. Employee health and safety reps are volunteers or elected reps of employee safety in the workplace (where there is no trade union representing the workforce) as detailed in the "Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996".

There is separate legislation regarding the role and function of Safety Reps detailed within 'Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977' for Trade Union elected representatives. The council considers both Trade Union health and safety reps and employee health and safety reps to be the same in their role, responsibilities, and rights. It is also important to highlight that employee health and safety reps are independent from management and have not been appointed by a manager to fulfil these duties.

Perhaps the most important role that a health and safety rep plays is simply being available for employees to talk to them about any workplace health, safety or welfare concerns they may have and, if not able to provide a solution themselves, ensure it is raised through the appropriate channels.

Responsibilities can include:

- representing employees
- attend relevant safety panel meetings.
- taking up general matters and concerns about potential hazards and dangerous events in the workplace.
- being a contact for the corporate health and safety team
- assisting with workplace inspections
- assisting with accident investigations and complaints

As well as the corporate health and safety team, housing maintenance and compliance have access to 2 health and safety employee reps. The role of the employee health and safety rep is to represent the work force at the Housing Health and Safety Panel. The Housing Health and Safety Panel is a quarterly meeting held between senior management, supervisors, health and safety reps, and a member of the corporate health and safety team. The purpose of the meeting is to allow all members of the work force to consult and raise any health and safety concerns they may have.

All meeting minutes, action table and accident statistics are available to all employees via [Sharepoint](#).

If you would like to raise any question or concerns, please contact your health and safety rep. You can also contact a member of the health and safety team by phone, email, teams, or in person.

## Housing Health and Safety Panel

Consultation and communication regarding health and safety management takes place during regular team meetings and at service specific quarterly safety panel meetings.

Safety panels are chaired by assistant directors or service managers, attended by senior managers, health & safety advisors and the relevant employee health and safety representatives. A report from these Safety Panel meetings is taken to the Executive Management Team (EMT) by the Corporate Health and Safety Manager, James Loring, who also presents this report to the HR Committee.

Effective consultation involves the council, as employer, not only giving information to employees but also listening to and taking account of what employees say before making significant health and safety decisions or changes in safe working procedures.

If a decision involving work equipment, processes or organisation could affect the health and safety of employees, NFDC must allow adequate time to give the employees or their safety representatives information about what is proposed.

Individual service managers maintain the responsibility for the management of health and safety within their service; however, as part of their role, health and safety representatives are required to carry out duties in agreement with their line manager and in accordance with council policy.



## Useful emails

Corporate health and safety team: [healthandsafety@nfdc.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@nfdc.gov.uk)

Human resources: [hradvisory@nfdc.gov.uk](mailto:hradvisory@nfdc.gov.uk)

Safety representatives: [handsreps@nfdc.gov.uk](mailto:handsreps@nfdc.gov.uk)



HOUSING MAINTENANCE AND COMPLIANCE

## Health and safety handbook

SECOND EDITION, 2025